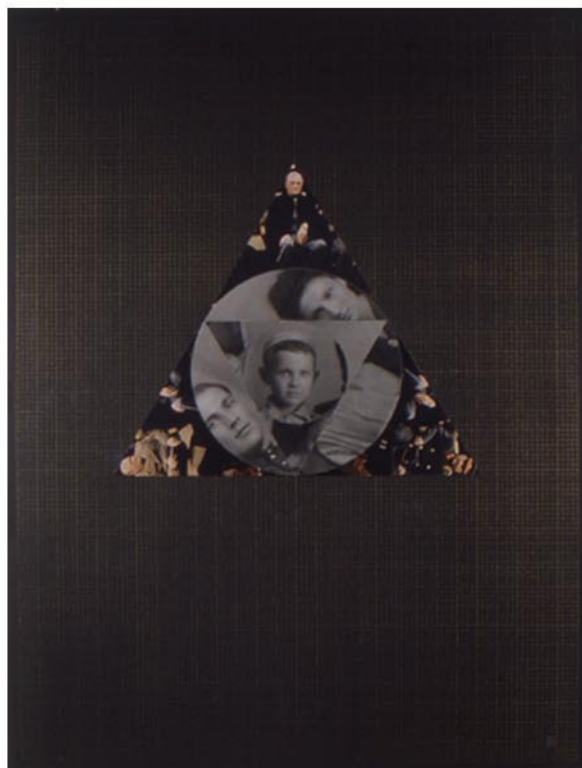


Vitaly Komar at Ronald Feldman

Artists worked in secrecy and the weekend fell on Sunday in Stalin's Soviet Union. The observation of this "free" day of rest was a matter of tradition, an attachment to the Gregorian cal-

endar. The young Vitaly Komar could only dream of a two-day weekend during which his Jewish mother could observe the Sabbath on Saturday. With the government's extension of the weekend after Stalin's death to include both Saturday and Sunday, the teenage Komar then imagined a three-day weekend, adding Friday in respect for Muslim tradition. "Three-Day Weekend," Komar's first solo exhibition without longtime collaborator Alexander Melamid, followed a narrative line in which the number three appears as a key symbol in his life and work.

Komar presented a series of 29 mixed-medium works on large sheets of 40-by-30-inch graph



Vitaly Komar: *Fragile Unity Triangle #2* (from *Three-Day Weekend*), 2004-05, mixed mediums on paper, 40 by 30 inches; at Ronald Feldman.

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Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta and a family photograph of Komar at the age of six seated between his Christian father and Jewish mother, shortly before their divorce. *My Family Photograph as a Butterfly* is a disassembled copy of the portrait elegantly flayed by drafting equipment and laid out in overlapping arcs and circles across the grid. *Study for Three-Day Weekend Stained Glass* transposes the cutout Stalin to Komar's father's place in the family group. A drawing on black grid paper, *Fragile Unity Triangle #2*, shows the family in a circle with young Komar in the center and the men of Yalta lurking in three corners. In another, the boy is replaced by an image of the lost extraterrestrial E.T.

Sharing the exhibition's title, the stained-glass works, one roughly 4 feet square and the other 7, consist of four interpenetrating Stars of David, four crescents and a cross. The two pieces were situated on opposite walls of the front gallery; circular mirrors at the centers of each work caught the other's reflection across the expanse of the room.

In the back room, Komar invited "everybody" to "establish a personal connection with eternal symbols of spirituality" by means of a Polaroid portrait. Visitors placed their heads in a cutout circle at the heart of a 4-foot-square wood support for *Mandala for Photographs #1*. The resulting portraits were placed in a grid directly on the wall and mailed to the subjects

at the exhibition's close. As to the state of his relationship with his former partner, Komar nicely observes that he has come to understand collaboration in the broader sense, as a continuing relationship with art history and the nonconformist art of his youth. [*"Three-Day Weekend"* is on view at the Cooper Union until Dec. 11.] —Edward Leffingwell