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**Press-release**

**St.Petersburg bids goodbye to the first contemporary art fair 1703**

**On June 19, 2022 the first St. Petersburg Art Fair *1703* organized by Gazprom and supported by the of St. Petersburg Cultural Committee closed at the Manege Central Exhibition Hall. More than 1,200 people had a sneak peek at the preview of the fair, while the main exposition brings together masterpieces from 23 Russian art galleries, has been seen by about 10 thousand visitors.**

From June 16 to 19, 2022, three sections of the fair: Galleries, Collections, and Digital Art, were on display at the Manege Central Exhibition Hall for the residents and guests of St. Petersburg. There the visitors could experience the entire spectrum of contemporary art practices, from sculpture and painting to conceptual installations and NFT. Collections featured three large-scale signature projects brought by Marina Gisich Gallery, KGallery, and the Béton Center for Visual Culture.

During the four days of the fair the Masters School ran a lecture programme, featuring art meditations and discussions about the future of classical and digital art, meta universes, trends in art collecting, and how science, technology, and creativity can co-exist. More than 320 thousand people had a chance to watch the lecture series.

Globally art fairs have proven to be an effective platform to promote new names and help galleries get the support they need. Also, it is a venue for interaction between artists, art historians, collectors and the general audience of culture-vultures. *1703* was no exception, with more than 150 works sold in four days by 20 galleries from the commercial sections. A total of 120 artists had works on display. The total value of the works was estimated at 200 million rubles.

**Vadim Navoenko, General Director of the Gazprom Cultural Initiatives Support Fund**: "For many years there has been a discussion in the art community that the cultural capital of Russia lacks its own contemporary art fair. We decided to right the wrong. It’s not easy to set up something grand like this, being in the spotlight of attention from practically every gallerist, curator, collector and, of course, the artists. We couldn’t have coped without the support of members and partners of *1703* and, of course, the citizens of St. Petersburg, our most intelligent but strict critics of all cultural initiatives. Now it’s becoming clear that the fair is ready to claim its rightful place in the series of events that are organized in support of art".

**Alina Krukova, founder of a-s-t-r-a gallery (Moscow**): "We need this fair, and I sincerely hope it is going to become an annual event. Thanks to it we unraveled the pain-points of the Russian art market, not only within the community itself, but also within the group of people who pay lip service to culture, but in reality, take no concrete steps to get closer to that culture. I think the fair is a proverbial bridge that we laid in 2022 and will progress from there. And it is extremely symbolic that it is being built from St. Petersburg, the city with so many bridges.

**Polina Askeri, founder of ASKERI GALLERY (Moscow):** "Participating in the fair was an interesting and a positive experience for us. It would be correct and absolutely honest to say that the organization and logistics of *1703* fair is on a par with a European level".

**Taisia Frolova, founder of K2 Studio Gallery (Moscow)**: "The fair has pleasantly surprised us. Very friendly atmosphere, everything was done with an open heart and love for art. In my opinion, the exhibition hall is perfectly designed, every detail is impeccable. It’s stylish, beautiful and tasteful. I can imagine how much effort it took.

**Marina Gisich, owner of Marina Gisich Gallery (St. Petersburg)**: "It is one of the coolest contemporary art fairs in Russia in terms of organization, logistics and team work. It’s important to keep going and proceed with the second, the third or the fourth edition of it in St.Petersburg. Our city must have its own contemporary content which will unite the art collectors. I think this fair will be not only the best one in Russia, but it will turn into a solid European venue due to its huge potential.

**About 1703**

1703 Art Fair in St. Petersburg is a large-scale cultural project, which is designed to foster the institution of collecting in Russia as well as to support national artists and art galleries. The fair is conceived as a new annual cultural event in the city, and its first season is timed to coincide with the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the birth of Peter I.

The organizer of the fair is Gazprom. The Gazprom Group is carrying out large-scale work on the comprehensive improvement of St. Petersburg. Moreover, the company is providing continuous support and assisting with the development of culture and art, mass and professional sports, healthcare, and science. By 2022, the Gazprom Group has taken part in more than 220 charity projects. By the beginning of 2022, as a result of Gazprom for Children program, 37 modern sports facilities have been built in the city, including sports complexes, swimming pools and skating rinks. As part of the program for the comprehensive improvement of St. Petersburg, more than 80 streets, parks, embankments, and squares have been reconstructed; furthermore, more than 16 thousand street lights have been installed. Large-scale restoration projects are underway in the largest museum complexes. Through the courtesy of Gazprom, the interiors of the Lyon Hall have been reconstructed, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ has undergone restoration, and the interiors of the Zubovsky wing of the Catherine Palace in the Tsarskoye Selo State Museum-Reserve are being re-created. Since 2009, Gazprom has been a permanent partner of the Peterhof State Museum-Reserve in restoring the Chinese Palace in Oranienbaum; to date, 12 out of 17 interiors of the palace have been restored. The Gazprom Group supports large-scale exhibition and restoration projects, in particular those taking place at the State Hermitage Museum, the State Russian Museum, and the Faberge Museum.

1703 Art Fair in St. Petersburg took place between 16-19 June, 2022 at The Manege Central Exhibition Hall with the support of St. Petersburg Committee for Culture. The event is included in the official cultural program of SPIEF-2022. Tickets for the fair can be purchased through the website of The Manege Central Exhibition Hall or at the box office of the Manege during the days of the fair. Age restriction applies, 12+

Official website of the project:

<https://www.1703af.ru/>

Press office:

[press@1703af.ru](mailto:press@1703af.ru)