

SENKO 01

Senko Studio is a space in which art, architecture and design unite in a celebration of contemporary art and ideas. Since it opened its doors in 2002 the gallery has held host to a wealth of exciting international artists from across the board of contemporary image-making. From painters to sculptors, illustrators to photographers, fashion designers to filmmakers. From emerging artists to international icons.

Behind this creative phenomenon is the Danish-Ukrainian artist Sergei Sviatchenko. Since relocating to Denmark in 1990, Sergei set his heart on establishing a new arts community in the small but perfectly formed town of Viborg and through his architectural vision and an inimitable passion for emerging art, Senko Studio, a brave new world of contemporary art, was born.

More than a gallery, Senko is an ideology. The gallery's multi-media ethos embodies the spirit of contemporary creative culture. Like a box of treats filled with art, ideas and imagination, Senko is a feast for the eyes and hearts of any passionate creative.

Senko 01 celebrates seven years of this extraordinary art space, offering a peek into the ideas that drive the gallery and a unique collection of fifteen posters, postcards and booklets presenting work by some of the gallery's most inspirational artists. This is the wonderful world of Senko Studio.

“Collaboration is the key to contemporary art. Everyone grows through it, but creative people live for it. It’s like walking on the street early in the morning. You walk, you are content, but when the street becomes with filled with people you walk faster, you smile, you greet, you interact. That’s how I see it. It’s the same with art. Collaboration creates progress and life.

Everything that is happening in contemporary art today excites me. Art, architecture, music, fashion, photography, design. They have always been a big part of my life. Growing up in the Ukraine in the 1960’s it was impossible to ignore the changes that were taking place in the visual arts and being a young artist in the late 1980’s was especially exciting. It was a time of great political change. Perestrojka, the political reforms that were introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, had given rise to the possibility of showing forms of modern art that had not been allowed in the Soviet Union before. The shifts provoked much debate about contemporary art and the feeling in the arts community became one of revolution.

Around this time I began working as an art director at SOVIART, the centre for contemporary art in Kiev. Our first exhibition was a collaborative project with an American company called Global Concepts. It was the very first exhibition of young Soviet and American artists and it established a fantastic creative network within which to support and promote this newly emerging arts community. It was also at SOVIART that I first began collaborating with artists in Denmark. Our exhibitions were very experimental – enveloping other arts such as music, theatre, literature and poetry, and many of the shows toured other cities in the Soviet Union. It was a fantastic experience and one which has informed my working practice ever since.

The first seeds of Senko Studio began around this time whilst I was writing my PhD on Means of Visual Information in Architecture. My thesis explored the influence of modern images on people – the relationships between art, architecture and community. I was particularly interested in notions of perception and effect; theories about how unusual ways of presenting or constructing images in terms of size, structure, texture, colour, and the unexpected act placing of them within the structure of buildings, can provoke thought and communication in culture and society.

After establishing my career as an artist in the Ukraine, in 1990 I moved with my family to Viborg, a small town on the Jutland peninsula of Denmark and was keen to find ways in which to establish an international arts community in my new cultural environment. I started thinking about applying my theoretical studies in my new home town, about incorporating visual art images into Viborg to create a dialog between art, architecture and the community. Artist-run spaces had always fascinated me so I decided to create a space that could hold visually integrated but simple exhibitions in Viborg. An idea for an ‘open’ gallery or ‘aquarium’ evolved and I began looking for a space with large windows which would allow a complete integration of art into the town’s architectural environment. Viborg being a relatively small town it was also important that I created a space of the right scale, allowing a unity between the size and content of the shows and the environment and culture of the town itself. I found the perfect location in an old bicycle shop, a long space with very large windows which would be exposed to changes in light, colour and the surrounding environment, and in March 2002 I opened Senko Studio. The gallery has become a fresh and surprising element in the town’s structure – exactly as I had dreamed. The unique physical frame provides artists and curators a chance to make a real statement with their show. It was fantastic to see my theoretical knowledge realised in the gallery.

It was important to me to make Senko part of the international arts community so the geographical spread of artists has been very broad. We have had exhibitors from all over Denmark, many of course from the thriving art scenes in Århus and Copenhagen, and internationally we have presented artists from Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, Israel and Russia. From the beginning we worked closely with two Danish art portals, www.kunst.nu and www.kopenhagen.dk, which had started around the same time and we also had support from national newspapers and television stations. It was a pleasure to feel that Senko was developing as part of the wider Danish community. Running a gallery in a small town it is obviously difficult to compete with the larger cities in terms of visitors, but we have also created a dynamic community through the Senko website which has a very large international following. We try to present each show thoroughly on the site, giving the viewers a ‘real’ experience of the exhibitions and most importantly an understanding of the art itself.

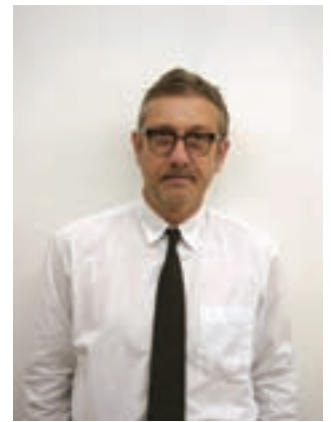
I decided from the outset that Senko would be non-profit. Artists would invest their time and work in the shows and I would spend my free time at the gallery. Senko was initially self-funded. I had used money I had earned from selling my paintings and collages to get things started but as time went on I started to build a committee of people to support Senko’s development from a business perspective. This committee has been instrumental in helping me develop the gallery to what it is today. Senko has also had support from the Danish Art Council and from local businesses in the Viborg municipality

who have offered their services to Senko projects and publications over the years. It’s important to remember that business people do not only think about money. They helped me in the beginning and are helping now and I am very grateful to them all.

The creative perspective at Senko is very much drawn from my personal understanding of contemporary visual art. It is very important to me to show work that resonates with me personally. Working as a multi-media artist myself, I am regularly in contact with artists, curators and critics from all over the world, so I have the perfect network within which to be exposed to exciting new artists for Senko. I have respect for all the artists who have shown at Senko over the years, but from time to time I get closer to some of the exhibitors, often because we communicate as artists. Family is very important to me and the gallery is a ‘family’ project in many senses – artists and curators staying with us in our home, sharing dinners together, so with Senko I have an art family as well.

It excites me every time we open a new exhibition. Every new project is somehow unique and interesting for me and as someone who regularly exhibits my own artwork I have a natural affinity with the challenges and excitements of putting together an exhibition. One of my most memorable Senko experiences was working with Yoko Ono in 2006. She created a video piece using Morse code to say, ‘I love you’, with a torch to the people of Viborg. I thought it was fantastic! It was also an honour to work with Paul Smith, my favourite designer, who presented his exhibition *Father & Son* at Senko in 2004. I had liked and respected Paul for many years and during a visit to London I had the opportunity to get to know him personally. I had heard about the photography exhibition he had shown in Japan and when we met I asked him if he would be interested in showing the exhibition in Denmark. In his typical down-to-earth style, he said, “We will do it, Sergei, don’t you worry.” I hope we can collaborate again in the future.

I have always worked with a wide variety of media – collage, photography, film – so it was natural for me to develop Senko as a multi-media platform. Graphic design is another important element of the gallery. Each exhibiting artist is asked to design a unique poster, postcard and t-shirt to celebrate and promote and their show. The shirts are signed by the artists as a limited edition series. I think it is an interesting challenge for the artists to think of the exhibition as a statement and I like the idea of artists and visitors being able to keep something from the exhibition. It enables the communication continue. I have seen someone in New York wearing a Senko t-shirt, although I will admit he was a Dane!



Sergei Sviatchenko,
Artist & Director of
Senko Studio.

Today Senko comprises various different creative elements. Senko Frame is a large screen for video artists which opened in 2006 and we recently launched Senko Window, an external wall on which we can show large-format posters by designers and architects. As the gallery and its creative community have grown we have also started collaborating in more applied ways with the local community. In 2006 we began working with Danish fashion stores such as Ei’kon in Århus and Milk Contemporary in Copenhagen. Working with art directors and curators from Copenhagen, London and the US we have produced a series of bespoke exhibitions and catalogues which transform the stores into dynamic creative environments. This kind of collaboration is very much at the heart of Senko. It creates opportunities for artists, curators, designers, editors and art enthusiasts to work together and to learn about each other’s work and ideas – to find a level of understanding through art.

The biggest benefit of Senko is communication – communication with art and the people who work with it. It inspires me greatly to work with the artists and curators who exhibit at Senko, to give and get something from the process.

During the last fifteen years I have witnessed major transformations in contemporary art, particularly the evolution of video art, photography, illustration and digital art. It is already clear that the future of contemporary art lies in the interweaving of many art forms – architecture, sculpture, sound, technology. Senko is very much a response to these shifts and we look forward to exploring and celebrating these emerging art forms even further. In the future there will be no limits for what artists can do and I want Senko to be a part of everything – to contribute, to define, to show, to see.”

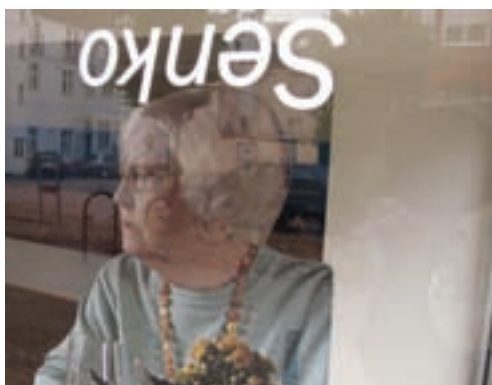
**Interview by Faye Dowling,
Editor & Curator, London.**

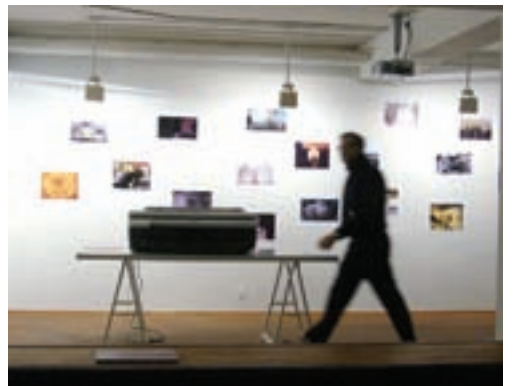
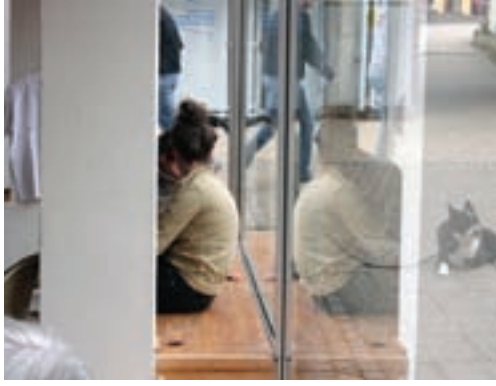


Alexandra Sviatchenko
'Eleven', March 2006



Senko Studio,
2002-2009







Henrik Vibskov
'Madsen',
June 2005





Laura Heyman,
'The Photographers
Wife', April 2008

Alessandro Gabini,
'Paper Sings',
August 2006





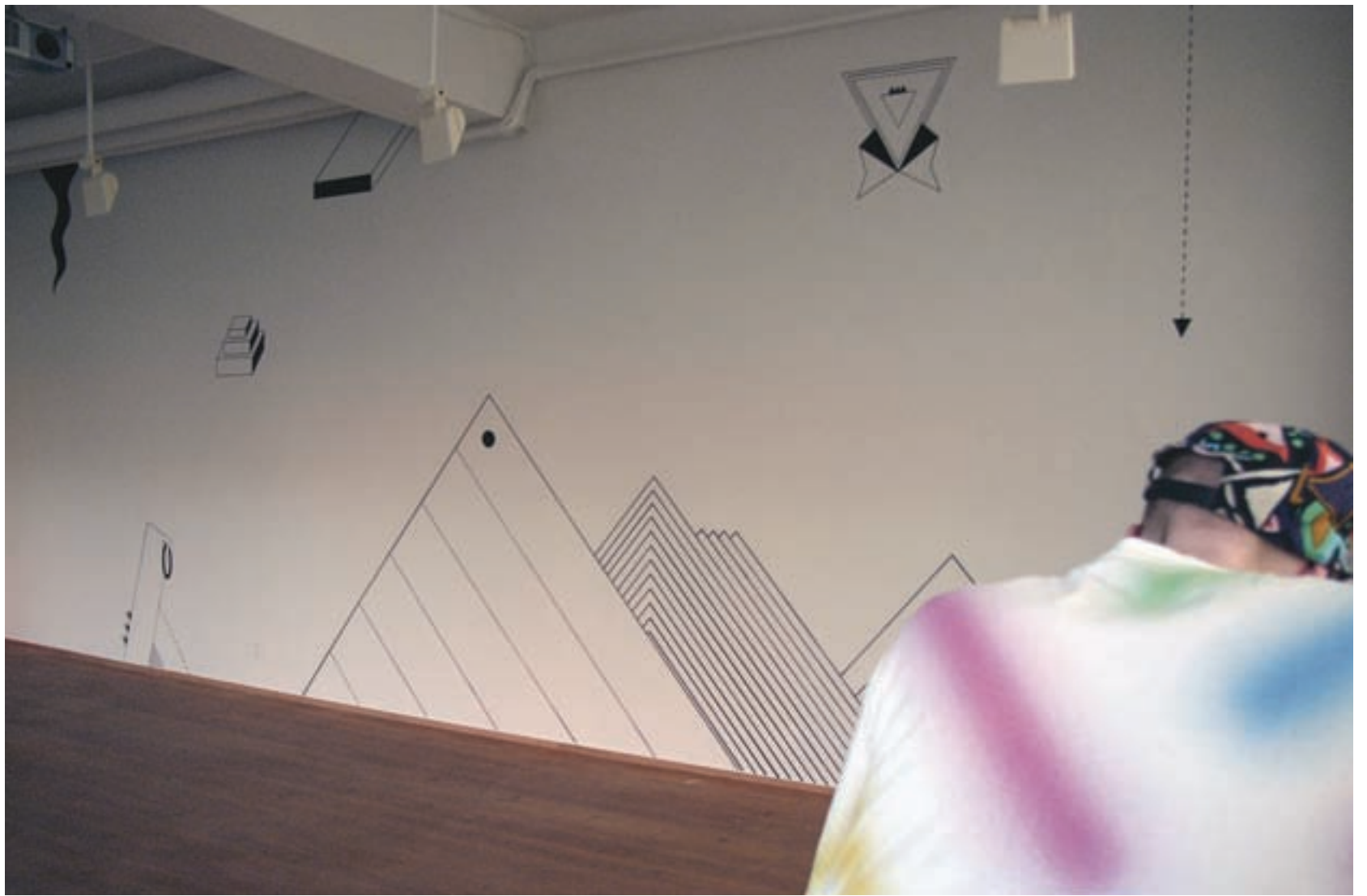
Stefano Giuriati,
'Campo Sportivo',
September 2006

Signe Vad, 'What
do you mean by
that metaphor',
August 2007





Jakob Jensen,
'Electric Sunset',
March 2005



Kasper Fjederholt &
Eske Gram Nørholm,
'6.CTPÆ.108C /
North', February 2007

Kristine Mandsberg,
'Welcome to the Doll Theatre',
August 2009







Diane Landry,
'The Lost Shield'
Senko Frame Project,
September 2007



Carlo Ferraris,
'Eastern Standard Time'
Senko Frame Project,
June 2006

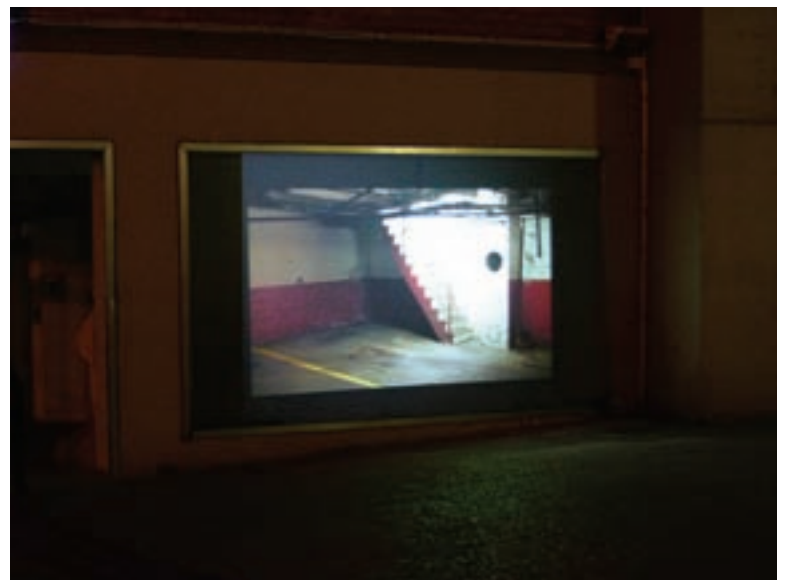
Senko Frame Project,
2006-2009



PROVMYZA,
'Wet Chicken'
Senko Frame Project,
November 2006



Darren Floyed,
'Dreams of Babies'
Senko Frame Project,
April 2009



Line Kallmayer,
'Dennis, a monodrama'
Senko Frame Project,
May 2009



Yoko Ono, 'Onochord'
Senko Frame Project,
March 2006



POISON ALL CURATORS

Senko/thisisamagazine,
'Poison All Curators',
a collaboration with
Karen Ann Donnachie
& Andy Simionato,
alt_Cph,
The Annual Alternative
Art Fair in Copenhagen,
September 2006



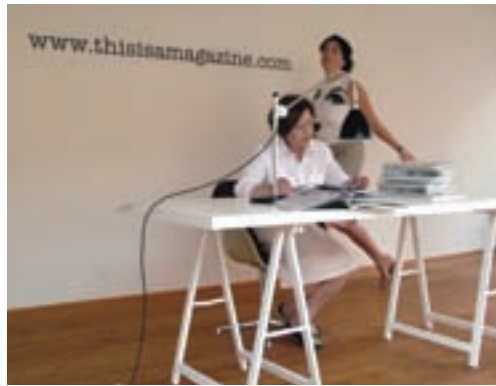
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Senko Studio,
2002-2009





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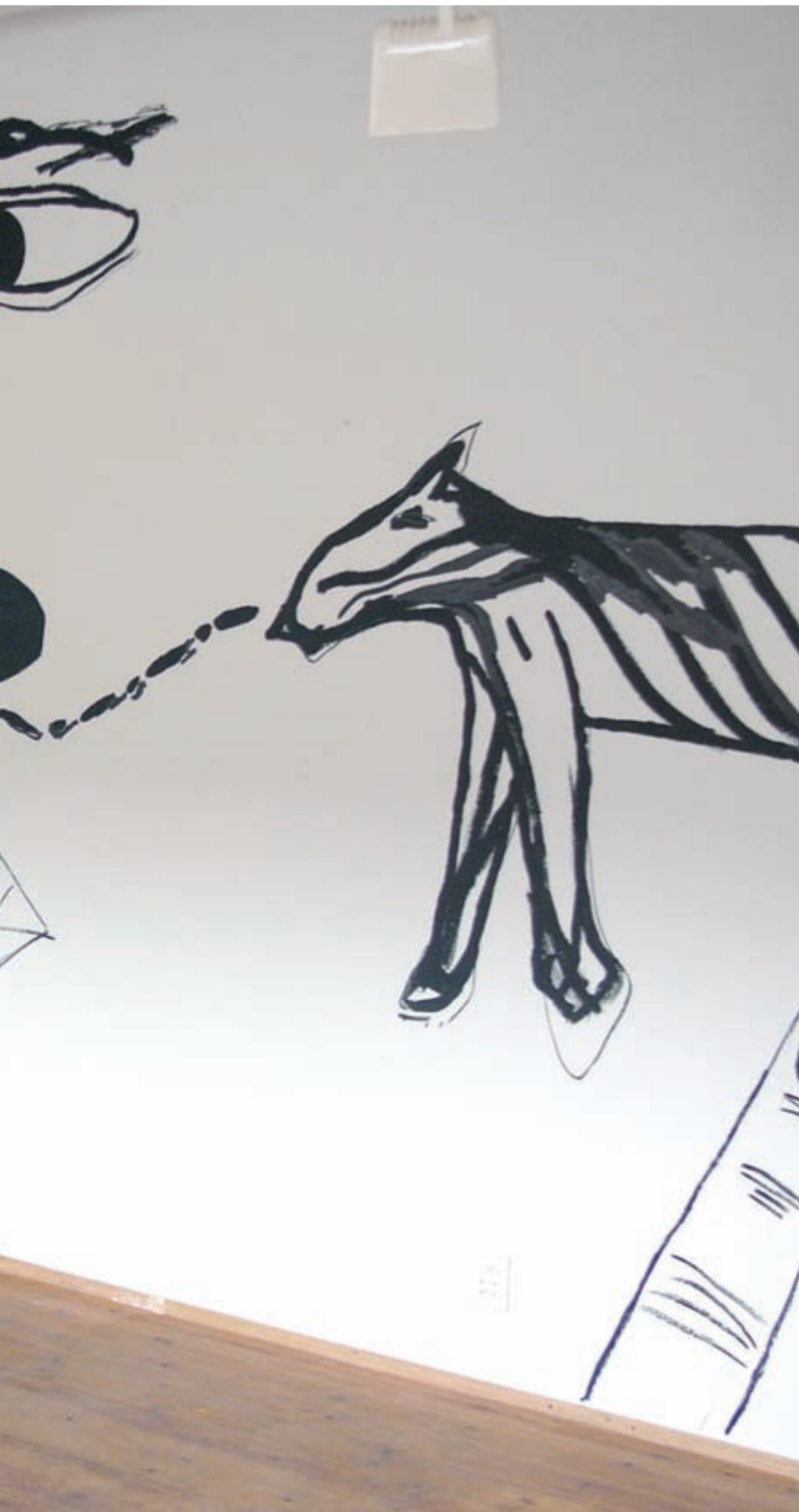
MIKO BACHM



1886



Alexandra Sviatchenko
'Eleven', March 2006



SENKO1 is a limited edition publication celebrating seven years of Senko Studio.

Featured artists: Boris Berlin, Kim Boske, Karen Ann Donnachie, Kasper Fjederholt, Carlos Ferraris, Darren Floyd, Susie Forman, Alessandro Gabini, Stefano Giurati, Astrid Gjesing, Annika von Hausswolff, Jakob Jensen, Line Kallmayer, Diane Landry, Eske Gram Nørholm, Kristine Mandsberg, Yoko Ono, Paul Paper, Provmyza, Nicholas & Sheila Pye, Tine Bay Lührssen, Laura Heyman, Andy Simionato, Paul Smith, Clare Strand, Alexandra Sviatchenko, Signa Vad, Bettina Camilla Vestergaard, Henrik Vibskov.

All artwork © the artists

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SENKO1 is dedicated to the memory of my father (Sergei Sviatchenko)

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Art direction and design by James Greenhow
Design by Adam Morris
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(www.sviatchenko.dk) and Kurt Nielsen

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Senko

SENK01
FEATURED ARTISTS:

BORIS BERLIN /
KIM BOSKE /
SUSIE FORMAN /
ASTRID GJESING /
ANNIKA VON HAUSSWOLFF /
PAUL PAPER /
PROVMYZA /
NICHOLAS & SHEILA PYE /
TINE BAY LÜRHSSEN /
LAURA HEYMAN /
PAUL SMITH /
CLARE STRAND /
SIGNE VAD /
BETTINA CAMILLA VESTERGAARD /
HENRIK VIBSKOV

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