

HYBRIS

**HYBRIDS AND MONSTERS
IN CONTEMPORARY ART**

MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION

VENICE

CFZ

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05.13–06.28'17

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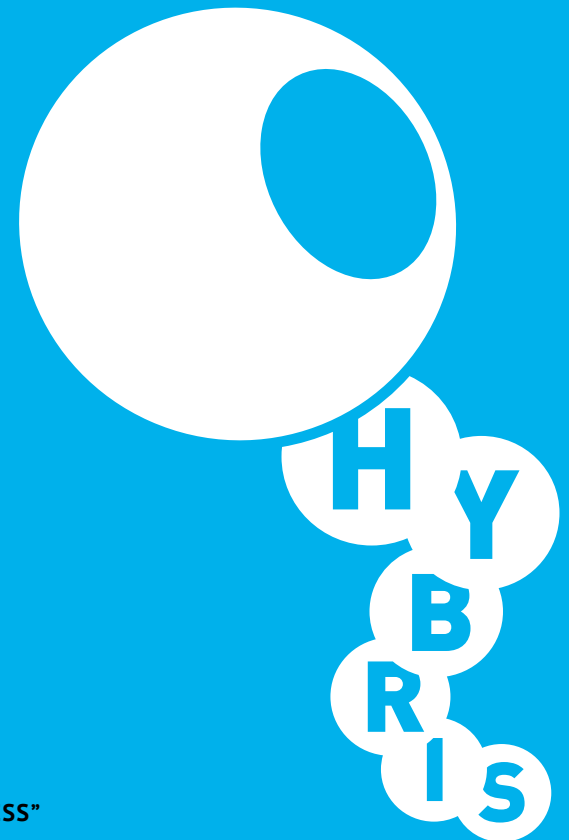
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MONSTERS AND HYBRIDS IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN ART

Silvia Burini

art historian, professor at Ca' Foscari University, director of the Centre for the Studies of Russian Arts (CSAR)

MONSTRUM (Latin)

The subject of this project – Monsters and Hybrids in Contemporary Russian Art (and not just there) – examines one of the mechanisms at the basis of cultural functioning: the problem of a relationship between “one’s own” and “somebody else’s”.

The monster is the antipode of “one’s own” and, in a certain sense, it constitutes the quintessence of the “enemy”. At the same time, the enemy is something specific, solid and, in most cases, anthropomorphic while the image of monster is significantly more indistinct. From the theoretical point of view, the monster and the hybrid further to a great extent the emergence of the dichotomy between “one’s own” and “somebody else’s”: the subject that, also delineated as “one’s own”/“other’s” or “we”/“you”, is an object of the intense philosophical and culturological analysis of the latest decades.

As it is suggested by the etymology, the word *monstrum* derives from the word *monere*, which means “to warn, to caution”, but *monere* also means “to preserve the traces, memories”, in other words, “to keep the memory alive”. The word *monumentum* also derives from *monere*. In fact, the conceptual relationship between the monster and the monument is really strong.

The images, even when they are repulsive, are still a form of revelation of what we are

hiding, what probably should have remained concealed, and what nevertheless became revealed. The monster is a warning, but also the return of that which was removed.

Dictionaries of the Russian language emphasize the ambivalent, twofold nature of the monster (human and animal), its strangeness, incredible dimensions, the absence of form (ugliness) as well as its profound “difference” that acquires a negative connotation in respect to that which is “the other”.

The monster is not just an enemy that is dreadful, incomprehensible and unpredictable, but that also is the “other”, “alien” that is outside the boundaries of measures and norms: by its existence and its appearance it violates not only the laws of the society, but also the laws of nature.

HYBRID

The concept of hybrid is directly connected to the concept of monster. From a theoretical point of view this could be taken as the category described by Zakiya Hanafi.

“A monster is ‘not human’, then, and explicitly signals its foreign status with its body: too many limbs, or not enough, or not in the right place. Monsters are ugly because they are de-formed, literally ‘out of shape’, deviating from the beauty of standardized corporeal order. I know I am human because I am not *that*. The monster serves to erect the limits of the human at both its ‘lower’ and ‘upper’ thresholds: half-animal or half-god, what is other is monstrous. Another fundamental meaning of the monster – perhaps the most important aspect for an anthropological understanding its mythological and social significance – is its hybrid character”¹.

The hybridity, as it was noted, is a phenomenon that reveals itself in the vastest area of significances: from biology to technology, from forms of thinking

to arts, literature and practically all the expressive forms. We are talking about the phenomenon that traces its origins to one of the oldest works of art ever created: a figurine of mammoth ivory (currently at the Ulmer Museum) depicting a human being with the head of an animal (bear or lion) that was discovered in 1939 in the Stadel grotto in the vicinity of the city of Ulm.

The hybridity could be viewed as an anthropological strategy with which various cultures tried to solve a number of questions proceeding from the observation of natural phenomena. The judgments that those cultures expressed about the hybrid and, accordingly, the process of hybridization tend to move towards two extremes: the full acceptance of the hybrid and its integration into the complex of ideological structures and collective images or its configuration as a negation of the completion of its metamorphosis and a subsequent identification with the idea of unnatural and monstrous.

In the West, the ideological association of the hybrid with the monster is not so taken for granted as it might appear. Over the centuries, it was primarily popular masses that tackled the image of hybrid and its underlying strategy, which is evidenced by the depiction of masked participants of European carnivals whose images and costumes reveal creatures that are hybridizing the humanity with manifestations of the natural world, animals and plants. As for representatives of the enlightened classes, they found in the hybrid and in its ideological mechanisms of inclusion a potential antagonist to the model of learning by way of experimental method. An eloquent example to this would be the alchemy and spiritualism and, as far as the arts are concerned, it would be a significant series of imaginary figures and notions of



the hybrid that have become the objects of representation and esthetic reflections from the medieval times to our days.

Androids, replicants, cyborgs and robots could be viewed as a whole as a symbol of contamination, fusion and gradual dematerialization in action. The body appears to have decided to merge with technology in order to create a new essence. A new being...

“ONE’S OWN” AND “SOMEBODY ELSE’S” AND A SEMIOTIC MECHANISM

Could some images as – Tjurliki of Geliy Korzhev, Bestiary of Dmitri Prigov, monsters of Grisha Bruskin, hybridization of Boris Orlov, pendants of Western-European imaginary beings of Matthew Barley or human figures that reconnect with themselves by way of heterogeneous components by Aurel Schmidt and David Altmejd – be perceived as experiments and proofs of rethinking of the reality and of the human being?

The reflections of Yuri Lotman are fundamental for penetrating the depth of dynamics “one’s own”/“somebody else’s”, that was mentioned earlier, from the perspective of its key concepts. The most significant of them is the concept of “dialogness” (the possibility of a dialog between different semiotic systems) that is understood as the basis for dynamics of semiotic mechanisms. The importance of a dialog with the Other in the realm of processes of producing the meaning is already revealed at the stage of translating texts of one system into the other. Thanks to external contributions, the individual or the culture renounce their specific individuality in order to build something new; they become the other while still remaining themselves. “As a result, the ‘I’ has an opportunity also to become ‘the other’ for itself”².

To exclude what is foreign, other or alien means to deprive the culture of its vital

mechanism that oscillates between evolution and homeostasis. Lotman emphasizes yet again that this phenomenon is particularly observable in the artistic field: the dynamic model “has its maximum realization in the languages of art”.

Using various means, the contemporary art visualizes the new identity, which presents itself in a new form resulting from the absorption of the otherness.

According to the semiologist from Tartu the notion of “fear” represents an important subject of study because it is directly connected to the presence of *cužoj* (“other”, “alien”, “strange”, “foreign”), somebody who is a stranger to the system. The cultural function of the *other* is immense: being located outside any functions, this subject intrudes into the realm of “usual”. The interconnection between *cužoj* and *izgoj* (“outcast”) is of primary importance and extreme actuality: every culture creates its own system of “fringe groups”, “outcasts”, those who don’t fit within its framework. Their intrusion into the system causes everything that is extra-systemic to become one of its fundamental stimuli for the transformation of a static model into a dynamic model. The dynamism of culture is a fruit of coexistence, inside the same cultural space, of various languages that are interconnected according to their various degrees of translatability and untranslatability: the more crowded and dense the cultural space is, the more complex will be the system that derives from it.

The artists however appear to propose with great insistence the confrontation and exchange with the otherness that is much more radical than that of a strange culture that intrudes into the space of our daily routine. The art invites to hybridize with that which is in reality different from itself, with the true and proper non-culture: with the inanimate, nonorganic, animal – with

the monster. Man, as a cultural being, needs a juxtaposition with that which is strange in relation to the cultural realm. However, currently “the confine is erode and to define each specific fact as the one that belongs to the cultural or extra-cultural realm is possible only with a high degree of relativity”. The contemporary art thus testifies both to the necessity of existence of the other for the definition of otherness and to the repositioning of confines of that which is internal and external to the idea of culture and, consequently, of humanity.

The concept of hybrid is certainly connected to the reflection about the body that has permeated all the contemporary art of the 20th and 21st centuries. FAM (Francesca Alfano Miglietti) talks about a “transhuman”, characterized by the overcoming of limitations that used to be considered fundamental, which, in its turn, leads to the concept of hyperbody that is capable of absorbing and containing parts of other humans, animals, vegetables, minerals and new technologies. As a consequence, there is an obvious urgency to change the identity when the body becomes an “enormous, hybrid, social, and technobiological hyperbody”. At the border of a mutating morphology, this is a passage from the fixity of images to their mental persistence. A body that mutates in order to adapt to the present chaos. Donna Haraway defines the body as “a surface of intersection of multiple and mutating information codes – from the genetic code to that of the informatics”.

¹ Zakiya Hanafi, *The Monster in the Machine. Magic, Medicine, and the Marvelous in the Time of the Scientific Revolution*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2000, p. 2.

² Jurij Lotman, *Un modello dinamico del sistema semiotico (1978)*, in Jurij Lotman, *Testo e contesto. Semiotica dell'arte e della cultura*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1980, p. 24.

Back in 1964, in a book that immediately prompted vigorous debate (*Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*), Marshall McLuhan concluded the chapter “Hybrid Energy: Les Liaisons Dangereuses” with a singular, if not provocative, definition of hybridity. He observed how the direct encounter between two media, and their subsequent hybridisation, is a dynamic that sparks an authentic moment of truth and revelation, from which a new form cannot but emerge. Over fifty years later, we can now frame McLuhan’s emphasis in the broader context of what we have known since the late ’80s as the *pictorial* or *visual turn*. Many other scholars, from David Freedberg to Tom Mitchell and Gottfried Boehm, have added important contributions of their own. In the essay *Four fundamental concepts of image science* (2007), Mitchell in particular notes that every pictorial turn is a remarkable opportunity for artists and their audience.

It “reappears numerous times in the history of culture, usually at moments when some new technology of reproduction, or some set of images associated with new social, political, or aesthetic movements has arrived on the scene. The dilation of the instruments of expression, the explosion of combinatorial possibilities and an ever-denser interweaving of mutual borrowings opens up new opportunities and new forms, resulting in new subjects and new forms of consumption.”

In this vein, the exhibition “Hybris. Hybrids and Monsters in Contemporary Art” surveys and sequences a series of works and groups of works by 19 artists from 7 countries, from different cultural contexts and historical periods. (The oldest works date back at least 40 years.) Linking all of them is a shared quest to explore one of the most challenging themes cutting across our contemporary world: the complex relationship between identity and alterity. Beginning with the Biennale organised by Jean Clair, “Identity and alterity: figures of the body 1895–1995”, later artistic explorations set out their objectives more precisely. Thus, representing the body gave way, in a post-human perspective, to manipulating it. The intercultural debate turned into the need for an encounter – indeed, a clash – with that which is not part of human civilisation: the inanimate, the inorganic, the animal, the monster, and pervasive and invasive technologies. In just a decade or so, the body became a surface bearing layers of changing information codes (from genetics to informatics), acquiring a mutating morphology that blended and blurred them.

The exhibition’s three parts – “Hybrid spaces”, “I–the other, the hybrid, the monster” and “Metamorphoses and metaphors” – at least hint at the complexity of this problem, and visitors will see that they fit together into a single discourse. The terms used suggest very clearly that the artists’ individual paths (even though these are people from different generations) and the signs they produced are a mix of different times and even far-off eras. Ultimately, the obsession with monsters/hybrids has pervaded our civilisation ever since it first appeared.

Inevitably, the artists include a strong Russian contingent. In its general thinking on the relationship between identity and alterity, the West has paid scant attention to the explorations by Russian artists. Yet one of the goals – and perhaps the merits – of this survey, despite its modest size, is precisely its appreciation of a journey with such deep, distant roots.

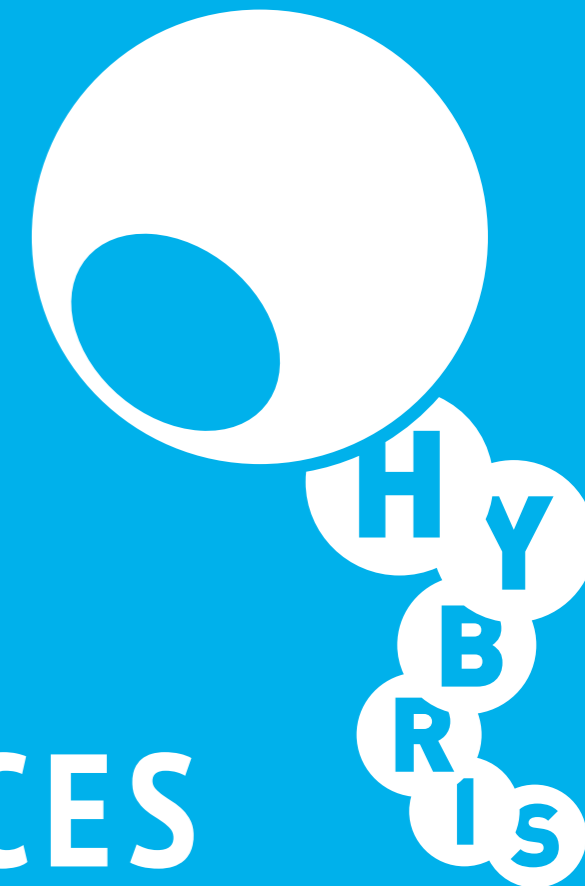
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HYBRID SPACES



MUTATOR

generative video, 2015
Generated by "Mutator" software. Software development: Stephen Todd, Lance Putnam

"Mutator" shows synthetic 3D organic forms evolving as projected computer animation and in real time in VR. The viewer is navigating through a vast multidimensional space of possible forms.



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William Latham

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UNTITLED

video triptych, 2010–2017

Video investigation of everyday things, their reflections, distortions, transformations. "Lamps swinging in the wind, throwing red eyes in a puddle... foam cocktail structure... magic movement of car's internal mechanism displayed in showroom... surface's secrets. No special effects: a closer shot. It is not a fictional world. There is a diversion of the world. The motion combines organic and nonorganic worlds. Movement forms are deformed by sound. The association is between the contrast image-sound. We are taken away by the time, the speed and the rhythm" (Viktor Mazin).



TRIPTYCHS

photos, slideshow on three screens, 2007–2017
Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

The triptych form originated in the early Christian art, and it was a popular format for religious paintings in the Middle Ages. The middle part contained the main subject, and the wings were a compositional complement, though they too could be viewed as a separate work. In the early 20th century, a threefold polyptych inspired Kazimir Malevich. Originally, his “Black Square” was called “Tetragon”, and it was a component of the triptych, together with “Black Circle” and “Black Cross”. Alexandre Benois noted: “Undoubtedly, this is indeed the icon which Messieurs Futurists prefer to Madonnas and impudent Venuses”. A hundred years after the advent of “Black Square”, Alexander Terebenin has created a minimalist and abstract triptych, using the pictorial geometry of vanishing scenery. The squares, rectangles, crosses, “spied on” by a camera, are written into the three-part format. Traces of life of the previous generations turn into secret signs and sacral symbols.



Alexander Terebenin

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Lucia Veronesi

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UNTITLED LANDSCAPE #5

video, 2014

“Untitled Landscape #5” faces catastrophe, like the rest of the video series. The violent transformation wipes out any illusion of safety. Houses, gardens, basins, swimming pools: everything that was made to protect human life gives up, suffering its own opposite. Infiltrations, rocks and floods creep into the furnished rooms. Revolting creatures replace the statues in the garden. The polished marble of the sculptures is covered by shapeless rocks. Uncontrollable plants come out of the ground and crumble the bottom of the swimming pool. A tranquil telescope turns into a bullet, the glance is a punch that beheads all it sees. A barbarian power invades, disintegrates, mocks. The eyes can only look through layers of incisions, the sky has turned into a shutter of cuts that falls on its own image. If knowledge and experience want to remain reliable, they will necessarily have to take the view of the catastrophe.

STUDIO. WAITING

media object, 2016

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

The project “Studio. Waiting” is a large-format canvas with an attached device that allows the viewer to see the story anew and to refresh the image without the intrusion of one art form into another. This is an attempt to demonstrate both independence and coexistence of the traditional form — painting — and the newest means of augmented reality. The project investigates game theory (including a game with an absent character) in its contemporary, virtual-psychological aspect. The picture is separated from the device; nothing is projected onto it. It serves just as a switch-on point, a pretext to expand the boundaries imposed by the bored glance of a visitor to the exhibition. The painting and the program live and work together, much like people coexist on networks. This peculiar symbiosis allows one to bring technology to a discussion of the same questions that are posed by classical art.



Vitaly Pushnitsky



Ivan Govorkov, Elena Gubanova

GEOMETRY OF CLASSICS

oil on canvas, print, 2007–2016

The series of pictures “Geometry of Classics” is conceived by the authors as part of the investigation of patterns of plastic configuration of images in the classic art. A projection of topological space of the unilateral surface of “Moebius Strip” on famous paintings of the Renaissance demonstrates that many compositions of the old masters are structured in accordance with its crisp geometry. By creating a plastic hybrid of painting and topology, the artists suggest that the viewer return to the ancient view of the world, in which mathematics and art were capable of describing the entire Universe.



Time and space are the Moebius Strip;
The human body is the Moebius Strip;
The entire life is the expectation of properties of Moebius Strip.
Everything is present in the “non-presence”;
Everything exists in the “non-existence”.

Ivan Govorkov



EXPLOSION OF A CAN OF CONDENSED MILK AFTER THE WATER HAS EVAPORATED

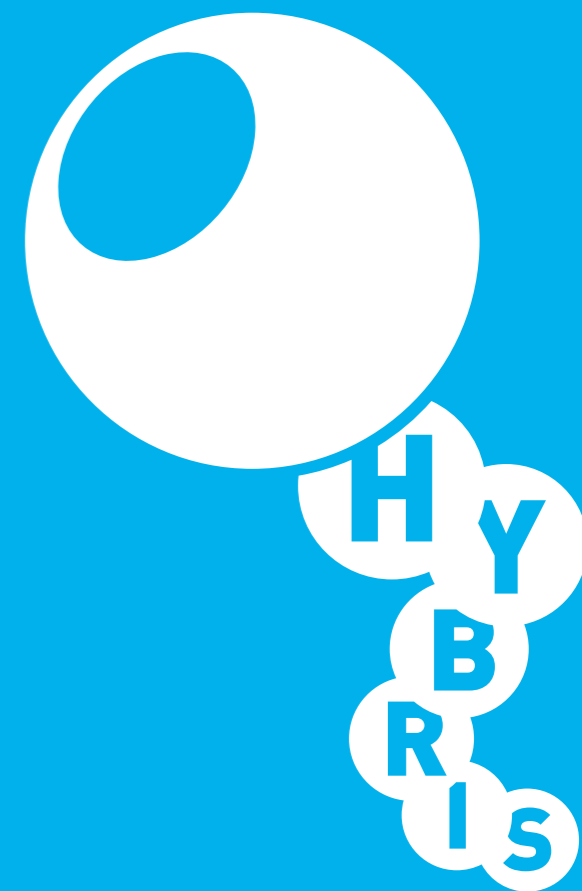
*media installation, version №3, 2016
Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab*

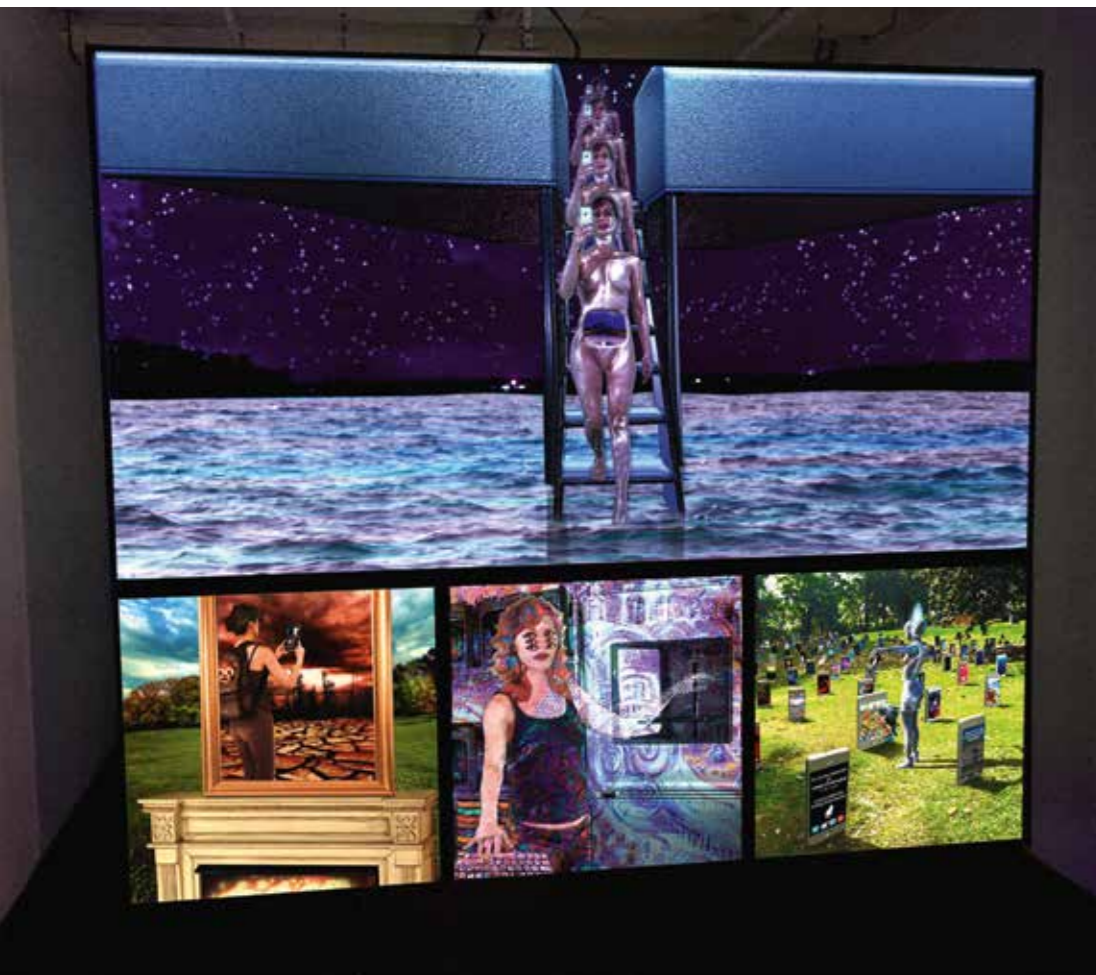
Conceptually referencing a computer grid and visually reflecting the infrastructure of a building without walls, Anna Frants builds an open framework room. Comprised of raw polypropylene cubes, the exposed framework houses objects, videos, and movements. The interior (unlived-in lived-in) space is empty for viewers to navigate the visuals, sounds, words, and virtual actions of the exterior matrix and formulate their own story. Birds chirp, recorded faces communicate, playful toys whiz and whirl, the seas ebb and flow — each with brand names that they are sold as or known by as characters in Frants' theatrically staged work and beyond. At first glance reminiscent of "The End" or "Mad Max", this multimedia environment is less a scene from a dismal future and more an intimate setting presented for a poetic contemplation of the sense of self. The installation is flexible, varying from site to site and country to country, with local materials utilized each time.

Anna Frants



I AM DIFFERENT. HYBRID. MONSTER





A SUBJECT SELF-DEFINED

video, 2015–2017

Carla Gannis's collection of large-format looped moving images takes its title from Joseph Kosuth's 1966 neon sculpture that is eponymously titled "A Subject Self-Defined". Kosuth belonged to a group of artists involved in stripping down the art object, reducing it to ideas and information that were detached from personal meaning. Fifty-one years later, in the age of networked identity and digital dematerialization, Gannis is perplexed by subjecthood and self-definition in relationship to the "personal" when performed publicly.

Carla Gannis



Irina Nakhova



OBSERVATION POST

installation, 2015

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

The rapidly deployed booth is constructed out of a thick protective quilted jacket. Each booth has two pairs of sleeves to choose from. An observer could: a) try to reach the hands of another observer from a different booth; b) use the sleeves as a strait jacket. Each post is equipped with a voice servicing the observer. Periodically, the voices whisper a program of international monitoring: peace... pax... pace... мир... paix... Frieden... etc.





MONOLITH 2

media object, 2017

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab
It's 1915. Modernism, which reigned in art in the late 19th and early 20th century, reaches its apogee. Pioneers of abstraction are consciously solving the problem of the crisis of artistic image. The desire to reproduce the unreproducible and to reflect a higher reality was, in fact, what brought forth images of Suprematism. Abstract art, which has been trying to cleanse itself from all visual allusions and to rid itself of any illustrativity in relation to the reality, presents to the world Malevich's "Black Square" – "the great nothing"...
The black monolith is externalization. It is the process by which the "internal OBJECT" is projected at a certain object in the outside world. It is a different person that becomes this object. Furthermore, upon superimposition, the projection brings forth something that is doubled by the mutual action of each protagonist. And what if this "something" is our internal monster or a new creation – a hybrid to which one needs to get accustomed and which needs to be tamed.

Alexandra Dementieva



Ludmila Belova

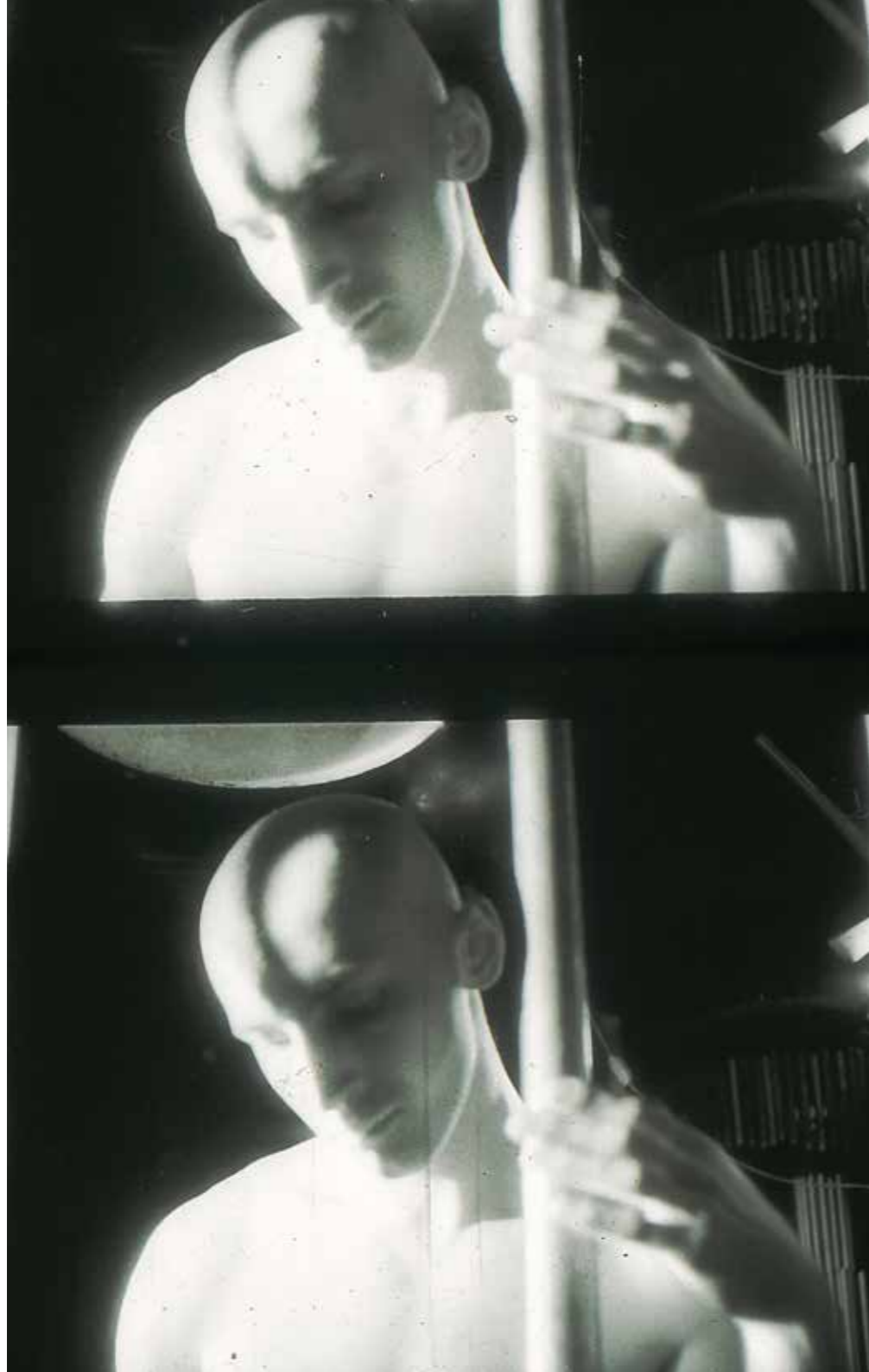


PASTORALE

installation, video, 3D printing, 2016
Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

In the installation "Pastorale" copies of a porcelain shepherdess produced by a 3D printer are arranged on a screen that reproduces a video imitating a flowery meadow. The sound is a compilation of the music of Jean-Baptiste Lully and the chirping of "electronic birds". If a traditionally understood pastorale is the peaceful bucolic scene lit by bright sunlight, the digital pastorale is a digitized world behind the looking-glass that represents what is absent in reality, the reflection's reflection. Instead of sunshine flooding idyllic landscapes, the digital spaces glimmer with the cold silver of the Moon – the reflected light of the Sun. The pastoral music of Lully appeases the spectator who sees a multitude of absolutely identical "shepherdesses" dancing on the grass that is breaking up into pixels. The birds' chirping creates the atmosphere of a joyful sunny day and invites us into this new digital world which dazzles us with its beauty, goodwill and absence of borders.





BICAPO

film, 1987–1988

The screenplay was written as a self-deprecating story that traced the origins of the “Bicapo” mystery play, with which Vinogradov has been involved since 1984. The plot calls for the cross-breeding of a man (the director of a metallurgical factory serves as a sperm donor) and an ape resulting in the creation of a biorobot with enhanced physical endurance for the manual transport of heavy things at a metallurgical factory. While transporting metal ingots, the hero-biorobot starts listening to the sounds of metal, escapes from the factory and starts creating his own music using new metal music instruments that he invents, and when he performs in mystery plays for the public, he interconnects all the primary elements: fire, water, air, earth and metal. The society rudely intrudes into the hero’s new life and brings him back to his former work at the factory. The hero breaks down under the workload and dies. He is thrown out to the scrap yard where he used to gather the material for creation of his instruments.

German Vinogradov



Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai

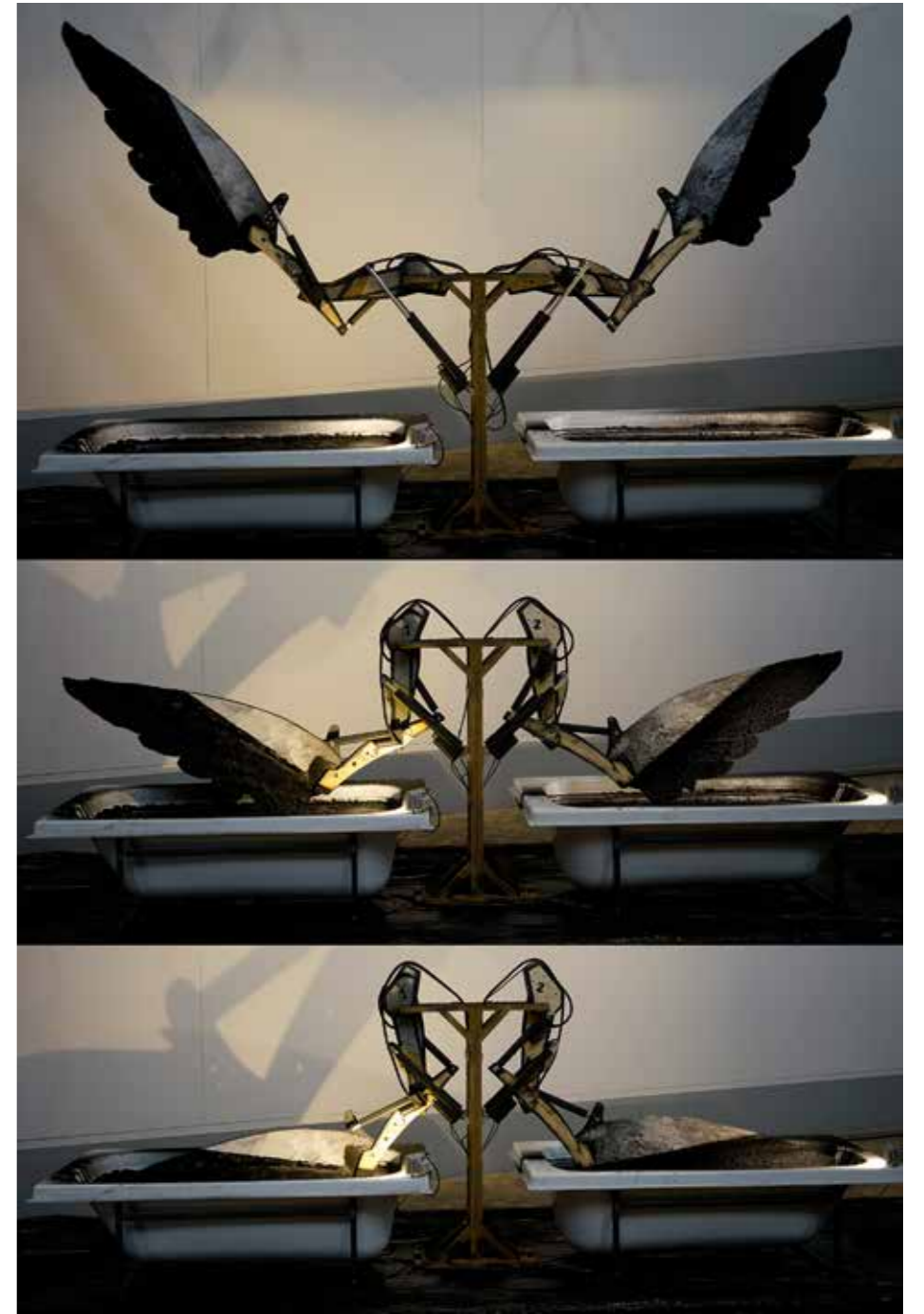


BATH OF MARAT

kinetic installation, 2016

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

Simulated wings are immersed in tubs filled with black paint and they flap, bringing to mind birds soiled by oil spills at sea. The work refers to the subject of Icarus: the aspiration towards beautiful ideas followed by a fall into the depths of crap. On the other hand, the wings function as the giant brushes of an artist. The customary artisanal world of a creator can also be interpreted as an endless immersion in light and darkness.





VIGILANCE

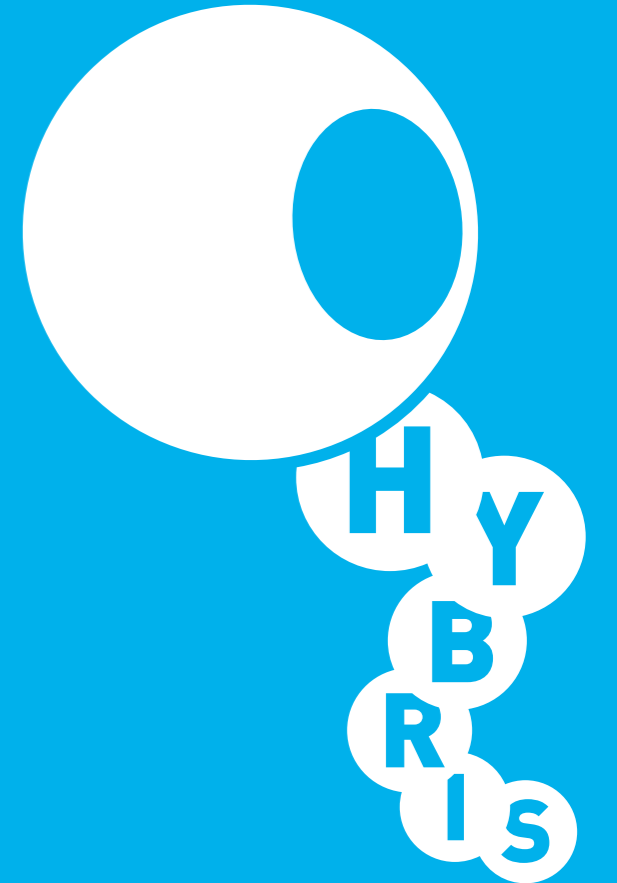
3D print, e-waste, theremin, 2015

In his work "Vigilance", from the "Campfire Tales" series, Patchen mounts a deer head covered in code on a circuit board that incorporates 3D printing and e-waste. The piece references the human trophy-taking impulse as it combines the natural and digital worlds ultimately calling into question our own behavior, consumption and its impact on the planet. Reflecting the wariness of an endangered animal, the antlers/television antenna is a functioning theremin that fills the space with static at varying pitches when the viewer is near. The binary code, a snippet of the Stux virus, textures the beast while its meter/eye measures the environment in vain.

Peter Patchen

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METAMORPHOSES AND METAPHORS





DEATH GRIP OF LIFE

kinetic object, 2013–2015

*Engineers: Aleksey Grachev, Sergey Komarov.
Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab*

The entire object is an enlarged copy of the household flytrap. The sticky sweet ribbon, in the artists' ironic version, is a metaphor of life. People "stuck on" power, ideas and principles, sensual lust, love, time and space the way flies get stuck at the honey bait. Having come close, the viewer falls within the area of coverage of sensors. The entire construction comes into motion and starts vibrating and humming as if an insect had alit on it. The resonant and heart-rending sounds of a panicked desire of breaking loose leaves no hope for a happy end. In this grotesque form, the authors remind the viewer once again of the pernicious nature of human passions, dogmatic ideas and desires.

Ivan Govorkov, Elena Gubanova



Valentina Povarova



CROSS

oil on canvas, 1999–2000

"As an artist, I am attracted not to empiric existence, psychology, morals or societal issues, but by the sense of transcendental that is behind all that. A power is also the hatred of everything profane in oneself. I think that, through the works, one gets the feeling of belonging to supreme invariable origins. If this pans out – the artist is happy... Colors and shapes are the protagonists in my works. One could dedicate entire cycles of paintings to the joy one derives from a single color – from its capacities. The important thing, the thing that moves it all, is energy. The energy that fills life in all its shapes and manifestations" (Valentina Povarova).



STAKES

film, 1999

Eugene Yufit, father of the Necrorealism movement, was finishing gluing together his film "Silver Heads" when Boris Kazakov ran into him in an editing room in St. Petersburg. Yufit allowed Kazakov to take away those clippings of the film positive that ended up on the editing-room floor. So the artist brought to Moscow a trunk-full of film footage. He did some reviewing, selecting, adding and additional drawing, which resulted in a short spin-off film.



Boris Kazakov

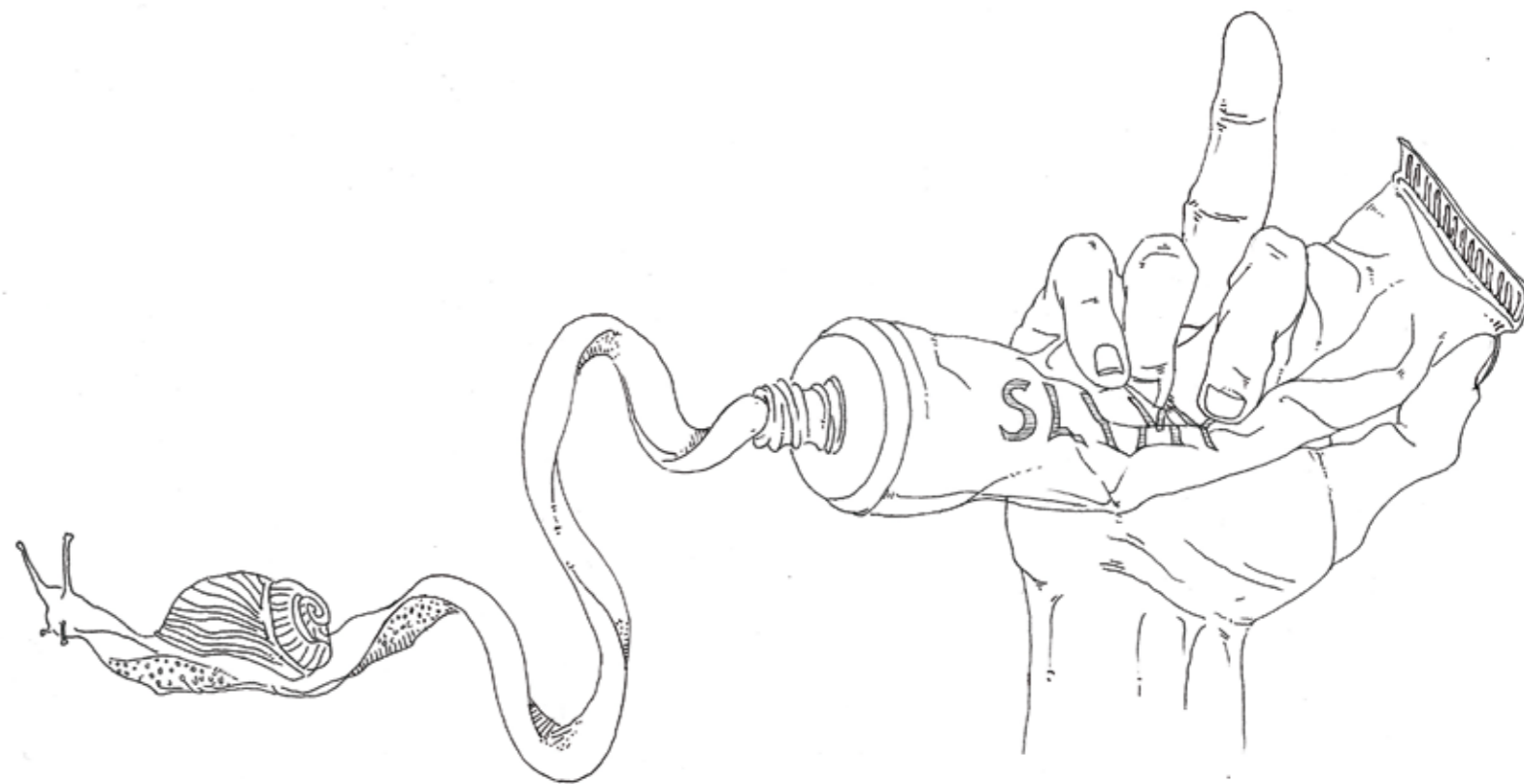
Alvise Bittente



BASILISK (SLIMY-GRIMY)

drawing on wall, 2017

The work stands on the axis between the myth of basilisk, "king of serpents", whose gaze turned everything to stone, and the play "Arden of Faversham" by an anonymous Elizabethan author, in which the protagonist Alice and her lover paid Clarke, a painter who was an expert in mixing venom into oil painting, to create a portrait that would be hung in her husband's room and kill him at first glance. Art gives a different meaning and other points of view to a basilisk that petrifies with a gaze, and perhaps by looking and staring at art in excess we are risking poisoning it.



GARDEN OF MALEVICH

introspective action, 1992
reconstruction, 2017

In 1992, the group of artists "Tut-i-Tam" ("Here-and-There"), former students and graduates of the Leningrad Academy of Arts Alexei Kostroma, Ivan Govorkov, Elena Gubanova and their friends, organized the action "Garden of Malevich". The chief idea was to sow the seeds of new art in the very heart of an orthodox art institution during the new time of nascent democracy in Russia. In May the artists dug a black square in the round courtyard of the Academy of Arts and sowed some carrot seeds. In November they dug up the carrots. Then they walked over the Palace Bridge with 3-meter sculptures of the carrot, having crossed the Neva as a symbolic Rubicon of time. (This action was a remake of the futurist manifestation of Morgunov-Malevich on February 8, 1914, in Moscow.) The final action was eating the carrots at the exhibition-installation at the Russian Ethnographic Museum as an act of destruction of the "Black Square" itself.



Alexei Kostroma,

Ivan Govorkov, Elena Gubanova



To dig up the round courtyard of the orthodox Academy of Arts with the Black Square of Suprematism, to plant it with seeds and wait until the form, germinating in a plane, is born and is eaten in real life.

Ivan Govorkov, 1992

The introvert nature of "Black Square", its inaccessibility for the uninitiated, serves as a constant irritant and a disturber of peace and, after the consumption of its fruit, turns into a quite accessible and ordinary image. In reality, there is a qualitative and quantitative change of the square that demonstrates parallels of creative and biological processes whose approximation we dare to declare here. In 1915 in Petrograd, in the first quarter of the 20th century, the great Master published with his "Black Square" the final result of his long digestion of Russian and Western Art. But does the final result in art exist? And isn't the final result just a new beginning?

Alexei Kostroma, 1992

Valentina Povarova

Povarova was born in 1933 in Leningrad, USSR. In 1960, she graduated from the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (Department of Painting). She taught the course of color science at the Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design.

The artist Valentina Povarova has traveled a remarkable creative path. Having started with the academic studies of nature, she awoke to the dead-end track of official art. The acquaintance with the traditions of Russian avant-garde of the early 20th century opened for the artist new possibilities in her creative work. Matters of form-making, color and plastic structure of artworks excited Povarova and made her look for her own visual metaphors of the world.

The artist's work testifies to the enduring value of pictorial origins. Valentina Povarova wrote: "The creative vision of an artist is not adequate to the word or literature. The vision gained by an artist conveys sensations and feelings that are not yet named by a word or a thought. Moreover, this should transpire through painting". Her communicating with Vladimir Sterligov, pupil of Kazimir Malevich, studying the legacy of Pavel Filonov, collaborative work with Pavel Kondratyev and Vladimir Volkov and profound insight into the discoveries made by those artists informed her work with a special character. Not the reflection of visible elements, but the creation of her own picture of the world – overcoming of the reality's chaos and "taming of the infinity" – this is the cornerstone of Povarova's creative process. Her art balances at the juncture of opposites: visible and conceptual, natural and geometrical.

The artist organizes the space structurally, but the "order" that emerges in the paintings

is subjected to the secret "self-development" of forms that is detected intuitively. This gravitation to the sign-oriented and abstract generalization of forms reveals the connection with the prophetic views of artists of the early 20th century – with the "cosmologic" aspect of their works. The relationship between the human being and the Universe in the 20th century is shaped differently. "Every real object or phenomenon contains a cosmogenic moment, a connection to the Universe... There is an unmotivated beauty dictated by the precipitous running of the modern life, novelty of the materials, impressions and so forth. And all this contains the pulse of the Universe", – explained the artist. The world view also gives birth to a new plastic language. The free hovering of forms in Povarova's paintings is not conveyed by illusory means and it is not depicted, but rather revealed as a quality peculiar to the forms themselves. The forms, in their turn, do not depict anything either, but rather acquire their value as primary forms, and this is what they are all about. In this overcoming of the Earth's gravity, the innovative character of Russian avant-garde reveals itself, which the artist has experienced and felt in her own way. A special role of the color – its concentration in the paintings down to the visible colors of spectrum – turns us to the spiritual power of Old Russian art. The artist said: "My last works are first and foremost about the color red that I have always loved. In fact, the main triad of colors – red, blue, yellow – holds colossal painterly possibilities. I do not treat the form and the content separately, believing this to be nonsense. I experience a purely artistic inclination to red or blue – you know, after all, both the icon-painting and the entire ancient art are built practically wholly on these forces". The artist's talent fuses together the traditions of Russian art in a broad timeframe. But, at the same

time, an artist always belongs to his or her time being a part of the living art process. In this sense, the art of Valentina Povarova, against the background of all-European crisis of the turn of the century ("twilight of the gods" and "falling idols") remains a genuine art phenomenon ruled by the "dynamic equilibrium" between Eternity and Time.

Nana Zhvitiashvili

Works by Povarova are in the collections of Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Arkhangelsk Museum of Fine Arts (Russia), "Tsarskoye Selo Collection" (Pushkin, Russia) and others.

Selected exhibitions

1989 "From Non-Official Art to Perestroika", Leningrad, USSR

1990 First Biennale of Contemporary Art, Leningrad, USSR

1990 Festival of Galleries, Leningrad, USSR

1994 "Russian May", Ghent, Belgium

1995 "Kondratyev and Artists of His Circle", St. Petersburg, Russia

1996 "Post-Glasnost: Contemporary Art of St. Petersburg", from Chudnovsky Family Collection, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

1996 "Malevich. UNOVIS" International Open Air, Belarus

1997 "Fathers and Sons: Two Generations in Russian Art", Los Angeles, USA

1997 Solo Exhibition as part of the international conference "Russia: Science, Art, Politics", Madrid, Spain

1998 "Malevich: To and Fro", St. Petersburg, Russia

1998 "In the Wake of Avant-Garde", Lodz, Poland



V. Povarova
UNITY
oil, fiberboard, 50x52 cm
1980



V. Povarova
RED OVAL II
oil, fiberboard, 52,3x50 cm
1983



V. Povarova
From the Series OVAL
oil, canvas, 55,5x39 cm
1985



V. Povarova
HEAD (DAYBREAK)
oil, canvas, 60x50 cm
1994



V. Povarova
From the Series SIGNS
oil, cardboard, 55x48 cm
1997



V. Povarova
From the Cycle BLACK PLANE
oil, cardboard, 58x50 cm
1999-2000

V. Povarova
From the Cycle
ENERGY
oil, canvas, 68x35 cm
1998



V. Povarova
CROSS IV
oil, fiberboard, 62x70 cm
2000



V. Povarova
From the Series CROSSES
oil, canvas, 60x60 cm
2000



V. Povarova
From the Series CROSSES
oil, canvas, 65x63 cm
2000



V. Povarova
WEIGHTLESSNESS
oil, canvas, 57x52 cm
2000

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HYBRIS

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MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION

V. Povarova
From the Cycle
COSMOGONY – CROSS III
oil, canvas, 60x60 cm
2001–2003



V. Povarova
From the Cycle
COSMOGONY – CROSS
oil, fiberboard 71x61 cm
2001–2003

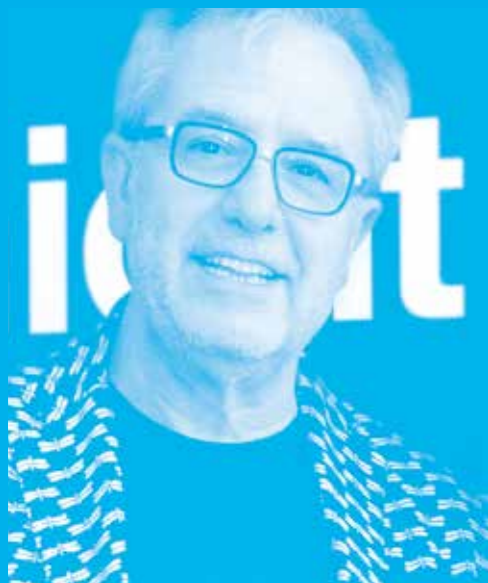


V. Povarova
RED TRIANGLE. SPACE
oil, cardboard, 49x54 cm
1999–2000



V. Povarova
From the Series
CROSSES
oil, canvas, 63x68 cm
2003

From the collection of the Frants family



Giuseppe Barbieri (Italy)

Art historian, curator. Professor of Modern Art History at Ca' Foscari University (Venice, Italy), where he was the head of the Department of Art History and Conservation of the Cultural Heritage "G. Mazzariol" from 2008 to 2010. Member of the scientific committee of the International Centre for Contemporary Art of Punta della Dogana. He has authored and curated more than 40 books and organized numerous exhibitions in Venice, Vicenza, Milan (Italy) and Madrid (Spain). His expertise in art history is testified by numerous monographs, over one hundred essays and hundreds of articles, mostly on Renaissance treatises, the history of architecture and urbanism in the modern age, some important issues of Renaissance iconography, as well as on the enhancement of the artistic and cultural heritage. He has also worked on more contemporary figures and contexts. More recently, he coordinated several initiatives and collaborations between Ca' Foscari and the main Venetian institutions in the field of contemporary art: Palazzo Grassi, Punta della Dogana, Fondazione Guggenheim, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, and Fondazione Biennale di Venezia. Lives and works in Venice, Italy.



Ludmila Belova (Russia)

Artist, curator. Born in 1960 on the Kamchatka Peninsula, USSR. Graduated from the Abramtsevo Art and Industry School (Moscow Region, USSR). She works with video, sound, painting, photography. Investigates the issues of memory, space and time; studies the impact of new technologies on the human being in art practices; makes the viewer a participant of the art process through interactivity. Works of Ludmila Belova have been exhibited in Europe, USA, Russia and Asia. Participant of the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Russia, 2005, 2011), exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (Italy, 2011, 2013, 2015), parallel program of the Manifesta 10 Biennale (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014). Winner of the prize "50 Bestern" ZKM (Karlsruhe, Germany, 2000), nominated for Sergey Kuryokhin Award (Russia, 2011, 2015). Her works are in the collections of the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Anna Akhmatova Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Erarta Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA), in private collections in Switzerland, Germany and Russia. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia. www.ludmilabelova.com



Alvise Bittente (Italy)

Artist. Born in 1973 in Venice, Italy. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, Italy, with a thesis that explored the role of design in contemporary art. Participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions. His science-fiction story "3.600 Spazi Inclusi" was published in 2012 and then became a reading performance in 2013. He created the installation "A Time out of Joint" that included a theatre performance "Impasto a Shakespeare", in which he also starred. Lives and works in Venice, Italy.



H Y B R I S

M U L T I M E D I A E X H I B I T I O N



Silvia Burini (Italy)

Art historian, curator. Born in 1966 in Bergamo, Italy. Graduated from the University of Bergamo, Italy, with a thesis in Russian Art History and earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Slavic Culture from the University of Milan, Italy. She pursued postdoctoral specialization at the University of Genoa, Italy. She further specialized in semiotics and history of art in Tartu (Estonia), Moscow and St. Petersburg (Russia). Professor of Russian Art History and Russian Cultural History at Ca' Foscari University (Venice, Italy); Director of the Centre for the Studies of Russian Arts (CSAR) at the same university. Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of Arts since 2014. Member of board of the Cyfest Festival held in St. Petersburg (Russia) and other cities all over the world. She has curated several exhibitions of Russian art, and organized screenings of Russian films. She is currently involved in researches about Socialist Realism in art, and the Moscow underground in the Sixties. Lives and works in Venice, Italy.



Anna Frants (Russia-USA)

Artist, curator in the field of media art. Born in 1965 in Leningrad, USSR. She graduated from the Vera Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design (Leningrad, USSR) and Pratt Institute (New York, USA). Cofounder of the nonprofit cultural foundation St. Petersburg Arts Project, CYLAND Media Art Lab and Cyfest Festival. Frants' interactive installations have been showcased at Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Russia), Video Guerrilha Festival (Brazil), SIGGRAPH Asia Conference (Hong Kong), Manifesta 10 Biennale (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014), Museum of Art and Design (New York, USA), the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany) and at other major venues all over the world. The artist's works are in the collections of the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Art and Design (New York, USA), Sergey Kuryokhin Center for Modern Art (St. Petersburg, Russia) and Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA) as well as in numerous private collections. Lives and works in New York, USA, and St. Petersburg, Russia. www.annafrants.net



Carla Gannis (USA)

Artist. Born in Oxford, North Carolina, USA. She received a BFA in painting from the University of North Carolina (Greensboro, USA) and a MFA in painting from Boston University (USA). In the late 1990s she began to incorporate digital technologies into her work. She narrates through a "digital looking glass" where reflections on power, sexuality, marginalization, and agency often emerge. She is fascinated by contemporary modes of digital communication, the power (and sometimes the perversity) of popular iconography, and the situation of identity in the blurring contexts of technological virtuality and biological reality. Since 2003 Gannis's work has appeared in 20 solo exhibitions and numerous group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Currently she is a professor and assistant chairperson of the Department of Digital Arts at Pratt Institute (New York, USA). Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, USA. www.carlagannis.com



Ivan Govorkov (Russia)

Artist. Born in 1949 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Ilya Repin State Academy Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (Leningrad, USSR). He is engaged in philosophy, psychology, painting, drawing, sculpture and installations; he works at the junction of traditional art and cutting-edge technologies. Professor of drawing at the Ilya Repin Institute. Recipient of the Sergey Kuryokhin Award (Russia, 2012) in the category "Best Work of Visual Art" (together with Elena Gubanova). His works have been exhibited at major Russian and foreign venues, including the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Moscow (Moscow, Russia), University Ca' Foscari (Venice, Italy), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany), Sky Gallery 2 (Tokyo, Japan). Participant of the Manifesta 10 Biennale Parallel Program (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014) and several exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (Italy, 2011, 2013, 2015); many times participant of the Cyfest Festival. Since 1990, he has been working in collaboration with Elena Gubanova. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

www.elenagubanova.com



Elena Gubanova (Russia)

Artist, curator. Born in 1960 in Ulyanovsk, USSR. Graduated from the Ilya Repin State Academy Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (Leningrad, USSR). She is engaged in painting, sculpture, installations, and video. Gubanova's principal interest as an artist is to explore the time-space notion in a social context and to present scientific discoveries through the figurative language of art. Recipient of the Sergey Kuryokhin Award (Russia, 2012) in the category "Best Work of Visual Art" (together with Ivan Govorkov). Her works have been exhibited at major Russian and foreign venues, including the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Moscow (Moscow, Russia), University Ca' Foscari (Venice, Italy), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany). Participant of the Manifesta 10 Biennale Parallel Program (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014) and several exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (Italy, 2011, 2013, 2015); many times participant of the Cyfest Festival. Since 1990, she has been working in collaboration with Ivan Govorkov. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

www.elenagubanova.com



Alexandra Dementieva (Belgium)

Artist. Born in 1960 in Moscow, USSR. Studied journalism and fine arts in Moscow (USSR) and Brussels (Belgium). Professor at the Royal Academy of Arts (Brussels, Belgium). Her principal interest as an artist is the use of social psychology, perception theory and behaviorism in her installations as well as the development of film narration through the point of view of a subjective camera. She has been an active participant of the CYLAND Media Art Lab since 2008. Dementieva received the first prize for the best monochannel video at VAD Festival (Girona, Spain). She is a participant of numerous exhibitions in major Russian and international cultural institutions, including the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art (Russia), Centro de la Imagen (Mexico City, Mexico) and others. Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

www.alexadementieva.org



H Y B R I S

M U L T I M E D I A E X H I B I T I O N



Boris Kazakov (Russia)

Artist, filmmaker. Born in 1964 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Institute of Machine Building LMZ-VTUZ (Leningrad, USSR). Kazakov started painting in the late 1980s. In 1996 he made his first film "Nestlings of the Sea" using the technique of drawing on film which is traditional for parallel cinema. He also experimented with different methods of animation without a camera and invented a way to shoot movies with a photo camera. Recipient of the Grand Prix of the Kinoshok Film Festival (Anapa, Russia, 1999). Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.



Alexei Kostroma (Germany)

Artist, theorist, researcher. Born in 1962 in Kostroma, Russia. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts (Repin Institute), Department of Painting, in 1989 in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg). Works in media: painting, object, installation.

In the early 1990s proclaims a new trend in contemporary art – ORGANIC WAY, connected with the study of the laws of development of animate nature that allowed Kostroma to form his personal approach and his concept of the relationship between aesthetic theory and creative practice in contemporary art. His oeuvre is always rooted in research regarding the process of interaction between nature and man, and he strives to integrate the resulting knowledge into the social environment. The artist always follows several directions of the development of his subject, speaking about internal problems of human existence through the laws of the functioning of nature and perceiving the world as a single entity. "ORGANIC WAY is a way of knowledge the unity of meanings". Installation "UNO" was nominated by Kandinsky Prize as the Best Project of a Year 2011 in Moscow. Public collections: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; State Hermitage, State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg; State Tretyakov Gallery, Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow; Museum of Organic Culture, Kolomna Lives and works in Berlin. www.alexekostroma.com



William Latham (UK)

Artist, computer scientist. Born in 1961 in the UK. Originally trained as an artist at the Oxford University (UK) and the Royal College of Art (London, UK). Well known for his evolutionary art created from 1987 to 1993 whilst a Research Fellow at the IBM Scientific Centre in Winchester, UK. His pioneering organic art based on the concept of "evolution by aesthetics" was shown widely in major touring shows in the UK, Germany and Japan in the 1990s. From 1993 to 2003 he worked in rave music and computer games development working with Universal, Sony SCEE and Warner Bros. In 2007 Latham became Professor of Computer Art at Goldsmiths (University of London, UK) and returned to his artistic origins and restarted his long term collaboration with mathematician Stephen Todd. Since 2015 he has worked extensively in VR developing "Mutator VR". Lives and works in London, UK.

www.latham-mutator.com



Natalia Lyakh (France)

Artist. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, from her early childhood Natalia was passionate about painting, sculpture and photography. Later on, she developed a strong interest in science and got her Ph.D. in Neurolinguistics on the subject of Brain Asymmetry and Speech Processing. Several years of a scientific career were not, however, a hindrance to her artistic development as she continued to experiment with photography and got involved in video art. Since 2000, Natalia has devoted her full-time attention to photography, video art, short films and video installations, working in Paris, Stockholm, Istanbul, Milan, Rome, New York and London and participating in various art shows and festivals. Influenced by her former neurolinguistics research, she invites us to discover the magic dimensions and abstractions, hidden in simplest objects that surround us, as seen through the lens of a microscope, the prism of binoculars, telescope or kaleidoscope. She currently lives and works in Paris, France.
www.nlyakh.com



Irina Nakhova (Russia-USA)

Artist. Born in 1955 in Moscow, USSR. Graduated from the Moscow Polygraphic Institute (USSR). Early member of what came to be known as the school of Moscow Conceptualism. Pioneer of the genre of total installation in Soviet underground art. Nakhova concurrently works with painting and installation, the most vivid of which employs painting, digital printing, sculpture and interactive video and audio. In 2013, she won the Kandinsky Prize (Russia) in the category "Project of the Year" for "Untitled", an installation that uses photography and film from the 1920s until today from her own personal archive. Since 1989, her work has been exhibited throughout Europe and the USA. Nakhova has been selected to have a solo exhibit at the Russian Pavilion for the 56th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2015). Lives and works in Moscow, Russia, and in the USA.



Peter Patchen (USA)

Artist, art educator. Born in the USA. He grew up in Colorado where the natural environment had a profound influence on his perception of the relationships that exist between nature, humanity, culture and technology. Earned a MFA from the University of Oregon (Eugene, Oregon, USA). In 1993, he founded the New Media program at the University of Toledo (Toledo, Ohio, USA). Currently he is the Chair of the Department of Digital Arts at Pratt Institute (New York, USA). He maintains a studio in the Red Hook area of Brooklyn (New York, USA).
www.peterpatchen.com



Valentina Povarova (Russia)

Artist, art educator. Born in 1933 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Ilya Repin State Academy Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (Leningrad, USSR). Taught at the Department of Drawing at the Herzen Institute (Leningrad, USSR). In the late 1960s Povarova met Pavel Kondratyev (pupil of Malevich, Filonov and Matyushin) and the artist Vladimir Volkov. From that time on, there was a period of active creative meetings and collaboration on studies of the legacy of the Russian avant-garde. From 1970 to 1988 Povarova was a professor at the Department of Painting and Drawing of the Vera Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design (Leningrad, USSR). She developed and made part of the curriculum a unique course of "color science" that was based on the legacy of the school of Malevich (the GINKhUK) and the art systems of Filonov and Matyushin. She participated in the so-called "apartment exhibitions". Her works are in the collections of the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Arkhangelsk Museum of Fine Arts (Russia), "Tsarskoye Selo Collection" (Pushkin, Russia) and others. Died in 2007.



Vitaly Pushnitsky (Russia)

Artist. Born in 1967 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Ilya Repin State Academy Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (Leningrad, USSR). Pushnitsky participated in major group exhibitions in Europe, USA and Russia, including the Venice Biennale (parallel program, Italy, 2007) and the Moscow Biennale (Russia). He had numerous solo shows in museums and galleries in Russia and around the world. His works are in various public collections, such as the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia) and Moscow Museum of Modern Art (Russia), and in many private collections. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.
www.pushnitsky.ru



Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai (Russia)

Artist. Born in 1969 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Leningrad Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography. He has worked as a theatre artist since 1995; collaborates with such directors as Yury Butusov, Andrey Moguchy, Adolf Shapiro. As a scenographer and costume designer, he worked in theatres in Russia, Norway, Poland, Bulgaria, South Korea, China. A repeated winner of the theatre award "Golden Mask" (Russia). Since 2010, a member of the artists' union PARAZIT. Since 2014, a participant in the projects of CYLAND Media Art Lab. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.



Alexander Terebenin (Russia)

Photographer, artist, curator. Born in 1959 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Architectural College in Leningrad. A professional photographer, Terebenin also creates art objects and installations. He is a participant of over 70 exhibitions in Russia and abroad. His works are in the collections of the Museum of the History of St. Petersburg (Russia), Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA), as well as in galleries and private collections in Russia, USA, Israel, Germany and Finland. He is the curator of the art projects "Conversion" (Russia, 2012) and "Signal" (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014). He won the Innovation Prize (Russia) for the best curatorial project of 2014 (in collaboration with Peter Belyi). Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Lucia Veronesi (Italy)

Artist. Born in 1976 in Mantua, Italy. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera (Milan, Italy). Veronesi is interested in landscape and its transformation. The core of her research is uninhabitable and dysfunctional space caused by the volume of whatever was used and experienced. Hence, the inhabitable domestic space turns into a sort of wild landscape and in fact, by interacting with the natural external landscape, it is invaded and absorbed. Her videos were selected for several festivals including the Torino Film Festival (Turin, Italy), Obliqua Festival (Lisbon, Portugal), Oodaaq Festival (Rennes, France), Montreal Underground Film Festival (Canada), and others. Lives and works in Venice, Italy.
www.luciaveronesi.com



German Vinogradov (Russia)

Artist, poet, musician, actor. Born in 1957 in Moscow, USSR. From 1976 to 1983, student at the Department of Architecture of Moscow Institute of Land Use Planning Engineers. From 1984, participant of numerous art groups. Founder of mystery art in contemporary Russia. Vinogradov regularly stages the mystery play "Bicapony of Heavenly Forest" using the BICAPO environment that consists of a huge number of the author's sound sculptures. He is the first artist in contemporary Russia to introduce fire, water and other primary elements as an integral part of mystery plays held in enclosed spaces. He held over 2000 mysteries in Russia, Europe, USA and Canada. Influenced by the system of Porfiry Ivanov, Vinogradov created several unusual forms of creative work, in which cold, snow and cold-water dousing as well as dipping in icy water became a component part. Author of performances with the burning of land-art objects of Nikolay Polissky in the Nikola-Lenivets Park (Russia, 2006, 2012). Lives and works in Moscow, Russia.



HYBRIS

Hybrids and Monsters in Contemporary Art Multimedia Exhibition

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