

SWITZERLAND + MEDICINE
INSPECTION "MEDICAL HERMENEUTICS"
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The baggage which Inspection "Medhermeneutics" brought with them to Switzerland for the realization of their project showed what they consider the focus of their artistic work. It wasn't, as had been expected, mostly pictures, photographs or drawings, but an opulent bundle of texts on the theme of "Switzerland + Medicine" which they had composed as part of the preparations for the exhibition. These texts plot the foundation of the exhibition.

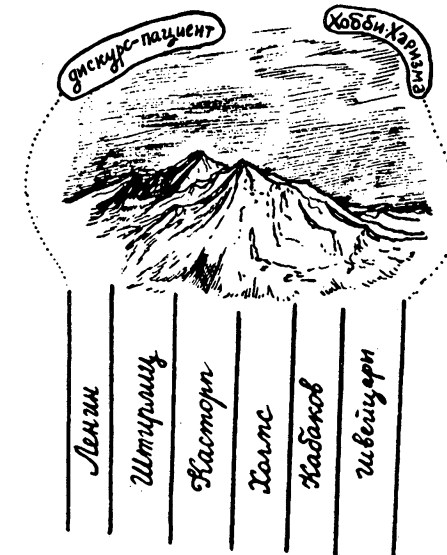
Various themes relating to and forming the group's very own image of Switzerland are addressed in five corridors. These corridors lead to a central object composed of two flags hanging side by side-- the red cross and the Swiss cross. The red cross takes the form of a winged altar-piece and can be folded together and lowered into the Swiss cross fastened onto the wall, so that both emblems fuse into a red monochrome plane. The resulting red flag suggests an ideological as well as an erotic union.

With this project, brought to the attention of Swiss institutions through the artists' own initiative, the Medhermeneutics created an identikit of a country they had not visited prior to the exhibition. They found inspiration in literature, in the pre- and post-glasnost Russian media, in diffuse clichés, and in other somewhat accidental and not always reliable bits of information circulating in their direct environment. They connected these pieces of information in a spontaneous way, not wanting to reconstruct a historical or cultural context, but trying to create from these fragments of information a container for radically personal perceptions and thoughts. Medhermeneutics did not attempt to build a logical narrative chain from these concepts, but to create a network of discourse from which new associations could be drawn continually. They put to a halt potential dogmatism and ideologization into which one slips so easily--on no matter how trivial a topic--by focussing on generalizations and by diluting complex ideas into handy units.

In a sense, the artistic approach of Medhermeneutics relates to that of Thomas Mann, who wrote in the foreword to his novel The Magic Mountain that he was convinced that "only the exhaustive can be truly interesting." The Inspection Medhermeneutics group also places wide-ranged eloquence above pragmatic stringency. They try to ferment the process of identification to the point where it develops its own dynamic, so that aside from the major strands of story line an unending number of other narratives arise and assert themselves, increasingly questioning the autonomy and orientation of the narrator in charge. Suddenly, what is of interest is not what the artist does with these concepts, but rather what the concepts do to the artist.

The Themes

References to Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain are a central part of the installation "Switzerland + Medicine." In this novel, the Medhermeneutics have found numerous analogies to their own situation. Life in a sanatorium--similar to the existence in a hermetically sealed environment--in which individual concepts of time and space rule and verbal and mental realms are more real than actual experienced reality, offered the group an identification matrix for their existence on the Moscow art scene, which before 1987 was also completely isolated. Concepts or themes presented in the other corridors include:



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