



*Ronald Feldman Fine Art*

## Vitaly Komar

For his first solo exhibition in 30 years without collaborator Alex Melamid, Vitaly Komar imagines spiritual unity and secular well-being by means of a three-day weekend: adding Friday for Muslims to the Saturday for Jews and Sunday for Christians. An artist's statement cites as an influence Komar's Stalin-era Jewish grandparents' indignity at having only Sunday free, and Komar's own yearning as a young artist for more creative time away from his day job. With an agile conflation of personal and shared histories, coupled with faith in the archetypal properties of geometry, Komar presents hybrid mandalas (symbols of "unity, healing and meditation") in support of his proposition. Hand-drawn spiritual and state symbols are collaged in 'fragile unities' — Komar's term for two photographs representing tenuous trinities: himself as a child with his (soon-to-be-divorced)

parents, and Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta in 1945. Some might feel nostalgic for the absurdist satire that made Komar and Melamid famous. This work is as sharply conceived but less entertaining than their signature fusion of Socialist Realism and Pop.

One deadpan kick is a large mandala painting sporting an actual hole through which Polaroid portraits are visible — 'spiritual passports' of those wishing to enlist in the Three-Day Weekend Society. Elsewhere, opposing stained glass mandalas with mirrors reflect each other and the viewer's face. Komar's split with Melamid registers, but he remains collaborative, continuing to critique by proposing an expansive alternative institution.

—Amoreen Armetta

VITALY KOMAR, *Three-Day Weekend*  
Small Stained Glass with Mirror, 2004-05. Stained glass, mirror. 124 x 124 x 25 cm. Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts. Photo: Alan Zindman.