Viktor Misiano. Moving Stars

The motif of the star, like the theme of outer space in general, has appeared in Vadim Fishkin’s work from the very beginning. His interest in the philosophical school of the so called “Russian cosmism” and the legacy of Chizhevsky and Tsiolkovsky is something he shares with the founding fathers of the Russian avant-garde, with Khlebnikov and Tatlin. Fishkin can be considered an heir to this tradition, to its utopian pathos, its faith in the omnipotence of technology and its aspiration to global totality. Yet in Fishkin’s execution, the avant-garde utopia seems touched by gentle irony. In his work, Kant’s “starry sky above” appears as an ordinary light bulb hanging on a wire, while technological optimism is represented by the “scientific discovery” that a bulb attached to a working hairdryer will start to revolve in a circle. But Tatlin’s work was no less absurd. At the dawn of the airplane age he strove to fly to the depths of cosmos on a pair of plywood wings. But those who have created an avant-garde utopia while maintaining their “sanity” turned it into design; that is to say, they took utopia out of art and out of the avant-garde. Opposition to pragmatism and a lack of clear meanings or goals are what make art art. They constitute a higher goal and meaning, and Fishkin is inclined to treat that without any irony, like matters of principle importance. And the less principles have to do with common sense, the more inclined Fishkin is to take them seriously. The bulb humming and skipping beneath the ceiling does not only bring us closer to the poetic infinity of the cosmos above us, it also serves as a reminder of the “moral law within us”.