

NOSE TO NOSE SLAVS AND TATARS



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Pejman Foundation: Argo Factory is proud to present “Nose to Nose” Slavs and Tatars’ first exhibition in Iran. The second installment of their mid-career survey, the exhibition at Pejman Foundation’s newly opened Argo Factory in downtown Tehran, appropriately enough a stone’s throw from the Russian embassy, will feature all three axes of the artists’ practice: publications, lecture-performances, and exhibitions. Marking ten years of the collective’s activity, art becomes a platform of translation – of one organ into another, the heart into the mind, the stomach into the head, as part and parcel of any Abrahamic understanding of hospitality.

The collective's Eurasian remit – “between the former Berlin Wall and the Great Wall of China” in their own words – acts as a foil to an understanding of ourselves as multiple subjectivities. Their focus has a particular resonance in a capital and country whose history, traditions, and culture offer some of the more compelling arguments today against reductive nationalism and for an elaborate syncretism, in this case between Persianate, Arabic, Russian, and Turkic spheres of influence, to name a few.

Across a range of sculptures, balloons, audio works and publications, “Nose to Nose” looks to the Sufi notion of hamdami, the breathing together of sensuality and spirituality. Their “Not Moscow Not Mecca” installation, first exhibited at the Vienna Secession in 2012, will be restaged as an anti-anthropocentric altar: a retelling of faith via fruits and flora. Slavs and Tatars’ insistence on metaphysical and intellectual contamination marks their unique place in contemporary art. Like their anti-modern mascot, Molla Nasreddin, the artists suggest looking to the past while moving resolutely forward: not in order to return to a Modernist internationalism, nor to reactivate a revanchist nationalism, but rather to sharpen a popular understanding of the cosmopolitan. Their means of doing so passes via a focus on infra-politics—the importance of whispers, utterances, and sayings often invisible to the official register but no less traded amongst people.

On the occasion, a new Persian translation will be commissioned for their multi-channel audio installation “Lektor”, joining Aboriginal Jaguera, Arabic, Polish, German, Danish, Flemish, Spanish, so many linguistic traces of past venues.

To coincide with the exhibition, a translation of David Joselit's "On Aggregators", originally published in October, will be made available in Persian.

After debuting at the CCA Ujazdowski, the exhibition will run at Salt Galata, Istanbul in summer 2017; CAC Vilnius in fall 2017; and Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade in winter 2017.

Nose to Nose is made possible with assistance from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tehran and The Third Line, Dubai.

ABOUT SLAVS AND TATARS

Founded in 2006, Slavs and Tatars mine the complexities and unexpected affinities across cultures through three axes: publications, lecture performances, and exhibition-making. They have exhibited in major institutions across the globe, including MoMA NY, Tate Modern, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, NYU Abu Dhabi, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Slavs and Tatars have published several books including a translation of the legendary Azeri satire “Molla Nasreddin: the magazine that would’ve could’ve should’ve”,

currently in its second edition. The artists work across cycles, where extended periods of research give life to an eco-system of installations, sculptures, lectures, and printed matter that question our understanding of language, ritual and identity. Imbued with humor and a generosity of spirit, their work commonly blends pop visuals with esoteric traditions, oral rituals with scholarly analysis in a way that opens new paths of contemporary discourse.