

**Pavilion of Kazakhstan
at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**

ORTA collective
LAI-PI-CHU-PLÉE-LAPA
Centre for the New Genius

Spazio Arco, Dorsoduro
23 April – 27 November 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Transdisciplinary collective ORTA (Alexandra Morozova, Rustem Begenov, Darya Jumelya, Alexandr Bakanov, Sabina Kuangaliyeva) represents Kazakhstan for its first national participation at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 23 April – 27 November 2022. *LAI-PI-CHU-PLÉE-LAPA Centre for the New Genius* is inspired by the life and work of Almaty artist, writer and inventor Sergey Kalmykov (1891-1967). Now remembered for his extraordinary artistic output, which was both prolific and highly original, Kalmykov was most known during his lifetime for his eccentric proposals, unorthodox worldviews and unconventional lifestyle, for which he was known as a 'city madman'.

LAI-PI-CHU-PLÉE-LAPA is an experimental research station by ORTA, exploring Kalmykov's central ideas and named after the most important of his manifold alter-egos, 'the great and immortal constructor of flying tower-vortices'. This complex *Centre* is a symbol and manifesto for ORTA's revolutionary programme for changing the world, the Art of the New Genius. Continuously evolving, the *Centre* applies Kalmykov's principles to theatre, film, photography, design, robotics, electronics and music, as well as every aspect of everyday life. Kalmykov believed he was 'a professional genius'; ORTA goes further than this, calling themselves the 'New Geniuses of the First Rank' and declaring that genius is present in everybody if only they will activate it. Taking its lead from intriguing references by Kalmykov to the 'art of the fourth dimension', the Art of the New Genius seeks to open a Portal to the Fourth Dimension at Venice.

The *Centre* is the result of five years of research and development by ORTA in collaboration with artists, musicians, filmmakers, designers, philosophers and members of the public, as well as electronic engineers, welders, builders, craftsmen, programmers, handymen, roboticists, and hydraulic and pneumatic workshops. These dynamic collaborations see all partners expanding their areas of expertise, with participants learning skills from one another and boundaries blurring between art, design, technology and science. This spirit of collaboration and inclusivity is one of the core principles of the Art of the New Genius, alongside generosity, excess and the journey beyond reason.

Kalmykov's prolific and diverse practice included painting, drawing, illustration, mathematical and geometric systems, designs for the Kazakh State Opera and Ballet Theatre, and huge bodies of writing including visionary depictions of the future. Despite this extraordinary output, Kalmykov was never recognised during his lifetime and died in obscurity in a psychiatric institution where it is conjectured

he was unnecessarily admitted. The surrealist nature of Kalmykov's prodigious output, also known as 'magical impressionism', resonates with the theme of this year's Biennale Arte, titled *The Milk of Dreams* after a book and illustrations by Leonora Carrington.

The *Centre for the New Genius* consists of five areas: the Entrance Room, the Candy Room, the Main Hall, the Courtyard and the Death Research Room. The cylindrical Entrance Room prepares visitors for a successful visit to the *Centre*. Made entirely of aluminium foil, it houses the Pyramidal Photoiconostasis, an eight-tier dynamic irradiator in the form of a three-sided upside-down pyramid. 108 liquid crystal displays depict the New Geniuses of the First Rank in the process of creating the *Centre*. In the Candy Room ORTA summons Kazakhstan. Embedded in this room is a traditional yurt, reinterpreted with contemporary adaptations and embroidered on the outside with lines from Kalmykov's texts. Here visitors are offered the opportunity to learn about Kalmykov, the creation of the *Centre for the New Genius* and the Art of the New Genius in special screenings and talks.

The Main Hall contains the First Circular Cardboard Light Generator of Genius, a tunnel installation which aims to stimulate 'genion' particles which, according to the Art of the New Genius, are required to create appropriate conditions for a controlled and sustainable opening of the Portal to the Fourth Dimension. This Generator is made of 900 cardboard cells and 3,000 programmable LED bulbs, which create complex light patterns. The Courtyard has three zones. In the first a member of ORTA, the Transmitter, sits in a pyramid, embroidering words by Kalmykov onto Disk Tablets. Ancient Kazakh embroidery techniques are applied to old Soviet fabrics and imbued with the atmosphere of Venice. The second and third zones focus on the possible futures of robotics. In the second there is a refrigerator, a hydraulic powered washing machine and a walking body of a Daewoo Damas car. The third reveals a special six-legged pneumatically powered refrigerator. The Courtyard also hosts foam Antennae which collect emanations from Venice's historic beauty and transmit them to the Genius Generator in the Main Hall, the Transmitter in the Courtyard and the Transparent Servers – two-metre-high cupboards which house the Disk Tablets on old Soviet turntables.

ORTA will be in Venice until 20 May 2022, initiating the *Centre* – creating the necessary light and sound atmosphere, gathering data on emissions from the beauty of Venice and carrying out a series of special rituals. During this period regular services, consisting of readings of Kalmykov's texts, will take place twice daily and special



La Biennale di Venezia

**59. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte**

Partecipazioni Nazionali

performances – ‘Spectacular Experiments’ – will occur once a week at the pavilion. After this initial period, ORTA will return to Kazakhstan to share the results of their research on the Art of the New Genius in various cities across the country. The Venice *Centre* will then exist as an immersive audio-visual installation, with lights, texts and music continuing to operate, much like a temple continues to function even when its custodian is absent. In November ORTA will return to Venice, to open a Portal to the Fourth Dimension for the conclusion of the Biennale Arte 2022.

Despite living through two world wars, the Russian Revolution and Stalin’s Great Purge, and creating more than 1,500 works of art, Kalmykov’s place of burial is unknown. Since his death, he has inspired generations of contemporary artists in the region. With *LAI-PI-CHU-PLÉE-LAPA Centre for the New Genius* ORTA has finally brought Sergey Kalmykov to the International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Wednesday 27 April 2022 marks the 55th anniversary of Kalmykov’s death and will see special events take place at the *Centre*.

Kazakhstan’s presentation at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is commissioned by curator Meruyert Kaliyeva. The project is made possible thanks to generous financial contributions by the Saby Charitable Foundation, Nurlan Smagulov Foundation, G&G, Marusya Assaubayeva Foundation, Shakhmardan Yessenov Foundation and Damiani Kazakhstan. The pavilion is organised by the Foundation for Contemporary Art of Kazakhstan together with the A. Kasteyev State Museum of Arts and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Alexandra Morozova and Rustem Begenov, Founders of ORTA, have said:

“With the Kazakhstan Pavilion we introduce the world to the Art of the New Genius – a programme that gives liverty, strength and faith that any person can be a creator. We believe that, in difficult times for Kazakhstan and the world, in times of cataclysms and tragedies, the principles of the Art of the New Genius, which gave strength and freedom to Sergey Kalmykov, will give strength and freedom to generations of creators after him. They have certainly given them to us, the 30 people who have collaborated on this project and invented together another world, the symbol of which is our amazing pavilion.”

Meruyert Kaliyeva, Commissioner of the Kazakhstan Pavilion, has said:

“I am very excited to see ORTA collective’s interpretation of Sergey Kalmykov’s ideas at the Kazakhstan Pavilion in Venice. I am certain visitors will be as mesmerised by the world of Kalmykov as ORTA, who have been working with his ideas for the last five years. Kazakhstan’s national pavilion at the Biennale Arte has been a long-awaited event on the Kazakhstani art scene and I am honoured to be part of the team working on the project. The pavilion would not have been possible without the efforts of the artists, curators and art professionals who staged parallel programs, exhibitions and projects in Venice in a bid to start a conversation about Kazakhstan’s national pavilion.”

– ENDS –

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Exhibition credits

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Exhibitor and curator: ORTA collective (Alexandra Morozova, Rustem Begenov, Darya Jumelya, Alexandr Bakanov, Sabina Kuangaliyeva)

Commissioner: Meruyert Kaliyeva

Sponsors: Saby Charitable Foundation, Nurlan Smagulov Foundation, G&G, Marusya Assaubayeva Foundation, Shakhmardan Yessenov Foundation, Damiani Kazakhstan

Visiting the exhibition

Spazio Arco
Dorsoduro 1485, 30123 Venezia, Italy
(nearest vaporetto: Zattere)

Opening hours: Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–6pm

About ORTA

Transdisciplinary collective ORTA was founded in 2015 by actress Alexandra Morozova and director Rustem Begenov. Since 2017, the group also includes artist Alexandr Bakanov, photo and video designer Daria Jumelya and artist Sabina Kuangaliyeva. ORTA explores the higher dimensions of human creativity through the creation of Universal Projects, including theatre, visual arts and new media art, video and film, technology, social research and philosophy, as well as robotic, computer, electronic engineering and applied arts. Since 2017, their projects have been mainly focused on the New Genius Theory of the artist Sergey Kalmykov (1891-1967).

About Meruyert Kaliyeva

Meruyert Kaliyeva is founder of Aspan Gallery (Almaty/London), curator of Almaty Museum of Arts (opening 2024) and project manager at the A. Kasteyev State Museum of Arts (Almaty). She was the organiser of the exhibition of Russian and Kazakh art from the collection of the Kasteev Museum in London in 2010 and the first European exhibition of the Uzbek artist Alexander Volkov (1886-1957) in London in 2012. She has organised numerous exhibitions of Central Asian and international artists in Almaty.