

**GUM-Red-Line Will Showcase  
Contemplative Artworks by Mikhail Balan**

**19.10.2023 – 27.11.2023**



**Mikhail Balan's solo exhibition "Dhyāna. Deep Contemplation" is set to open at GUM-Red-Line Gallery on October 18. The exposition will include over 25 artworks, all made from rare species of wood from all around the world. While creating his abstract structures, the artist engages in a dialogue with the material form which will ultimately give way to a future shape. Balan offers his audiences the chance to continue that dialogue on their terms, infinitely rediscovering the world.**

"Dhyāna" means "deep contemplation, meditation, beholding, detachment, even deliverance" in Sanskrit. In Japan, the same concept is presented by the word "Zen." This is a state that many people strive to attain or, at the very least, approximate, overcoming their white noise and the pressures of the external information fields.

Mikhail Balan views working with wood as a synesthetic solution which gives birth to an artwork that the artist hears and feels with his fingers as a material structure. Those impressions are then passed on to the audience. Multilayered tactile objects form spaces that allow for the solemn passage of time. This is true visual poetry. "Ascension" ("Tatlin and the Sky"), made from a liana from Bali, the dramatic figure of the "Stone Collector," made from juniper with embedded stones that was discovered in the Caucasus, the "Monument to the Present," made from solid palm and detailing from an ancient Tver Region weaving loom, and the figure "Balance," made from Indonesian lianas, are especially representative in this sense.

Wood acts as a rightful partner and cocreator of each artwork. The same applies to each viewer who is able to communicate with the pieces on a personal level. Ultimately, viewing artworks by Mikhail Balan becomes a ceaseless cycle of contemplation and intimate "heart-to-heart" interaction.

Balan notes that “while working on the pieces presented as part of the exhibition I was inspired by nature and the wood itself. I offer a fresh outlook on that material and its role in contemporary art and showcase the ways of integrating new images into existing environments. I see the present exhibition as a sort of path. First, I go down that path myself. Then viewers interact with the images we created. Visitors take direct part in the experiences, enrich themselves with new emotions, learn about new images.”

The endless variety of forms and ideas that is on display in Mikhail Balan’s artworks reminds one of Dadaist Jean Arp who considered chance to be a coauthor. He did not provide a title to a work and did not offer explanations until he received the final, complete result, eliminating the impact of consciousness on the creative process. In his series “Constellations” all the objects adopt circular, soft forms (i.e., rocks or pieces of wood grinded down by water and wind). Arp wants his artworks to be as similar to naturally occurring structures as possible.

Mikhail Balan works within a similar style, allowing art to pass through the prism of discovering oneself to be a part of nature. Balan creates art objects that embody light, sound, impressions. Art critic Sergey Khachaturov rightfully names Balan a “wandering master craftsman” who is ready “to tell the world about the beauty of the Universe which we didn’t create.”

**Project curator – Svetlana Kalashnikova-Prokofieva.**

**GUM-Red-Line Gallery director – Igor Kazakov.**

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

GUM-RED-LINE Gallery occupies a space of 280 SM in the front of GUM. Its windows face Red Square. This is the actual location of the Henri Brocard Gallery that was established right here all the way back in 1893. Henri Brocard was a famous Moscow perfumer and art collector. While maintaining the legacy of the past, GUM-RED-LINE Gallery acts as a starting point for the cultivation of a new cultural space where GUM customers can learn about contemporary art.

**The gallery, located on Floor 2, Line 1, GUM, is open to visitors daily, 10 to 22.**

**[www.gum-red-line.ru](http://www.gum-red-line.ru)**



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