

Slavs and Tatars

Dschinn and Dschuice

16/09/15 – 14/11/15

Dschinn and Dschuice continues Slavs and Tatars' investigation into the numinous potential of language, euphoria, pitfalls, seductive slippages and all. The collective's latest research stems from an interest in a non-rational, non-hermeneutic, theological impulse to studying language. The Kulturprotestantismus that characterized early German philologists and orientalists—from Herder to Hamann, Creuzer to Wilhelm—witnessed a return to the book, the source of scriptures, to decode the mystery of the Old Testament. Slavs and Tatars identify in this holism an antidote to the specialization and secular rage that has otherwise plagued Modernity.

Alphabet Abdal reclaims a collective, Eastern, Arabic-script understanding of Christianity versus the Latin-based individualism we've come to witness. Letters march in step, part exodus part procession: the real threat to Christianity in the Middle East mirroring the perceived threat to Europe's Christian heritage posed by immigration from this very region.

Characterized by its esoteric, academic, supposedly disinterested approach, German orientalism served as much as a tonic to the gin of colonial adventures served up by France, Russia and England. This all changed exactly a century ago: *Reverse Dschihad* speaks to the mishaps of Germany's late arrival to empire via the newspaper *El-Dschihad*, published between 1915-1916 by the Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient (Intelligence Bureau for the East) in Urdu, Russian, Arabic, Tatar, and Georgian under the auspices of Kaiser Wilhelm II. *El-Dschihad* intended to stoke anti-imperial sentiment in territories belonging to WWI's Entente Powers and was primarily aimed at Muslim POWs held at a camp in Wünsdorf, outside Berlin, called Half-Crescent (Halbmondlager) who would, ostensibly, return to the front on the side of the Central Powers or to their homelands in an effort to spread their new liberationist message. *Dschungleieber*, *dschellaba*, *dschihad*: the awkward onslaught of four consecutive consonants—DSCH—to approximate the [dʒ] phoneme in German marks these ideas and words as irrevocably foreign or other...The debased, debunked conversion of scripts from one alphabet to another enjoys a moment of respite and reflection.

Reverse Joy (Kha) looks at the role of mystical language, namely the phoneme [kh] as a sacred sound across the three Abrahamic faiths. The red fountain addresses the cosmological role of a perpetual protest movement, inspired by the joyful commemoration of Muharram, a yearly cornerstone of the Shi'a faith for its radical reconsideration of history and, thereby, justice.

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. The collective's practice is based on three activities: exhibitions, books and lecture performances. *Slavs and Tatars* have exhibited across the Middle East, Europe and North America at institutions including the Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou, Istanbul Modern, 10th Sharjah, 8th Berlin, 3rd

Thessaloniki and 9th Gwangju Biennials. Select solo exhibitions include MoMA, NY (2012), Secession, Vienna (2012), Dallas Museum of Art (2014), Kunsthalle Zurich (2014), and NYU Abu Dhabi (2015). Current and upcoming exhibitions include Nottingham Contemporary (solo, 2017), Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, Texas (solo, 2016), CCA Tel Aviv / NBK Berlin (2016), Preis der Nationalgalerie 2015, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2015), Kunstverein Braunschweig (2015), Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (solo, 2015), Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (solo, 2015), Skulpturenpark Köln (2015), Contour 7, A Moving Image Biennale, Mechelen, Belgium (2015).

Upcoming lecture performances:

"The Tranny Tease", Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, 01.10.2015

"I Utter Other, 100 Years of Now", Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, 03.10.2015