

SCIENTIFIC BRICOLAGE

Vadim Fiškin's work is addressed through the tension between imagination and scientific approach. Almost all of the artworks presented in the exhibition bear a certain mystery associated with light or with the reflections of light: These are the practical examples of ideas on lamps without a power socket, candles lit without a flame, invisible lights coming from behind doors (Unplugged, Doorway, Miss Christmas, Moving star, Prometheus Electronic, Sisyphus electronic). But they also constitute a certain kind of *bricolage* through the use of popular everyday objects. The mystery and magic of a bricolage of objects that ordinarily would not be juxtaposed, surrounds the exhibition. In this sense, Vadim Fiškin's works have an enchanting effect on the viewers, on the lovers of art. Lamps lit by obscure forces with no electricity in sight, doors opening behind a veil of mystery, a hair dryer revolving in mid-air like a magic broom, the mysterious colors of the luminosity of a light shed into the darkness are always reminiscent of this world of magic. The line of thought that the artist follows seems to stem from the old Renaissance tradition of the likes of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) and Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519). According to this tradition, called the *hermetic* tradition, the relationship of man and the cosmos is a whole and he seems to be linked to a tradition of invention.^[1] The *Corpus Hermeticum*, a work of Ficino's translation, a narrative very much like the Book of Genesis, examines the creation of man. This narrative beginning with the word is a creation of *light*. Through this bond established between the creation of man and the creation of light the *hermetic* thought, magic, theurgy, and alchemy are united. The elements of nature are revealed by light. And seven governors and also seven planets symbolically place the order of the heavens onto earth. In this work of cosmos, consisting of three parts, there exists a lower world, a middle world and an upper world. The seven governors or seven planets that the lower world depends on, create man after establishing this bond. As man was created through a demiurgic conception, man was also a creative demiurge. The belief is such that an artwork could be created due to this condition. Thus, as a man of Humanism, the man of Renaissance is considered to be a demiurge. And as such, an understanding that would take over the forces of nature began to dominate. This emerges in a relation to an *enigma*; because to have these powers has an affinity with creativity. This tradition, which is also called Neo-Platonic, existed throughout the Middle Ages and until the Renaissance.

Hermes Trismegistus, who is believed to be Egyptian, was relaying hermetic knowledge through his writings. The image of *Asclepius* was based on a depiction of a wizard at work, and this acceptance of wizardry within the realm of creativity continued throughout the ages all the way to Kabbalah in the 12th century and beyond, but was abandoned in the modern era. Ancient Egyptian priests were people who knew how to “grab” the folk with their magical thoughts and practices. They established this knowledge based on their knowledge of the celestial bodies. Ficino had developed this knowledge in the Renaissance of the 15th century: According to this, “man, as a creator has created divine perfections.” Similarly, Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) associated man with “divine perfections” in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. This discourse emphasizes that in the world of Renaissance, man was a creator and that creativity was considered to be the inventions of a wizard. The creature would now become a *creator*; he was creative. Man was the creator. This is how the humanitarian nature of humanism and its man oriented perspective made itself recognised: the wizard-man who was able to commune with certain forces. The work of a man infused with the effects of cosmos would have an intense element of surprise for those who do not know what it means to be creative. He would become a miraculous man. According to *hermetic* thought, being able to have command over these forces was a condition of creativity. That is why the effect of these of obscure forces were sometimes referred to as a “muse”. These people were more of a wizard than a philosopher. Until the emergence of the concepts of scholar or scientist, the relationships between science, alchemy and magic has always been through a world of *abracadabra*, while wizards are still able to captivate people today.

Regarding Vadim Fiškin’s work, it is impossible to avoid the impression that the same magical and enchanting character is maintained here; it looks as if everything is presented in a miraculous perfection. He seems to view the world of creativity exactly from the same place a Renaissance man would have viewed it. Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) proposed that genuine “applied science” was made possible by merging alchemy and mathematics. In that sense, Vadim Fiškin treads a line that goes back and forth between mechanics, mathematics and magic; just like the creators of the ancient times who could talk to the angels and claim their powers, he, too, would guide us towards the physics of a magical world of art. In his works, he invites us to join this path that he walks through natural, mechanical and mathematical means. He channels a different view into the vision of art in the world. When we see how the energy that flows through solid matter conveys the “light” in Genesis, we can do nothing else but be

surprised: Is this sorcery, is it magic, or is it just mechanics? It is as if the “world soul” (*anima mundi*) was passing through there: The magical use of mechanics. If Leonardo Da Vinci was the inventor of this in the Renaissance then the line is still kept alive. Leaving aside scholastic thought, and bringing observation to the fore, Leonardo turned to the practical. And it is known that he, too, was a follower of Marsilio Ficino. He added mechanical rationality to this thought. I see Vadim Fiškin as a part of this tradition.

Starting from objects of everyday use, and making use of a scientific approach in the form of a *bricolage*, Vadim Fiškin is realising a rational magical-mechanical artistic work in the spirit of a “*bricoleur*”. Objects that we continually use without taking notice, are presented in ways we could not begin to imagine, revealing the mysteries hidden in the elements of his art. The exhibition focuses on a line of thought that develops through these objects.

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[1] As emphasized in a text by Viktor Misiano, Vadim Fiškin remains attached to the tradition of “Russian cosmism”. The legitimacy of which in the modern period hinges on the Russian *avant-garde*, Chizhevsky, notable for his works on cosmo-biology and Tsiolkovsky with his pioneering works on astronautics.