



Yelena Vorobyeva (°1959, Nebit-Dag, Turkmenistan, lives in Almaty, Kazakhstan) and Viktor Vorobyev (°1959, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan, lives in Almaty, Kazakhstan) have been working together since the 1990's. Their usage of different genres and techniques results in stylised, multi-layered works, focusing on post-Soviet circumstances and their effects on everyday life.

The artists became interested in 'socio-colouristic' relations while traveling in the south of Kazakhstan in 2002. They noticed that the usual colour red, used as the attribute colour of everything Soviet, had been supplanted for the colour blue. Their work *Kazakhstan. Blue Period* of that year, a series of photographs acquired by M HKA, documents this nationwide colour spree graphically and with warm humor. As Yelena Vorobyeva puts it herself: 'The canonical state symbols of the communists had been subjected to total desacralisation. The colour of the new independent Kazakhstan is blue; symbolising many things — the heavenly blue sky, the pagan celebration of spring, the blue domes of Islamic mosques, the dream of the inaccessible ocean's expanses — the colour blue satisfied the majority and entered the mass consciousness as the best colour, the "right" colour. The blue dream of eternal spring, manifest in colour, has spilled across Kazakhstan, adding some optimistic lustre to our dim steppe vistas.'

The work *Bazar*, 2007 depicts how the collapse of the Soviet system and new sovereignty destroyed existent social relations followed by a privatisation of enterprise and the free market. People had to do something to survive and soon the streets of Almaty became a big trading ground, a '*bazar*', a still-life of a changing epoch.

To conclude, in Vorobyeva's own words: 'We took photos of these objects and made a purchase as a sign of gratitude. Little by little, we accumulated a rather sizeable collection of objects. By placing these objects in the exhibition space, we would like to show interrelated realities — the reality of an exhibited object that can be touched, the documented reality of the place where this object was sold, the reality of the existence of each person (the objects' owners), the reality of time (history), and finally, the reality of direct personal contact.'

Viktor
Vorobyev &
Yelena
Vorobyeva