

SIGHTS #1 LOVE ME, LOVE ME NOT

SLAVS AND TATARS

 [watch SLAVS AND TATARS' introduction](#)

Love Me, Love Me Not [Poland-Gdańsk], 2020

A genealogy of a given city's name changes, the result of rising or falling empires, states, and populations. Some cities divulge a resolutely Asian or Muslim heritage, so often forgotten in some citizens' quest, at all costs, for a European, Christian identity. Others vacillate almost painfully, and others with numbing repetition, entire metropolises caught like children in the spiteful back and forth of a custody battle.



SLAVS AND TATARS
Love Me, Love Me Not
[Poland-Gdańsk], 2020
reverse mirror painting, acrylic,
aluminum frame
85 x 60 cm | 33 1/2 x 23 2/3 in
unique

EUR 7,000.00 (excl. VAT)

Our publications are 'in-between' much like our region itself

- SLAVS AND TATARS

Like much of Slavs and Tatars' work, *Love Me, Love Me Not* was first conceived as a book: Published in 2010 as a limited edition by onestar press, it is a compilation of 150 cities within Slavs and Tatars' Eurasian remit. Since their beginnings as a book club in 2005, publications had been at the core of their activities.

The collective's publications are analytical but not academic, informative but not journalistic, intimate but not memoirs. They give space to the discourse around complex issues that inform Slavs and Tatars' practice and to the joy of reading and researching. Their intellectual and disciplinary elasticity is also reflected in the form, combining popular and artistic imagery with critical essays and short expository texts that kaleidoscopically deconstruct seemingly solid concepts.

Instead of marking the end of a body of work, as would a catalogue or documentation, the collective's books often precede what we encounter in the exhibition space. Ideas and materials often appear first in one of their books and come to life several years later in three dimensions as sculptures and installations.



KAPAN

Kafan
(Gharan, قاپان, Кафан,
Qafan, Zangezur, Madan)

↓
Kapan (Կապան)

ARMENIA

KARAKOL

Karakol
(Каракол)

↙
Przhevalsk
(Пржевальск)

↓
Karakol

↙
Przhevalsk

↓
Karakol

KYRGYZSTAN

Love Me, Love Me Not: Changed Names, 2010, offset print, 22.5 × 14 cm, 150 pages, b/w throughout, glue binding, gloss-laminated softcover, edition of 250, numbered, published by onestar press.

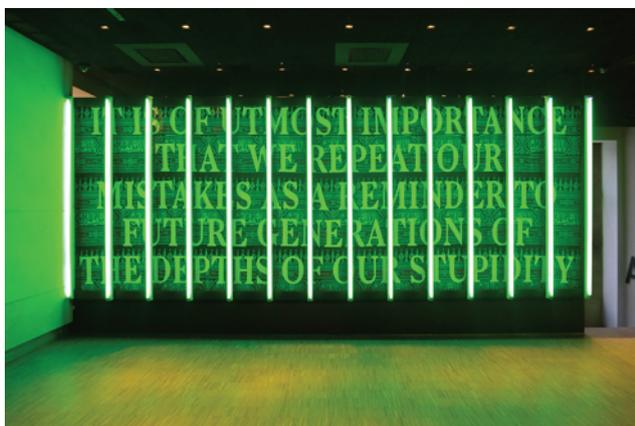


Kidnapping Mountains, 2009 published by Book Works

[Download SLAVS AND TATARS' publications](#)

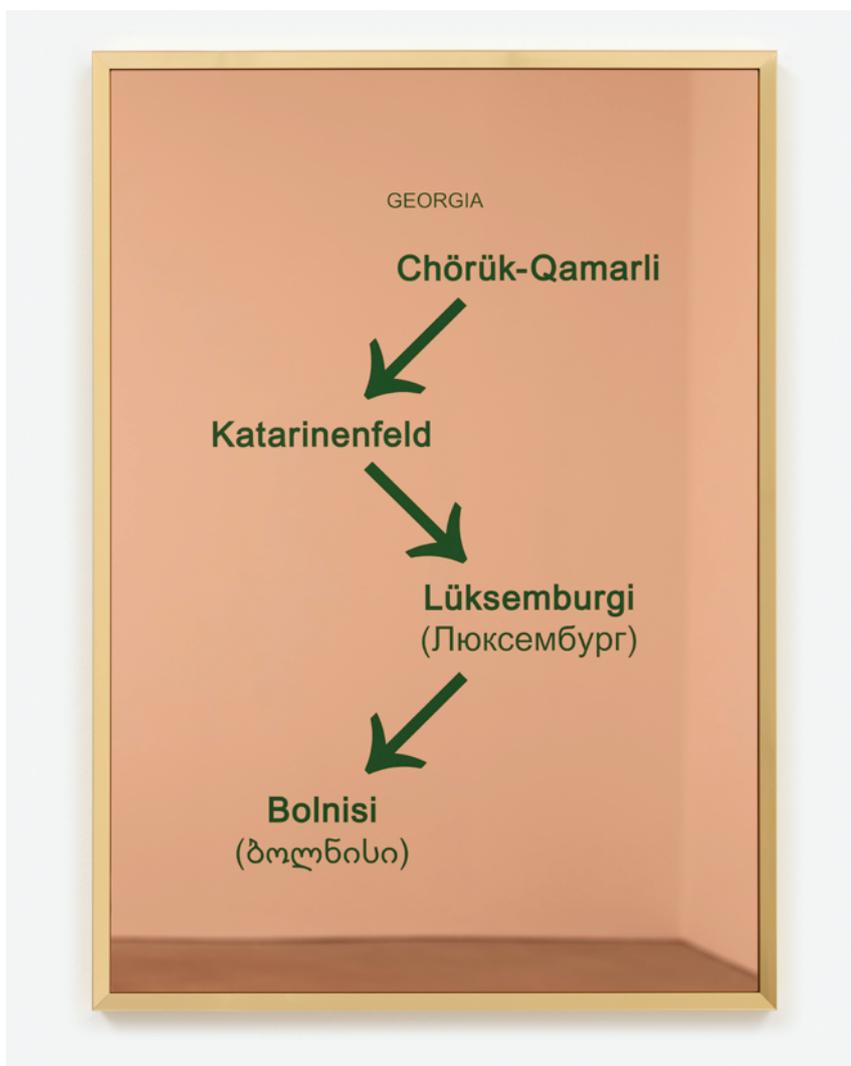
As another example, here's a spread from Slavs and Tatar's first book Kidnapping Mountains. On the left side is a text which two years later became the light work Mystical Protest, exhibited in 2011 at Tate Modern, London; Salt Istanbul; Albertinum, Dresden and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin. On the right, pages from the satirical publication from Azerbaijan which Slavs and Tatars fully translated and published as a book in 2011 and as the sculpture Molla Nasreddin: the antimodern in 2012.

In some ways you could say that SLAVS AND TATARS' art works are a means to bring people back to the book.



Left Mystical Protest, 2011, exhibition view, Mouth to Mouth, Salt, Istanbul, 2017
 Right Molla Nasreddin the antimodern, 2012, exhibition view, Yinchuan Biennale, 2016

Following the hopscotch patterns of Love Me, Love Me Not, SLAVS AND TATARS are interested in the edges of empires, the frontiers of ideology, the margins of belief systems.



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[Georgia-Bonisi], 2020
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Slavs and Tatars' regional focus underlines their interest in blurring boundaries, between disciplines, cultures, and languages. A region is necessarily messy: it's all about spheres of influence. It goes beyond national borders but retains enough of cultural specificities often lost in larger groupings such as globalism.

The artists have long been interested in the curious phenomenon of reverse glass painting. As a tradition shared amongst Christian (namely Catholic) and Muslim (namely Shi'a) cultures, it's one of the many craft traditions Slavs and Tatars explored over the years. The glass paintings can be found across Poland, Romania and Italy usually depicting folklife, or saints; but also in Lebanon, Iran, Azerbaijan where they illustrate the Battle of Karbala and portray imams. Painting behind glass also turns on its head the normal method of painting: one paints the surface first then moves backward to the background.

Cross-cultural traditions, like reverse glass painting, can be found all over Eurasia, depicting archetypical figures and religious motives.



Reverse Painting on Glass
Jahangir Kazerouni and Ferial
Salahshour Collection
without signature, no date



Berlin: The Palace of the Republic in (September 1990)
CC Dietmar Rabich

The copper mirror stands in for the legacy of Eastern European architecture, and with it the idea of reflective distance.

The copper color of the mirrors brings to mind the mirrored glass facades of buildings like the Palace of the Republic in East Berlin. Its iconic windows in shimmery copper were as attractive as opaque, in every sense symbolic of the state's affairs. Completed in 1976 and demolished in 2006, the mirrored glass facade - now appearing more neutral in cool silver tones like the Twin Towers in Frankfurt am Main, built in 1978 - is a mainstay in the vocabulary of architectural representation of the dogma of reflective distance.



Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Bank
Twin Towers (February 2014)
CC Epizentrum

Gdańsk perfectly illustrates the shifts of power and politics in the Eurasian region. Originally a Pomeranian settlement of the West Slavs on the Baltic coast, the city has passed between Danish, German, and Polish hands several times over the past centuries, with the latest following World War II. In fact, its importance as a trade port – it was once part of the Hanseatic League – means that it was not just material goods but traditions, culture, and belief systems that passed through its streets, docks and homes.

To see further available works by SLAVS AND TATARS head over to our [online viewing room](#).

