

Media release
Zug, Aug 12, 2025

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov ***The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys.*** **Oct 19, 2025–Jun 28, 2026** **@Kunsthhaus Zug Schaudapot**

It's huge in size, filling the room – as big as a tennis court. It's intensively involved, like a gripping match, and it resonates like a Grand Slam final: "The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys." (version 2) is a work of quick-wittedness, profundity and ironic humour whose back-and-forth game is like tennis. It was first shown in Karlsruhe in 2000 and was thereafter exhibited internationally. Now, thanks to a generous donation by Emilia Kabakov, this 25-year-old work by Ilya & Emilia Kabakov belongs to the collection of the Zug Art Society. Its timeless topicality moves us – but also poses questions ranging from the stirringly honest to the ironic about humanity in the face of societal and historical developments. This exhibition can be seen at the Kunsthhaus Zug Schaudapot from October 19, 2025 to June 28, 2026. The tennis court will be accessible every other Sunday from October 26, 2025 onwards. Visits by larger groups can also be organised by prior arrangement.

The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys. (version 2)

"The theme of the "Animal" evokes in me the feeling of bewilderment and incomprehension". This is how "The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys." begins, this monumental work by the internationally renowned artist couple Ilya & Emilia Kabakov. It soon becomes clear that they don't mean any actual 'animal', but human beings in the maelstrom of societal and geopolitical developments.

What follows is a rapid exchange of profound questions, humorous remarks and sober confessions between Ilya Kabakov and the philosopher Boris Groys. Their back-and-forth (tennis) game takes place across 14 blackboards that line the edge of the court and it gradually, powerfully, pulls you in. You've barely stepped out onto the tennis court as a visitor when you become a player yourself. You parry questions and get swept along with it all.

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov are masters of the art of storytelling, as is impressively obvious from "The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys.". Their multi-layered work overcomes the divide between East and West by depriving them both of any utopia.

The opening of the exhibition "Ilya & Emilia Kabakov – The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys." will take place on Thursday, October 16, 2025 and marks the start of a participatory project inviting the public to play along. The act of participation will connect this timeless work with the present-day lives of the population of Zug.

With this unique donation of "The Tennis Game. In Dialogue with Boris Groys.", the Zug Art Society is expanding its collection with a work by Ilya & Emilia Kabakov, two artists who have been connected to the Museum since the 2000s.

Kunsthau Zug

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov

Ilya (1933–2023) & Emilia (*1945) Kabakov are two of the most significant artistic personalities of our time. Their works oscillate between conceptual art, installation, literature and music. Their topics are the power of ideologies, the fragility of remembrance and a longing for utopia, and they approach them with subtle poetry and subversive humour.

Ilya Kabakov was born in 1933 in Dnipropetrovsk (today Dnipro in Ukraine). He was a core representative of Moscow Conceptualism and helped to shape the unofficial art scene of the then Soviet Union. He emigrated to the USA in 1988, where he soon began working with his wife, the artist Emilia Kabakov. Their collaboration resulted in an œuvre that has garnered international acclaim and has been exhibited in numerous museums and at biennials across the globe – including the documenta, the Venice Biennale, MoMA in New York and the Tate Modern in London. For decades now, the ground-breaking artistic œuvre of the Kabakovs has radiated far across political and geographical borders.

Emilia Kabakov lives and works in Long Island in New York State; Ilya Kabakov also lived there until his death in May 2023.

Boris Groys

Boris Groys (*1947 in East Berlin) is an internationally influential philosopher and art theoretician with Jewish Russian roots. He grew up in the Soviet Union, and since the 1970s he has devoted himself to analysing the Russian avant-garde, totalitarianism and Soviet culture.

Groys is one of the most important intellectuals to have followed the work of Ilya & Emilia Kabakov actively. He regards their œuvre as central to Moscow Conceptualism, reading it as a multi-layered engagement with memory, ideology and failed utopias. His analyses have made a significant contribution to anchoring the Kabakovs' work in the context of Western art. In addition to his prominent activities as a philosopher and media theorist, Groys also curated the exhibition in the Russian pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011, entitled "Total Enlightenment – Moscow Conceptual Art, 1960–1990".

Today, Groys teaches at New York University, where he is helping to steer the international discourse on art theory with trenchant essays on exhibition, power and mediality.

Project management: Dr Matthias Haldemann (until April 2025), Mia Jenni (from June 2025)

Research assistant: Irina Gerber

Project support: Jana Bruggmann, Malte Frank, Fabienne Loosli

This exhibition is being generously supported by



Kunsthaus Zug

Opening times

October	Thu, Oct 16	18:00–21:00
	Sun, Oct 19	10:00–17:00 (special opening hours)
	Sun, Oct 26	10:00–17:00
November	Sun, Nov 9	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Nov 23	10:00–17:00
December	Sun, Dec 7	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Dec 21	10:00–17:00
January	Sun, Jan 11	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Jan 25.1.	10:00–17:00
February	Sun, Feb 8	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Feb 22	10:00–17:00
March	Sun, Mar 8	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Mar 22	10:00–17:00
April	Sun, Apr 5	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Apr 19	10:00–17:00
May	Sun, May 3	10:00–17:00
	Sun, May 17	10:00–17:00
	Sun, May 31	10:00–17:00
June	Sun, Jun 14	10:00–17:00
	Sun, Jun 28	10:00–17:00

Events

Thu, Oct 16 18:00–21:00	Opening	SERVE	Ilya & Emilia Kabakov <i>The Tennis Game.</i> <i>In Dialogue with Boris Groys.</i>	With Mia Jenni (Project management)
Sun, Oct 26 14:00–16:00	City Tour	RETURN	How the Kabakovs left their mark on Zug	Mit Mia Jenni
Sun, Nov 23 14:00–17:00	Open Atelier	ACE	Drawing in response to Kabakov	Mit Mia Jenni
Sun, Dec 7 14:00–17:00	Open Atelier	RALLY	Ping-pong tournament and battle of words	Mit Mia Jenni

→ Further events in 2026 will be announced towards the end of the year.

Kunsthhaus Zug

Media orientation: Thu, Oct 16, 2025, 10:00, Kunsthhaus Zug Schaud depot

You can find images and texts for the press on our website, at:

kunsthauszug.ch/en/about/media

Media contact

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Kunsthhaus Zug Schaud depot

Opening times: 10:00–17:00, on the following Sundays:

2025: Oct 19, Oct 26, Nov 9, Nov 23, Dec 7, Dec 21

2026: Jan 11, Jan 25, Feb 8, Feb 22, Mar 8, Mar 22, Apr 5, Apr 19, May 3, May 17, May 31, Jun 14, Jun 28

Admission: free for everyone

Address: Kunsthhaus Zug Schaud depot, Oberallmendstrasse 1, 6300 Zug

Accessibility: Please go online to find information on barrier-free access to the Kunsthhaus Zug

Contact: info@kunsthauszug.ch, +41 41 725 33 44

kunsthauszug.ch

[Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)

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#tennis #game #question #installation #zeitgenoessischekunst #contemporaryart

#ausstellung #exhibition #museenzug #museum #kultur #zugkultur #inlovewithzug #zug