

KVNSTHALLE ATHENA

PRESS RELEASE

LEKTOR BY SLAVS AND TATARS KUNSTHALLE ATHENA'S NEW ONLINE COMMISSION FOR 2015

Every year Kunsthalle Athena is commissioning one artist to do a piece specifically for the opening page of its website. You can view it by clicking www.kunsthalleathena.org.

For 2015, we are honoured to host a new piece by the internationally renowned artists Slavs and Tatars, titled *Lektor*.

Lektor (*Speculum Linguarum*), 2014, is a multichannel audio work, featuring a selection from the eleventh-century Turkik mirror for princes *Kutadgu Bilig* (Wisdom of Royal Glory), in its original Uyghur with several voice-overs. The delivery of a near monotonous, matter-of-fact voice-over stems from a translation practice called 'Gavrilov's translation' often used in Poland and Russia. The original language is kept audible, almost equally so, to the destination language. Specifically, the excerpts extracted from *Kutadgu Bilig* offer advice pertaining to speech and tongues – tongues that bring fortune and bad luck, profit and loss and what it means to loosen it, hold it or stick it out. In each venue, the selection of translations for the voice-over or 'dub' traces the itinerary of the piece through the languages of its exhibition history. In addition to the original Uyghur: Turkish, Polish and German speak over one-another, respectively if not disrespectfully. The simultaneous playback of distinct audio tracks makes for an uncanny experience, touching on issues of legibility and authenticity – elsewhere in the world, voice-over translations are often used for news segments and documentaries – not to mention language as a form of hospitality.

Slavs and Tatars is a collective of artists started in 2006 and 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. In essence, the work of Slavs and Tatars is a dense comment on the counterpoint between Islam and the Western world as cultural entities, the possibilities and the impossibilities of this condition.

For more information or visual material please contact:

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