

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS FIRST UNITED STATES MUSEUM  
SOLO INSTALLATION BY ARTIST COLLECTIVE SLAVS AND TATARS**

***Projects 98: Slavs and Tatars***

August 15–December 10, 2012

Contemporary Galleries, second floor

**NEW YORK, August 9, 2012**—For ***Projects 98: Slavs and Tatars***, The Museum of Modern Art presents the first United States solo exhibition by Slavs and Tatars, from August 15 through December 10, 2012. Slavs and Tatars is a collective whose installations, lectures, publications, and multiples focus on relationships between Western cultures and the Eastern world. At MoMA, the group presents the new installation *Beyonsense*, which takes its title from a translation of *zaum*—the term used to describe abstract language experiments undertaken by artists and authors in the early 20th century—celebrates twists of language across cultures, histories, and geographies. The project was developed, in part, from their study of the Museum's collection of more than 1,000 Russian avant-garde illustrated books. For MoMA, they have designed a reading room of an unconventional sort, featuring their text pieces and artist's books, which incorporate a multitude of languages (Farsi, Russian, English, and Hebrew) and scripts (Latin, Cyrillic). The suspended light fixture is inspired by a work that the American artist Dan Flavin made for a New York mosque. Stressing an attitude of discourse and hospitality within the museum setting, Slavs and Tatars encourage visitors to linger in the space, leaf through the publications, and encounter the installation. The exhibition is organized by Gretchen L. Wagner, The Sue and Eugene Mercy, Jr., Assistant Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books.

Slavs and Tatars, whose members are active in Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, work in a variety of formats and pin their practice to a defined geographic region of Eurasia—the vast expanse stretching, roughly, from the former Berlin Wall to the Great Wall of China. Living and traveling extensively in the region, Slavs and Tatars first collaborated in 2006 on projects that explored expansive historical and cultural narratives and the stereotypes and prejudices that cling to these topics. Islamic mysticism, the decline of Communism, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and agricultural traditions in the Caucasus are among the diverse issues they have investigated, freely transgressing cultural registers and humorously blending academic tropes with pop vernacular. To communicate the many threads of their inquiry, they create inviting environments—combining bold graphic design elements, traditional craft objects, and sometimes food—where visitors can pause and experience their work.

Slavs and Tatars has had solo exhibitions at Secession, Vienna, Austria (2012); Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany (2011); and Network Center for Contemporary Art, Aalst, Belgium (2009). They have been featured in group shows including *Print/Out*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012); *The Ungovernables*, New Museum Triennial, New York (2012); *I decided not to save the world*, Tate Modern/Salt Beyoğlu, London (2011); *Live Archive of The*

*Generational: Younger Than Jesus*, New Museum, New York (2009); *Left Pop*, Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2008); and *Somewhere Totally Else*, Design Museum, London (2005).

#### **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

Gretchen Wagner, Assistant Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Book, joined the Museum in 2004. At MoMA, Ms. Wagner organized *Gabriel Orozco: Samurai Tree Invariants* (2009–10) and *Thing/Thought: Fluxus Editions, 1962–1978* (2011–12). She has collaborated on several exhibitions, including *Kirchner and the Berlin Street* (2008) and MoMA PS1's *Greater New York 2005* (2005); and has contributed to the publications *Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art* and *Dada in the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art*, among others. She was recently appointed curator at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis.

#### **PUBLIC PROGRAM:**

##### **PopRally Presents *Beyonsense*:**

##### **An Evening with Dr. John Perry, Hosted by Slavs and Tatars**

Saturday, October 6, 2012

8:00–11:00 p.m.

PopRally will celebrate [Projects 98: Slavs and Tatars](#) with an introduction to *Beyonsense*, a site specific installation created by the artist collective Slavs and Tatars. The artists will be joined by Dr. John Perry, a renowned expert on Persian linguistics and language history and the cultural history of Iran and the Middle East, for a presentation on the pre-modern migration of myths and memes involving birds from India and Iran to Europe and beyond, where they invaded genres from mystical poetry and moral homilies to dirty jokes and Monty Python. Following the presentation guests will enjoy a reception featuring music by [Tiffany Malakooti \(Bidoun\)](#) and have exclusive access to MoMA's contemporary galleries, including *Projects 98: Slavs and Tatars*.

**TICKETS:** \$14 in advance, \$18 at the door. Available online at [MoMA.org/poprally](#).

Admission includes conversation, exhibition viewing, limited-edition print, and cocktail reception. Attendees must be 21 or older to attend this event.

*PopRally is supported in part by The Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art. Additional support by Sud de France Wines, Brooklyn Brewery, and Russian Standard Vodka.*

#### **ABOUT THE ELAINE DANNHEISSER PROJECTS SERIES**

The Elaine Dannheisser Projects series was created in 1971 as a forum for emerging artists and new art and plays a vital part in MoMA's contemporary art programs. With exhibitions organized by curators from all of the Museum's curatorial departments, the series has presented the work of over 200 artists to date. For further information on the series, including a listing of all Projects artists, please visit [MoMA.org/projects](#).

#### **SPONSORSHIP**

The Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series is made possible in part by The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

Additional generous support for this exhibition is provided by the Sharjah Art Foundation.

Special thanks to Pasargad, New York.

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#### **No. 35**

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**For downloadable high-resolution images, register at [MoMA.org/press](#).**

**Public Information:**

**The Museum of Modern Art**, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400

**SUMMER HOURS:**

Mondays: 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

**Tuesdays: OPEN 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. (through September 25)**

Wednesdays: 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

**Thursdays: 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. (through August 30)**

**Fridays:** 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Target Free Friday Nights begin at 4:00 p.m.\*

Saturdays: 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Sundays: 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

**Museum Admission:** \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00–8:00 p.m.

**Film Admission:** \$12 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$10 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

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