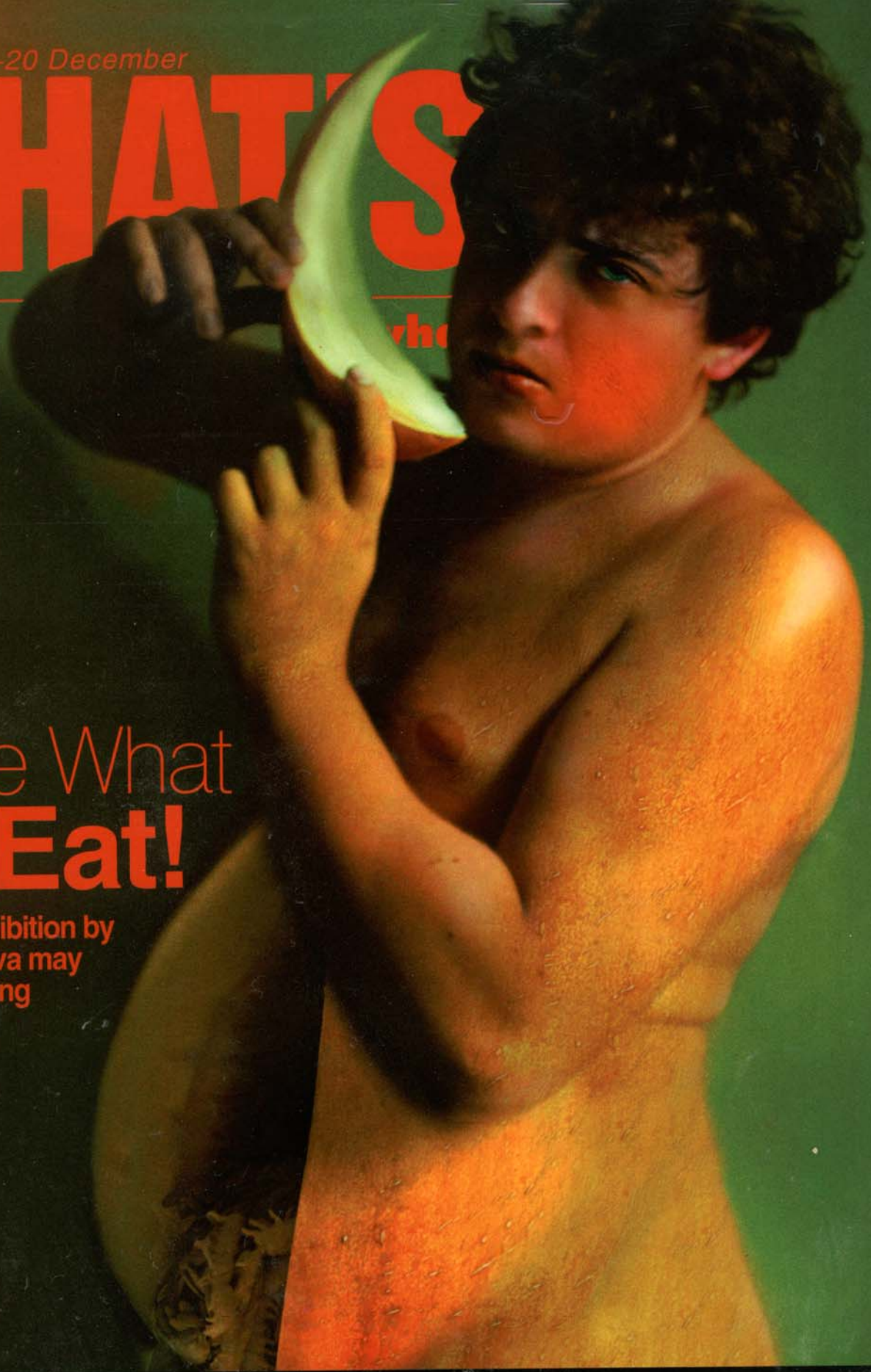


No.46/2007 14 -20 December

WHAT'S



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Anatalia Peregodova may
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A Photographer's Fruity-Psychedelic Pictures

Tired of winter? Stop by Kyiv Polytechnic Institute and take a peek at Natalia Peregodova's stunningly colourful and delightfully surreal photo-collages. What's On caught up with the talented artist.

Natalia Peregodova isn't a photographer by education. She's a computer programmer, and one who graduated from the prestigious Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (KPI). She could have had a big computer career, but after trying it for a while, she found it wasn't for her. So today she pursues her real love: her witty, psychedelic, colour-soaked photo-collages, which are based on two motifs, the human body and luscious summer fruit. Her first exhibition, 'Fruit Portraits,' is on display until 28 December on the second floor of KPI's cultural centre, and anybody who likes photography, or who wants a blast of energy and colour, should go and see it. The ten pictures are a trippy delight, and can even be the merest bit unsettling, in the way a dream can be. In 'Melon Man,' for example, perhaps the most striking photo in the bunch, a shirtless man stands chomping on a fat slice of melon and gazing into the camera. Then you notice that the slice has actually been cut out of his belly: he's part human, part fruit. It's the kind of image that might haunt your sleep if it weren't so bright, witty and weirdly charming. (The man, by the way, is Peregodova's husband, who wasn't an entirely willing model.) In 'Raspberry Girl,' meanwhile, a smiling blond wears a giant raspberry as a hat – or perhaps it's a miniature girl, and the raspberry is of normal size.

In 'Awaiting Eve,' a nude pregnant woman snuggles with a giant apple. All the pictures are characterised by Peregodova's signature juicy, psychedelic colours. Natasha got her start by posting her collages on

her livejournal blog. The images generated attention, and she received letters from hundreds of impressed people. Then one of her 'Fruit Portrait' collages won a fourth place prize at the Venice International Photo Contest, and she started thinking that it might be worth taking her photo-collage hobby more seriously. It wasn't long before she realised she was ready for her own exhibition. Hence the KPI exhibit. Why KPI and not a downtown gallery? She says KPI has spiritual meaning for her, because she spent her younger years there.

As for her work methods, Natalia says she prefers using regular people in her pictures rather than professional models. Regular people often have more interesting faces and are more prone to show unguarded emotions. "Usually they're my friends and their friends," she says of her subjects. "I don't like to take pictures of people who try to tell me what to do. One guy wanted to be a paprika. I didn't like the idea and told him no." Peregodova isn't a huge fan of a lot of contemporary photography. With the exception of the occasional big name like David LaChapelle, whose photos have much in common with her own, she finds much of it dark and depressing. Indeed, a lot of contemporary photography is boring: photograph a beautiful body in black and

'Melon Man' is the kind of image that might haunt your sleep if it weren't so bright, witty and weirdly charming.

white, and you stand a good chance of being called a 'serious' artist. But that's only one way to do things, and Peregodova doesn't understand why it's so popular. She's more into joy and vibrancy, so rare in the modern photo world. "I think looking at other art will make my work similar to it, and I'll lose my way with my own ideas. I don't remember the names [on the local photography scene] and can't tell you exactly what galleries are my favourite ones. The most worthwhile place for me is the PinchukArtCentre. That place really deserves people's attention."

Nor is Natasha the type to make too much of her art. She thinks anyone can be a photographer: if you're in the right place at the right time with your camera, you'll likely do some interesting work. "I don't need to go far to take a good photo," she says. "There's so much interesting stuff around us already. The problem is that we don't have time to see it." Poised at the threshold of a career breakthrough, Natalia is keeping her wits about her when it comes to future work offers. "I don't want to do mass-produced stuff," she says. "That will point me more toward the market, but it will take me away from my inner wishes." Commercial work isn't her cup of tea: she once worked as a designer for a magazine and found she was spending a lot of time on ephemera that didn't help her develop as an artist. Peregodova is currently working a new series of photo-collages called 'Sweet Addiction' that combine people and sweets. They'll go on display in Kyiv's Actors House in the middle of February.

Natalia Marianchuk



Good Music and Fashion

Alex Fakir's RadioBand in concert, with Doris Hartwich fashion show, National Opera House (3 Lyvynka), 17 December at 19.00

Alex Fakir's RadioBand is the Ukrainian orchestra that brings first-rate pop, jazz, funk, rock, and Latino and dance to the local masses. This concert at the Opera House will be accompanied by a fashion show featuring the designs of German men's clothes Doris Hartwich, a men's fashion designer from Germany who specialises in combining classic tailoring with unconventional details. For more information call 239-6632.

German DJ Coming to Kyiv

Paul Van Dyk in concert, International Exhibition Centre (15 Brovarskiy Prospekt), 14 December at 21.00

Paul van Dyk is one of the world's leading trance music DJs and producers. He grew up in East Berlin, where he kept in touch with the world beyond the Berlin Wall by secretly listening to the popular (but forbidden) Western radio stations RIAS and SFB and to mixtapes occasionally smuggled into the country. Today he's the winner of numerous awards from all over the world and the man who gets the trance hordes moving. Tickets are 130-400 hry. For more information call 501-2520.

Flamboyant Russian Singer

Valery Leontiev in concert, Palace Ukraine (103 Chervonoarmiyaka), 15-16 December at 19.00

This flamboyant Russian singer has always favoured over-the-top costumes and body piercings, and you could spend a fair amount of time counting up all the diamonds in his teeth. He's certainly generated his share of talk in his 20-year career on the stage, with the rumours touching on everything from alleged affairs with men to alleged love children. But he's never stopped working hard to maintain his place in the sun and he's managed to become a National Artist of Russia. Tickets are 40-400 hry. For more information call 501-2520.



Sweet and Gruesome Imagery Combine in New Art Show

Fruit Portraits, photography by Nataliya Peregodova, KPI Cultural Centre (37 Pobedy Prosp.), till 28 December

Photographer Nataliya Peregodova calls her style 'PhotoFunArt', and it's a result of her conviction that modern photography lacks a light, positive vibe. Her stated intention is to make people feel good, comfortable and warm, which she accomplishes in this collection of photos that wittily depict men and women surreally bonding with fruit: a man both eating and turning into a melon, a girl wearing a gigantic raspberry as a hat. These are trippy, supersaturated pictures and we'll bet you smile at least once when you look at them – although, in the manner of the best fairytales and children's stories, like 'James and the Giant Peach', they're also a little bit disturbing. For more info go to www.pam.org.ua

The Best from Four Years of Future Shorts Movie Fest!

Future Shorts: The Best! A Collection of 13 Short Films, Butterfly Ultramarine (1a Ullakoga street) and Zhovten (26 Kostyantynivska), till 30 December

Future Shorts is the world's most important short film festival, and this year it's celebrating its fourth anniversary. In honour of the date the festival's London office prepared a 'best of' collection of films that have shown over the years, and now the whole lot is coming to Kyiv. All 13 films are 90s masterpieces and international festival winners. Some are fun, some pack an emotional charge. Among the films are 'Jazz in the Stars' (2000), 'She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not' (2000), 'Japanese Night Place' (2004) and 'Sentimental Journey' (2005). For more info and a schedule call Butterfly at 239-0270 or Zhovten at 417-3004.

