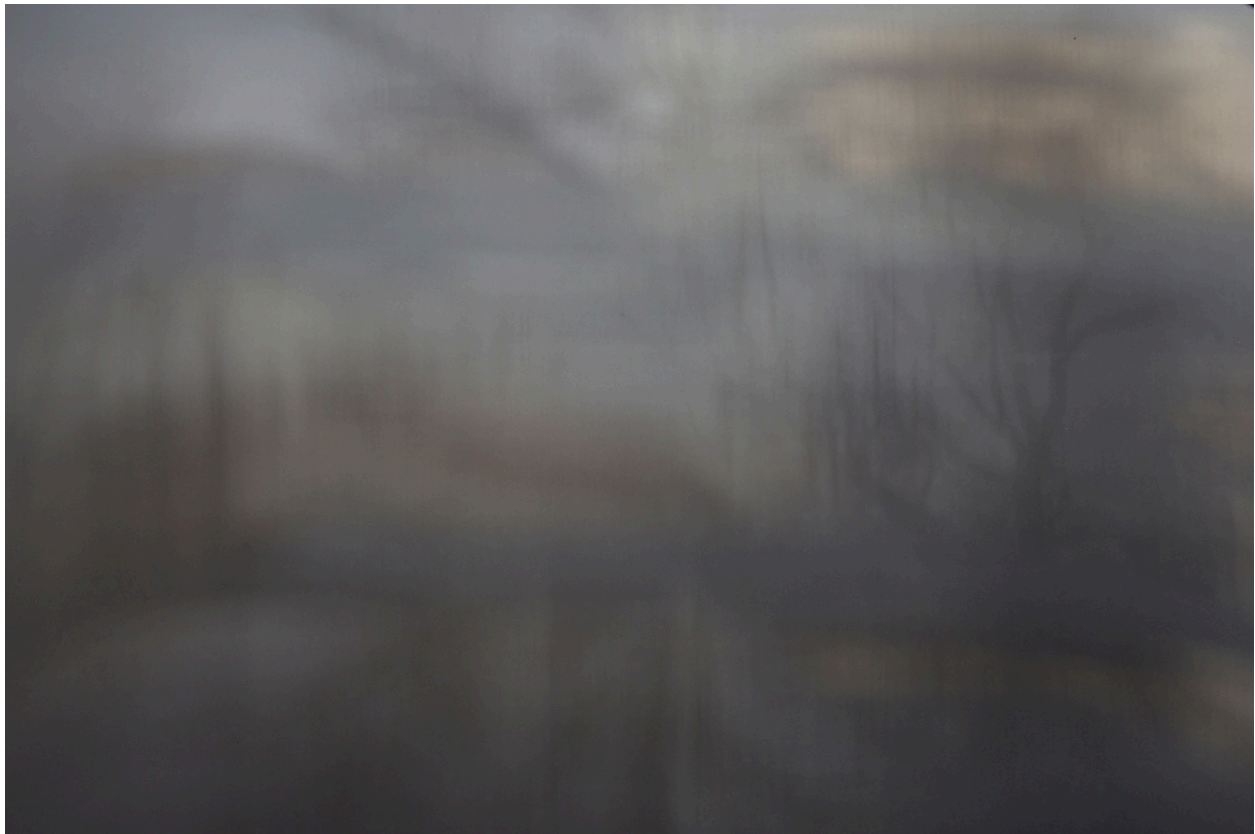


**A Poetically Scientific World: Alexander Ugay *More than Dreams, Less than Things* at NIKA Project Space Paris
March 16 – 17 May 2025**



Alexander Ugay. From the series Book of Optics. 2025. Courtesy of the artist.

- *Opening at NIKA Project Space in Paris on 16 March 2025, **More than Dreams, Less than Things** by Alexander Ugay draws from Soviet-era futuristic imagery and the history of optics to question the illusions of technological advancement and the materiality of image-making*
- *Curated by art historian and writer Elena Sorokina, the exhibition builds on the artist and curator's long-standing dialogue on diasporic memory, photography's impermanence, and the shifting narratives of visual culture*

*Paris, France - NIKA Project Space is pleased to announce the opening of **More than Dreams, Less than Things**, a solo exhibition by Alexander Ugay, curated by Elena Sorokina. Opening on 16 March at NIKA's Paris space, the exhibition delves into the*

intersection of photography, technology, and diasporic memory, examining the shifting status of images in an era of rapid evolution of generative photography.

An artist of Korean descent born in Kazakhstan, Ugay has long explored the materiality of images and their relationship to historical and ideological structures. Rather than photographing things, Ugay creates light-based objects and compositions or plays with historic image carriers of the 20th century—from VHS tapes to 8mm film—examining their role as both memory tools and political artifacts.

This exhibition will feature some of Ugay's earlier works, as well as new collages and objects through which the **artist interrogates possible parallels between quantum physics and psychoanalysis**. More specifically, Ugay explores the tension between French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan's work around the signifier and German theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in the act of observation and interpretation.

In the new work created for the exhibition, Ugay uses the legendary “Book of Optics”, written by the medieval Arab scholar Ibn al-Haytham, called in the West Alhazen, which includes one of the earliest descriptions of camera obscura. Ugay's new photographic series is created by camera obscura, in which the light shines through the Book's text, generating multilayered abstract images.

Ugay says: “All the works presented at the exhibition - to some extent - address the reverse side of the image. In the project *The Book of Optics*, this is realised through the dualism of the geometrical optics of the camera obscura and wave optics, the properties of which are manifested at the moment of light passing through the slits of the signifier. This opposition reveals the structural relation between quantum indeterminacy and the cleavage work of the signifier in psychoanalysis.”

Alexander Ugay collaborated with NIKA Project Space since the gallery's opening in 2023, he has been featured in multiple exhibitions, including *Fragments of Time Unending* and *Coded Gestures*. This ongoing collaboration reflects the gallery's commitment to fostering artistic discourse with practitioners from underrepresented regions, while providing a platform for critical inquiry and experimental creative processes.

Veronika Berezina, founder of **NIKA Project Space**, says: “Alexander's merge of quantum physics, psychoanalysis, and art to explore the relationship between historical memory, nostalgia and current realities gives his works a poetically-scientific feel, while the innovative fusion of outdated film techniques and modern digital practices

challenges conventional visual narratives, offering a profound critique of how history and nostalgia shape modern identity.”

More than Dreams, Less than Things by Alexander Ugay runs from March 16 to May 17, 2025 at NIKA Project Space, Paris.

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Press kit, including imagery, is available [HERE](#).

Alexander Ugay, *More than Dreams, Less than Things*

March 16 – May 17, 2025

10AM – 6PM, Tuesday – Saturday

43 Rue de la Commune de Paris,

93230, Romainville

France

PRESS ENQUIRIES:

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About NIKA Project Space

Veronika Berezina founded NIKA Project Space in the UAE in 2023, a gallery that fosters the artistic inquiry of emerging and established artists and curators internationally, with a focus on practitioners from the Global South. NIKA Project Space serves as a platform for artistic discourse and experimentation and champions the work of female artists and curators. In addition to exhibitions which focus on conceptualization, abstraction, and philosophical inquiry, NIKA Project Space offers a critically engaged programme that emphasizes contemporaneity and dialogue through talks, performances, and educational initiatives. The gallery also hosts a research programme, inviting artists to create impactful new works that implement research-based and experimental creative processes, ultimately facilitating the exploration and portrayal of nuanced societal experiences and historical narratives. In 2024, NIKA Project Space inaugurated a European location in the Komunuma art district in Romainville, on the outskirts of Paris. In Dubai, the gallery is located in Al Khayat Avenue, Al Quoz.

<https://www.nika-projects.com/>

About Veronika Berezina

Veronika Berezina is the founder of NIKA Project Space, a UAE and Paris-based gallery that fosters the artistic inquiry of emerging and established artists and curators.

Committed to providing a space for discourse and critical engagement, Berezina opened the doors to NIKA Project Space in Dubai in March 2023 and NIKA Project Space Paris in September 2024 and has since worked in tandem with international practitioners, with a focus on artists and curators from the Global South. Through a considered approach, Berezina is building a rigorous roster of artists and focusing on expanding the gallery's research programme and publishing arm. Born in St. Petersburg, Berezina formerly held a career as a lawyer. In 2022, she relocated to Dubai to pursue her goal of opening a gallery. NIKA Project Space evolved from over a decade of private collecting and patronage.

About Alexander Ugay

Alexander Ugay's work transcends artistic mediums while exploring boundaries of time, place, and memory. His uses of photography, video and installation reveal tensions within the "object": between a part that is present, materialised, and ideologised, facing a part that is absent, immaterial, and affective. Disrupted figures and pathways of the Korean diaspora situate his works within memory studies and trauma related to imperial rule in general, and Soviet-Korean lives and stories more specifically. Coming from a Korean family deported to Central Asia during the 1930s, he studied art in St Petersburg and Bishkek, becoming one of the most active figures in the Kazakh art scene today. In the context of decolonisation, Ugay reflects on the impossible return to the origins and the complexity and fragility of repair. More generally, the artist opens the fundamental question of organisation and dominance in relation to space and geography. Ugay lives and works in Almaty, Kazakhstan and Seoul, South Korea

Ugay has shown his work at the The 11th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2025) MASS MoCa Massachusetts (2024), The Albertina Museum Vienna (2024), The Centre Pompidou Paris, (2023), Busan Biennial of Contemporary Art (2022), Art Sonje Center in Seoul (2020); Sapar Contemporary in New York (2019); Lunds Konsthall in Sweden (2018); Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow (2016); Strasbourg Museum of Contemporary Art (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art (2011); Venice Architecture Biennale (2010); Centre Pompidou in Paris (2010); in the New Museum, New York (2009); Central Asian Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007); as well as various other biennials and international projects around the world, including solo shows at Aspan Gallery, Almaty, and Galeria Labirynt, Lublin, Poland, among others.

His work is part of international private and public collections. The latter includes Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Galeria Labirynt, Lublin, Poland; National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, and Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden.

About Elena Sorokina

Elena Sorokina is curator, writer and art historian with particular focus on sustainable curating and practices situated at the intersection of art, ecology and care. Currently, she is co-curating a project at the Musée d'Art et de Culture Soufis MTO™, opening in June 2025. In 2022, she co-curated the Armenian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. She served as curatorial advisor of documenta 14 in Athens/ Kassel and was chief curator of the High Institute of Fine Arts (HISK), Belgium in 2017-2018. In 2020, Sorokina co-founded the Initiative for Practices and Visions of Radical Care in Greater Paris, developing collaborations with the Liverpool Biennial, Colomboscope (Sri Lanka), and Indigenous Visions (Venice) among others. Throughout her practice, she curated projects for BOZAR Brussels, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Pera Museum Istanbul, Centre Pompidou Paris and other institutions. She has written in numerous catalogs, and contributes to Artforum, Cabinet Magazine, Glean, and Manifesta Journal, among others. Sorokina lived in Germany since 1993, studying art history at the Freie Universität Berlin, after which she attended the Whitney ISP Program in New York. She is currently based between Brussels and Paris.