

artist: Korsi

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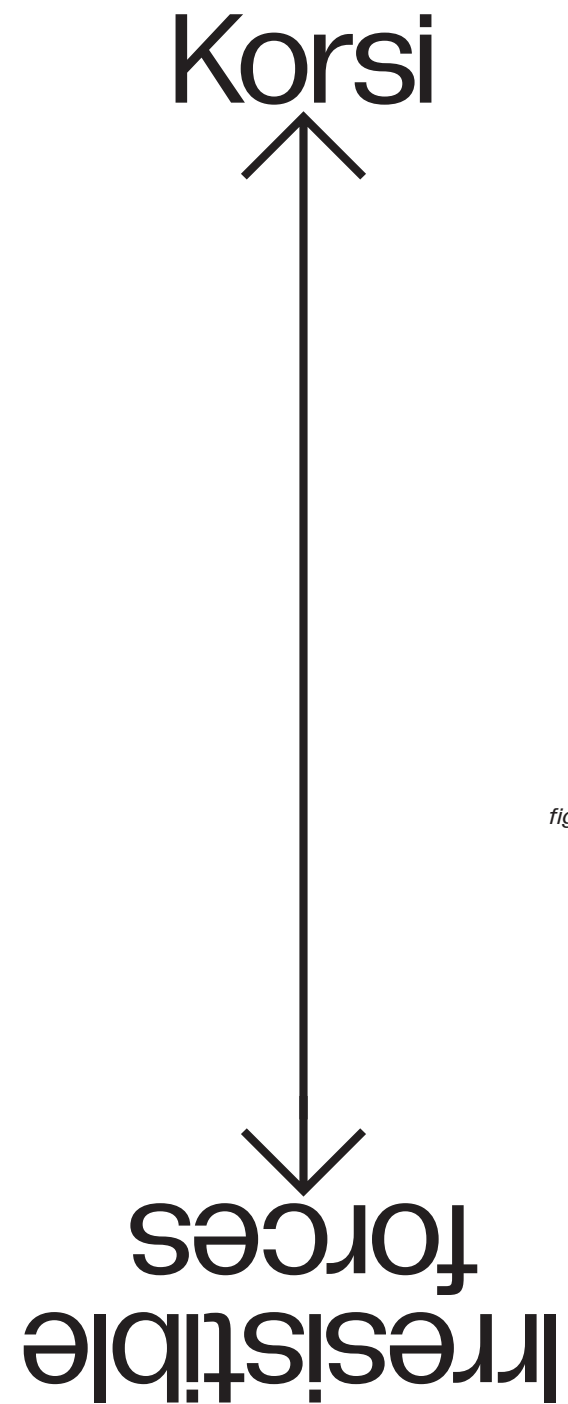


fig.1

Irresistible forces is a series of eight works united by a common concept by the Moscow-based artist Korsi (b. 1986).

Casting doubt on our habitual conceptions of everyday things, Korsi captures forms that seem as if frozen between wakefulness and sleep—the familiar outlines of objects remain distinct, but the gaze is already directed inward. Taking inspiration from the legal notion of force majeure, Korsi asks us to see in everyday realities the manifestation of forces beyond a person's control: their fears and desires. If these forces cannot be shown visually, they invariably reveal themselves in the world around us.

Korsi makes constant reference to the legacy of the French philosopher and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, and to his concept of the Real—that is, that which is inexpressible in language or image, the frightening or alluring underside entirely hidden behind everyday concepts. Korsi, however, does not abandon the attempt to show the connections running between familiar reality and its underside.

The series of objects Korsi has created for GES-2 House of Culture are an occasion for reflection on the idea of public space and the purposes of art as one of its essential components. On the one hand, there is the territory of presuppositions and rules that forms the foundation of social community. On the other, a multitude of impulses and desires lie behind any community. Art is able to maintain a double perspective, at once addressing society as a whole and individuals in particular.

Irresistible forces opens the *GES-2: Prospekt* programme, which aims at supporting artistic production in Russia. Works created especially for GES-2's Prospekt will allow viewers to see the House

of Culture through the prisms of various, sometimes unexpected artistic methods.

Korsi:

One of the most expressive examples of the tension between Reality and the Real was, for me, a series of events that took place not long ago on the Moscow metro.

The two Belorusskaya stations are connected by a shallow underground passage. From an engineering point of view, this passage is located in an extremely unfavourable place, given its proximity to ground water. Opened in 1952, the passage is a striking example of Stalinist architecture: ceremonial, high-vaulted ceilings, floral decor, blown-glass ceiling lights, majolica, natural marble. The passage's proximity to ground water, however, means there are constant leaks, that the marble oxidises, the plaster rots, and new layers of paint must be applied several times a year to hide this decay.

One day, I noticed how at the very centre of this passage, between the vaults of the arches, a current of water was falling from a gap in the marble blocks. Beginning at eye level, the water flowed in a neat, straight line to the floor, ran into a small puddle, turned, then continued its descent—down the stairs and along the station platform. This situation went unchanged for a month, before the maintenance services began to take action.

First, the decision was made to make a hole in the floor below where the water fell. This, by preventing the accumulation of liquid, seemed to get rid of the puddle. However, the water continued running, albeit almost imperceptibly to passers-by. This invisible fountain would exist for a further six months, until limescale began to appear on the surface of the marble slabs. A second attempt was then made at resolving the problem.

A metal door appeared in the wall. It seemed that, as they searched for the source of the leak, the maintenance services had dismantled a fragment of the marble tiling and part of the supporting wall. This door then appeared to conceal the resulting hole in the wall: with solid hinges and a keyhole, it seemed as though it had always been there, covering a technical unit or electrical wiring. However, within a few months, the water had returned, this time dripping from a gap between the door and its mounting frame.

The third and final solution was a chrome covering that concealed the water as it dripped into the hole. Once again, from the outside, the construction seemed as though it had been part of the station from the very beginning. It created a convincing illusion of technological rationality—as though it covered lengths of pipes or wires that ensured the functioning of the station and served the human good. But, in fact, the sole reason for the structure's existence was the need to conceal the unstoppable leak.

In a certain sense, such a redundant, empty structure that does not solve the problem it was built to resolve still retains a function, albeit a symbolic one. Such shiny surfaces can be seen as akin to Jacques Lacan's Reality, which, like a protective veil, keeps the unbearable Real from view. Reality puts in place a symbolic order, creates an illusion of control, of a world that is clear, logical, and just.

This image of metal overlay has haunted me since in the form of a suspicion that objects which seem solid and meaningful are only illusorily so, the convincing visual surface of Reality that protects us from the abyss of the Real. Wherever the eye might fall, one sometimes feels as though before us are only appearances, shining crusts concealing unstoppable streams of water that move endlessly through the dark.

Objects

- Bench
Slightly warm bench in the cold light of an autumn sun.
- Control panel
Metal sculpture playing on the shapes and materials of utilitarian elements of engineering and technical infrastructure (electrical casings and boxes, communication nodes, fire cabinets, and so on).
- Room
Fragment of an interior living space with furniture and other household objects, arranged in strict accordance with the axis of symmetry running between them.
- Smile
A charming smile that suddenly breaks then slowly reappears.
- Scene
The figure of a bewildered man of middle age, standing with his face to the wall.
- Window
Room in a panel building, of life-sized proportions. The structure is raised to eye-level in such a way that the viewer's gaze corresponds with that of a person lying on the floor. The light through the window is that of the Moscow night sky in cloudy weather.
- Drop
Iron sink with a dripping faucet. The monotonous sound of the falling drops is amplified by a built-in speaker.
- Street-light
Fragment of a street in the orange night-time light of a street-lamp. A piece of pavement, a curb, a lawn, a tree covered in the netted shadow of its leaves.