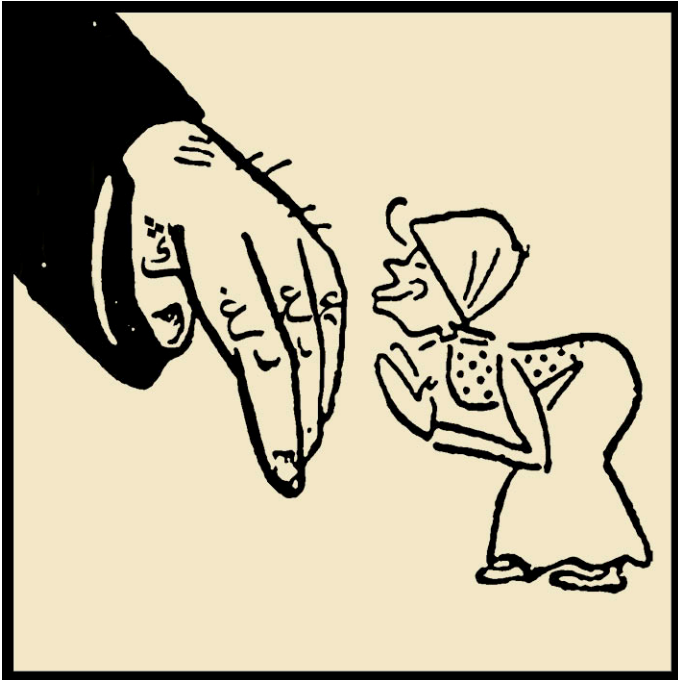


## Language Arts

### Slavs and Tatars

March 17 - April 17, 2014

The Third Line is pleased to present *Language Arts, Slavs and Tatars'* first solo show in the Middle East. Following a run of internationally acclaimed museum shows and publications, the artists' performative use of language takes a new turn, with an exploration of alphabet politics.



Slavs and Tatars, *Love Letters (No. 4)*, 2013, wool, yarn, 250 x 250 cm

Slavs and Tatars' recent work turns to language as a source of political, metaphysical, even sexual emancipation. With their trademark mix of high and low registers, ribald humor and esoteric discourse, the collective addresses the thorny issue of alphabet politics and attempts by nations, cultures, and ideologies to ascribe a specific set of letters to a given language.

The march of alphabets has always accompanied that of empires and religions: Latin script along with the Roman Catholic faith; Arabic with Islam and the Caliphate; as well as Cyrillic with Orthodox Christianity, and subsequently the USSR. Within this body of work, it is not peoples or nations that are liberated, but rather phonemes, from attempts to restrain and rein them in.

*Language Arts* celebrates language in all its polyphonic glory, with original works in Persian, Russian, Turkish, Georgian and English. A new series of sculptures, installations, textiles and printed matter address a range of subjects from name changes, in *Love Me Love Me Not*, to the orality of language, with *Rahlé for Richard*. The *Trannie Tease* vacuum forms present transliteration - the conversion of scripts - as the linguistic equivalent of transvestism: a strategy equally of resistance and research in notions of identity politics, colonialism, and liturgical reform. The *Love Letters* carpets address the issue of manipulation of alphabets across Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic, through the Russian Revolution's most well-known, if conflicted, poet-champion, Vladimir Mayakovsky.

Slavs and Tatars often collide those things considered opposites, or incompatible – be it Islam and Communism,

metaphysics and humor, or pop culture and geopolitics. From their first publication *Kidnapping Mountains* (Book Works, 2009) to the more recent *Khhhhhhh* (Mousse/Moravian Gallery 2012), the collective has consistently turned to language as a tool for disruption, humor, and unexpected meaning. By challenging an understanding of language as exclusively rational or semantic, Slavs and Tatars emphasize its potential to be affective and sensual, concealing as much as it reveals; even becoming a platform for sacred wisdom, rather than a mere vehicle for secular knowledge or profane, everyday use.

The Third Line show will open parallel to *MARKER*, the artists' curatorial début, focused on Central Asia and the Caucasus, at Art Dubai.

### About Slavs and Tatars

Founded in 2006, Slavs and Tatars is a faction of polemics and intimacies devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. The collective's work spans several media, disciplines, and a broad spectrum of cultural registers (high and low) focusing on an oft-forgotten sphere of influence between Slavs, Caucasians and Central Asians.

Slavs and Tatars has had solo exhibitions at major institutions including MoMA, NY; Secession, Vienna; REDCAT, Los Angeles; and upcoming solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zurich, Dallas Museum of Art, and GfZK, Leipzig. Group exhibitions include Centre Pompidou, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Palais de Beaux Arts, Paris; Tate Modern, London; Salt, Istanbul; Istanbul Modern, Istanbul; and 10<sup>th</sup> Sharjah, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mercosul, and 9<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Biennials.

Slavs and Tatars has published *Kidnapping Mountains* (Book Works, 2009), *Love Me, Love Me Not: Changed Names* (onestar press, 2010), *Not Moscow Not Mecca* (Revolver/Secession, 2012), *Khhhhhhh* (Mousse/Moravia Gallery, 2012) as well as their translation of the legendary Azeri satire *Molla Nasreddin: the magazine that would've, could've, should've* (JRP-Ringier, 2011); and most recently *Friendship of Nations: Polish Shi'ite Showbiz* (Bookworks/Sharjah Art Foundation, 2013).

Their works are in collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Re Rebaudengo Foundation, Turin and The Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE, among others.

### About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

The Third Line also publishes books by associated artists from the region. Books published to date include *Presence* by photographer Lamya Gargash (2008), *In Absentia* by Tarek Al-Ghoussein (2009), *Cosmic Geometry*, an extensive monograph on Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Karen Marta (2011), and most recently the self-titled treatise Huda Lutfi about the artist's Cairo based practice.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Ebtisam Abdulaziz, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorravian, Lamya Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Poursan Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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