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Art in Review; Vitaly Komar

By KEN JOHNSON

Three-Day Weekend
Ronald Feldman
31 Mercer Street, SoHo
Through July 29

At least for the foreseeable future, the long and fruitful partnership of the Soviet dissidents, emigrés and United States citizens Komar and Melamid has come to an end. Vitaly Komar's first solo venture involves the ingenious play with political and cultural symbols that characterized his collaborative work with Alex Melamid; it is more personal, but, disappointingly, it is not as anticly absurdist or satirically biting.

The title "Three-Day Weekend" invokes a utopian dream of ecumenical harmony in that it includes the three days of worship for Muslims (Friday), Jews (Saturday) and Christians (Sunday). To promote the "Three-Day Weekend Society" Mr. Komar has created a mandala-type painting with a triangle in the center and an actual hole into which viewers can insert their heads for Polaroid photographs.

He has also created two large stained-glass mandalas with round central windows opening onto mirrors in which viewers can see themselves. And he has made numerous intricately patterned mandala drawings on graph paper; collaged into them are photographs of the artist as a boy with his mother and father -- a Jew and a Christian who divorced when he was young -- and photographs of Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta.

At the heart of all this is a yearning for wholeness -- psychological, familial, political and religious -- in a world of endless conflict. This is poignant in light of the Komar and Melamid breakup; but any reference to that remains conspicuously absent, which is perhaps why it feels as if a certain vital energy is missing. KEN JOHNSON