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***Laughing Matters: Soviet Propaganda in Khrushchev's Thaw 1956-1964* will open at the Arthur Ross Gallery**

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Laughing Matters: Soviet Propaganda in Khrushchev's Thaw 1956-1964 will open at the Arthur Ross Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania on April 9, 2010. This exhibition comprised of 25 posters, most on view for the first time in the United States, offers a unique and thematically coherent sample of Soviet Propaganda art from the "Thaw," period—a singular moment of post Stalinist liberalization during Nikita Khrushchev's reign.

Curated by Liliانا Mikova Ph.D. and Masha Kowell, Ph.D candidate, both from the Department of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania, *Laughing Matters: Soviet Propaganda in Khrushchev's Thaw 1956-1964* highlights the dramatic iconographic shift from earlier Socialist Realist imagery to the vibrant images and cartoonish figures iconic of post-thaw propaganda posters. Instead of the monumentalizing and formulaic discourse common in pre-thaw images, the posters in *Laughing Matters* display humor, light-heartedness and whimsy, and are reminiscent of stylized comic books and caricatures.

A symposium, *The Thaw: Visual Culture and Beyond* addressing poster aesthetics in the former Eastern bloc countries will be held on April 8, 2010 at the Max Kade Center, sponsored by the Department of Slavic Studies. Additional support of the exhibition is provided by the Department of the History of Art at Penn. On April 9 from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM the Arthur Ross Gallery will host an opening reception. On April 10 at 2:00 PM the Arthur Ross Gallery will host a public exhibition walk-through with the curators. An additional gallery talk, *Khrushchev's Fateful Visit to Albania, 50 Years On*, will be given by Dr. Richard Hodges, Williams Director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology on April 27, 2010 at 5:30 PM at the Arthur Ross Gallery. Please consult the Gallery's website for details.

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*The Gallery is located at 220 South 34th Street, Philadelphia, and is free and open to the public. HOURS: Weekdays 10:00am – 5:00pm; Weekends 12:00pm – 5:00pm. Closed Mondays. Visit us on Facebook and Twitter. To reserve a group tour please contact us at arg@pobox.upenn.edu or 215.898.3617. Additional information is available at **ArthurRossGallery.com** or 215.898.2083.*