

Exhibition Guide

تاوس مخاتشيفا
Taus Makhacheva

مساحة للاحتفال
A Space of Celebration

Taus Makhacheva

A Space of Celebration

'A Space of Celebration' is Taus Makhacheva's first survey exhibition in West Asia, bringing together works created over the past thirteen years, including a new site-specific commission.

Makhacheva revisits and retells complex histories through a cast of objects and characters, including her alter ego, Super Taus. Her humorous and contextually grounded installations involve flawed gymnastics training arenas, Soviet-era circuses, wedding halls and suspended mountain ranges. In her works, facts meld with everyday myths, troubling the notion of cultural authenticity and making way for the fantastical. Makhacheva layers light-hearted tales with the uncanny and the unexpected, and occasionally, with incommensurable tragedy.

Much of Taus Makhacheva's stories emerge out of the North Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, specifically the Republic of Dagestan. Over the course of her career, she has looked at the making and remaking of history and heritage, as the region was undergoing its post-Soviet recomposition.

'A Space of Celebration' brings together works from 2009 to the present, making visible the vast ensemble of practitioners Taus Makhacheva has collaborated with. *Charivari* (2019) looks at the visual culture of the Caucasus through its circuses, bringing about spectacle, wonder and fantasies of the future. *Quantitative Infinity of the Objective* (2019) uses the setting of a training gym in which control is asserted through language and brings about ways of resisting constrictive social codes. In *Seismic Jitters* (2020), missing objects recount their own stories of absence and disappearance, resisting dominant narratives. *Superhero Sighting Society* (with Sabih Ahmed, 2019) introduces a cacophony of voices from all over the world which attest to superhero sightings. In Makhacheva's works, languages and voices often overlap, setting the stage for plural and complex tales where the truth is always in-between.

Taus Makhacheva (b. 1983, Moscow) holds a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London (2007) and an MFA from the Royal College of Art (2013).

Her work has recently been exhibited at the Biennial of Difficult Heritage, Volgograd (2021); Yokohama Triennale (2020); Lahore Biennale (2020); Kaunas Biennial (2019); Lyon Biennale (2019); Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2018); Liverpool Biennial (2018); Manifesta (2018); Yinchuan Biennale (2018); Venice Biennale (2017); Garage Triennial of Russian Contemporary Art (2017); Shanghai Biennale (2016); Kyiv Biennial (2015); Sharjah Biennial (2013); and the Moscow Biennale (2011).

Recent exhibitions in the UAE include the Sharjah Biennial (2013); 'Marker', Art Dubai's focus on Central Asia and the Caucasus (2014); Art Dubai video programme (2014); 'So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish', Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai (2014); 'The Wedding Project', Delfina Foundation and Art Dubai Projects (2016); and 'But Still Tomorrow Builds into My Face', Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai (2016). In 2021, she was shortlisted for the first edition of The Richard Mille Art Prize, presenting works as part of the inaugural 'Louvre Abu Dhabi Art Here 2021' exhibition.

Her work is part of the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the P. S. Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts, Makhachkala; KADIST, Paris and San Francisco; Moscow Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Modern Art, Antwerp; Pushkin Museum, Moscow; Sharjah Art Foundation; Tate Modern, London; and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

Curated by Lucas Morin and Nora Razian

Design and Production: Ansif Habib and Albert Kolambel

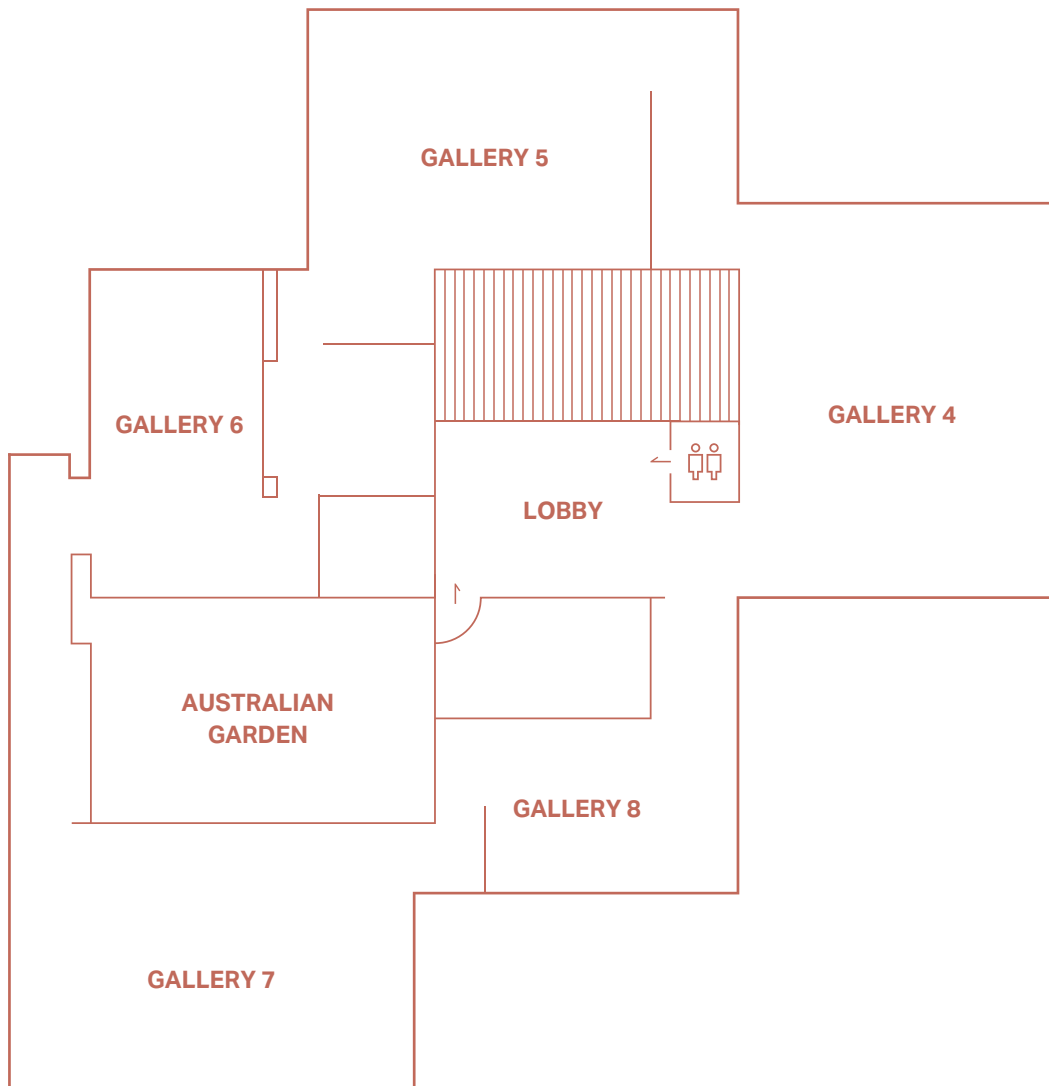
AV and Sound Design: 21dB, Brent Galotera, Christopher Tiu

Exhibition Graphics: Sarah Chehab (waiwai)

Arabic Translation: Ban Kattan

Taus Makhacheva Studio: Alisa Bunkova (project manager), Amal Avezdzhanova (archivist), Anna Vetrova (studio assistant), Kristina Cherniavskaia (studio director), Marina Istomina (head of archives), Sasha Kovaleva (assistant), Veronika Smirnova (studio manager)

Exhibition texts based on research and writing by: Sabih Ahmed, Dina Akhmadeeva, Maria Chehonadskih, Kristina Cherniavskaia, Antonio Dzheuzha, Andrey Efits, Silvia Franceschini, Suad Garayeva-Maleki, Tatiana Kochubinska, Alexey Maslyayev, Maria Moroz and Elena Yaichnikova.



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19 A Day

2014

Photographic documentation,
performance

Courtesy of the artist



19 A Day is a series of photographs taken at weddings that the artist 'crashed' on September 14, 2014, during peak wedding season in Makhachkala, the capital of the Republic of Dagestan. Posing as an invited guest, Taus Makhacheva congratulates the couple, dances and eats. With the help of photographer Shamil Gadzhidadaev's know-how and expertise, she poses for standard wedding photographs with the newlyweds. By the end of the day, Makhacheva and Gadzhidadaev had attended 19 weddings.

Please take a photograph, if you'd like to.

Photography: Shamil Gadzhidadaev
Colour correction: Shamil Gadzhidadaev
Makeup: Saniya Davudova
Production: Jamilya Valieva

Special thanks to Stephanie Bailey,
Elmira Magomedova

Commissioned by Ibraaz as Special Project
for Platform 008

Jameel Arts Centre (2022)
Furniture design: Anton Kirillov

A Space of Celebration

2009

Video, colour, silent, 16'10"

Courtesy of the artist



A Space of Celebration features faceless figures, loaded with bridal style attire, wandering through eerily empty wedding halls. The work was filmed at various wedding halls in Makhachkala during wedding season. Devoid of celebratory crowds, these lavish venues, with draped gold fabric, marble flooring and crystal chandeliers are explored through the movements of the anthropomorphic figures; their gestures both echo and subvert social codes and rituals related to the celebration of class, status and normative notions of gender. These figures' inner lives echo the outer life of the halls' grand architecture, where new traditions and cultures of celebration are created.

Camera: Alexander Sinyagin
Costume design: Maria Dzhivelegova
Costume case: Zulfia Kayumova

Special thanks to Alibek Abdulaev, Abdurazak Aliev, Gimbat Gimbatov, Gusein Gimbatov, Olga Ismailova, Olga Sosnina, and the administration of wedding halls 'Afalina', 'East Palmyra', 'Europe' and 'Marrakesh.'

Commissioned by Tsaritsyno for the exhibition 'Topography of Happiness: Russian Wedding from the 19th to the beginning of the 21st century,' Tsaritsyno Museum.

Charivari

2019, 2022

Mixed media installation, one-channel audio

Courtesy of the artist, Gazprombank
and Art Finance



The term *charivari* refers to a circus' opening or closing act, where solo and group performers of different genres parade into the ring at the same time, showing off their skills. With every action, the rhythm gets faster and the performances more complex, until the arena fills with floating and somersaulting figures.

During the Soviet era, circuses were used to project state narratives, but they were also a safe space for banter and freedom of expression, sometimes verging on the political. Merging fact and fiction, *Charivari* explores the rich circus tradition of the USSR, and of the Baku State Circus in particular, to consider possible futures. The installation draws on archival documents, films and photographs to evoke a chaotic make-believe circus featuring a cast of strange and unruly characters, including a silver-caped fly, a contortionist in a lion's belly and a strongwoman accountant, to name a few. The installation evokes both a carcass of an antiquated circus and a suggestion for an imaginary one.

Architect: Maria Serova
Text: Alexander Snegirev
Costume design: Panika Derevyva
Costume production: Panika Derevyva, Anastasia Markova, Alina Sarancha, Scenic Costume Studio 'M'Art', Costume Studio 'Ginger Rose'
Sound design: Denis Dronov
Sound engineer: Maxim Nikolaev, PicMus Production
Voices: Yuri Brezhnev, Kristina Cherniavskaia, Anton Kostochkin, Agnia Kuznetsova, Gladston Makhbub, Daria Mazur, Polina Milushkova, Ekaterina Shibayeva, Lubov Tolkalina
Production: Sanan Baghirov, Kristina Cherniavskaia, Sadagat Isayeva
Installation production: Novruz Mammadov
Dubbing actors: Renara Shamsiyeva, Patrick Sewell
Research: Vusal Ahmedov, Ulvia Akhmedova, Farah Alakbarli, Sanan Baghirov, Kristina Cherniavskaia, Sayara Huseynli, Asya Sokolova, Arina Umanskaya
Translation: Ben McGarr

Special thanks to director of the Baku National Circus Vagif Baghir-Zada, circus historian Radjab Mamedov, director of the National Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan Asger Rasulov, director of the National Archives of Photo and Video Documents of the Republic of Azerbaijan Vugar Tahtygly, gymnast Tamila Nazirova, clown Lada Sanatskaya, animal trainers Tofik Akhmedov and Rauf Rasulov, director of circus shows and concerts Vladimir Vavilov, archivist Aida Babazade, poet Leyli Salayeva

Commissioned by YARAT Contemporary Art Space

Jameel Arts Centre (2022)

Architect: Maria Serova
Costume design: Panika Derevyva
Production: Kristina Cherniavskaia, Alisa Bunkova, Albert Kolambel
Installation production: Gables Interior Design
Sound installation: 21dB
Costume production: Margarita Antonova, Alisa Bunkova, Panika Derevyva, Anastasia Rybina, Alexandra Terekhina, Anna Vetrova, Costume Studio 'Paloma' | Yulia Brikulskaya, Sergey Cheltsov, Nadezhda Danilenko, Olga Kalinina, Larisa Nikulshina, Anna Samsonenko, Denis Yudin
Costume production consultation: Sofia Egorova, Anastasia Markova
Sound production: Alisa Bunkova, Karina Salaway
Sound design: Denis Dronov
Sound engineer: Artem Karkach
Voices: Lydia Christina, Nicholas Collet, Lisa Dwan, Michael Geary, Frances Marshall, Susie Sefton, Andrew Winn
Arabic dubbing: Samer Maase
Research: Vasilisa Egorova
Arabic translation: Inna Alsatkina
Arabic editing: Abu Bakr Al Ani (theingtwist)

Travel Report No. 0172931

2019

Series of three prints, silkscreen and
embossing on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Shaltai Editions



Travel Report features mysterious photographs evoking impossible and daring voyages at the top of mountains, the bottom of oceans and in the far reaches of space. One of the photographs draws inspiration from a Dagestani tale that claims the easiest and fastest way to walk across mountains is on a tightrope. Each print in *Travel Report* is embossed with the image of an un-realised patented device that pushes the boundaries of the scientifically possible, such as a device that uses electrically-charged particles in an electromagnetic field to operate with time.

Makhacheva's practice reminds us that history is not only inscribed through documents, but is also comprised of myths, legends and stories that are re-elaborated from one generation to the next. In this work, historical records and science-fiction merge in harmony.

Print: Arkadiy Andreev, Nikon Filippov, Alexandra Koroleva, Alexey Veselovsky | Piranesi Lab
Design: Tata Osipova
Production: Kristina Cherniavskaia, Andrey Efits, Daria Pokrass
Research: Kristina Cherniavskaia, Andrey Efits
Commissioned by Shaltai Editions

Image 1

Mountain view of the Karl Marx peak and Engels peak in the Pamirs, Tajikistan, 20 February 1946. Author: [name unknown] Sidorenko, Russian State Film and Photo Archive, Krasnogorsk (Code 0-172931).

Walk on a tightrope performed by Rabadan Abakarov's and Aragi Hadzhikurbanov's troupe. Photo from Abakarov family archive. Sport equipment, authors' certificate of S. E. Mogilev from October 26, 1930 (certificate No. 77980), Committee for Inventions of the U.S.S.R., typolithography «Red Printer», Leningrad, 1931.

Image 2

Earth artificial satellite IS3-3, 1958. Scale 1:10. Pavilion «Cosmos-4», VDNH, Moscow.

Model of the «Vostok-1» spacecraft, 1961, The Tsololkovsky State Museum of Cosmonautics, Kaluga.

Ultra-small submarine project 908 «Triton-2», model sample, 1966, Museum of Small Underwater Self-Propelled Vehicles, Kronstadt. «Almaz» orbital station. Project of the 1970s.

Self-propelled underwater vehicle «AS-22», 1983, Museum of Small Underwater Self-Propelled Vehicles, Kronstadt.

Underwater vehicle from the «Tethys-N» project, 1989, Museum of Small Underwater Self-Propelled Vehicles, Kronstadt.

Diving device SM-370 «Sprut-1», 1977-1981, Museum of Small Underwater Self-Propelled Vehicles, Kronstadt.

Underwater device for the observation of underwater work, patent I. F. Gilsher of August 11, 1925 (certificate No. 4013), Committee for Inventions of the U.S.S.R., typolithography «Red Printer», Leningrad, 1927.

Image 3

A group of athletes taking part in the climbing of the Khan Tengri peak near the top, Tien-Shan mountains, Kyrgyzstan, August 1962. Photo: A. Stankov, TASS photo chronicle, Russian State Film and Photo Archive, Krasnogorsk10 (Code 0-283667).

Electromagnetic time relay (1987), Leningrad Electric Machine Building Association «Electrosila» S. M. Kirov, copyright certificate of the USSR B. A. Lyarsky No. 633090. VNIPI of the State Committee for Inventions and Discoveries of GCCT of the USSR, 1989.

Quantitative Infinity of the Objective

2019

Mixed-media installation, six-channel
synchronised audio, vinyl

Courtesy of the artist



In *Quantitative Infinity of the Objective*, the gallery is transformed into a flawed gymnastics training arena, fitted with altered equipment that destabilises aesthetic form and balance. A series of orders and instructions expressing authority play on loudspeakers. Heard out of context, the violent undertones of each phrase are amplified. On the walls, drawings of flexible exercising bodies hint at resilience and strength, offering possibilities of detachment from—and resistance to—constrictive social codes.

Text: Ilmira Bolotyan, Kristina Cherniavskaia,
Sound design: Denis Dronov, Alexander Khokhlov,
Night Production Studio
Voices: Emma Charles, Theo Jefferies, Joe Krapek,
Taus Makhacheva, Chris Obermeyer, Zoya Schmitt
Illustrator: Sarolta Szanto
Installation production: Maksim Lohanko,
Maksim Nosov, Igor Pastukh
Production: Kristina Cherniavskaia, Elena Torop,
Leo Trotsenko
Research: Kristina Cherniavskaia, Andrey Efits,
Sumi Hayashi, Medeya Margoshvili, Haruka
Shibata, Ksenia Skorytchenko, Leo Trotsenko
Translation: Ben McGarr, Ulyana Raikova,
Yaroslava Strikha

Special thanks to Tatiana Kochubinska

Commissioned by PinchukArtCentre (2019),
production supported by PinchukArtCentre
and Organizing Committee for Yokohama
Triennale (2020)

Jameel Arts Centre (2022)

Arabic translation: Kattan Consultancy
Arabic editing: Nadine El Khoury, Irene Gurguis
Sound design and installation: 21dB
Production: Alisa Bunkova, Anna Vetrova

Baida

2017

Fictional video documentation of
performance, colour, sound, 15'31"

Courtesy of the artist



Baida is the fictional documentation of a performance that was meant to take place daily during the 57th Venice Biennale (2017). A quayside label informed visitors of a performance piece taking place in the open waters of the Adriatic Sea at the exact coordinates 45°23'30.8"N 12°24'47.7"E; only reachable by costly private boat hire. Several performers were due to appear and disappear on a capsized boat, which had been transported from the Caspian Sea bordering Dagestan. Similar boats are used by fishermen poaching wild Beluga sturgeon, the precious fish from which caviar is harvested. The advertised performance turned out to be a hoax, existing only as this disconcerting video.

Baida emerged from conversations between the artist and fishermen living in the village of Starii Terek in Dagestan and working on the Caspian Sea. In their stories, the fishermen repeatedly evoked the risk of being forever lost at sea. In the event of a boat capsizing, fishermen would tie themselves to the prow so that their families could find their bodies and mourn with the certainty of their death. The work reflects on the precarity of human lives struggling for survival against overwhelming economic and natural forces, and is a commentary on the expectations and behaviour of art audiences when faced with immeasurable tragedy.

Text: Tim Etchells

Performers: Zubair Dzhavatkhonov, Artem Krupin

Voices: Andy Field, Madeleine Botet de Lacaze,

Deborah Pearson

Sound recording: John Avery

Sound design: Alexander Khokhlov

Production: Malika Alieva, Jamilya Valieva

Research: Malika Alieva

Translation: Elena Glazeykina

Special thanks to A., K., K., M., M., M.-R., R., S., S.,
Delfina Foundation, Gimbat Gimbatov, Daria Khan,
Manuela Kokanovic, Leonardo Guerra Seràgnoli

Commissioned by the 57th Venice Biennale,
production supported by Gazprombank and Art Finance

Jameel Arts Centre (2022)

Arabic translation: Inna Alsatkina, Kattan Consultancy

Arabic editing: Abu Bakr Al Ani (thelingtonist)

Subtitles: Julia Zaitseva

Seismic Jitters

2020

Mixed-media installation, brass,
one-channel audio

Courtesy of the artist



Evoking bygone worlds, this audio piece is composed of four texts narrated by missing witnesses—that is, through sites and objects stolen or long disappeared. Some voices emanate from the site of Fort Lahore; others are those of ghosts and long-gone observers. The small brass objects recall niches and recesses from buildings around Lahore, from which objects were removed over time. One of the voices is that of the Koh-i-Noor, one of the largest diamonds in the world; it was owned by Mughal, Afghan and Sikh rulers until it was ceded to Queen Victoria following the annexation of Punjab in 1849. Considered unfit for British eyes, the diamond was radically recut and altered by a London jeweller.

Text: Elmira Kakabayeva
Sound designers: Denis Dronov, Shehryar Khan
Voices: Suzanne Cousier, Christopher Caffrey, Zeenia Ghani, Benjamin Jones, Shehryar Khan, Adnan Lashari, Arshma Malik, Abdul Rauf, Patrick Sewell, Aroma Shayan, Nadira Tudor, Tamiza Tudor
Translation: Nadeem Abbas, Rubina Akmal, Ben McGarr, Jawwad Ul Haq
3D visualisation: Shamil Ahmed
Production: Murtaza Ali, Kristina Cherniavskaia, Maria Moroz, Zarmina Rafi
Research: Irina Litvinova, Maria Moroz, Ahmad Mughal
Special thanks to Ninotchka Jewels
Commissioned by Lahore Biennale Foundation
Jameel Arts Centre (2022)
Arabic translation: Kattan Consultancy
Arabic editing: Nadine El Khoury, Irene Gurguis
3D visualisation: Anton Kirillov
Production: Kristina Cherniavskaia, Albert Kolambel
Podiums production: Gables Interior Design LLC
Sound design and installation: 21dB

Zero Buoyancy

2022

Thermoplastic polyurethane membrane

Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by Art Jameel



Fish navigate by contracting or expanding their swim bladder to reach neutral buoyancy, a balanced state of neither sinking nor floating. They manoeuvre through layers of water of varying density and pressure levels, depending on whether they are close to the sun or deep near the seafloor.

An enlarged inflatable fish swim bladder grows within an internal courtyard at the Jameel Arts Centre, alluding to the institution as a living and breathing being, accompanying visitors through different worlds.

The structure invokes the functional, yet playful, sense of lightness typically associated with inflatable architecture, which ranges from military bridges, oil tanks and zeppelins to amusement parks by the beach.

Research: Elena Antagulova, Victor Lebedev

3D visualisation: Anton Kirillov

3D printing: 3dprintus | Dmitry Fetisov,

Polina Luchina

Installation production: Aerodinamika |

Alexandr Grishchenkov, Anastasia Minkova

Sketches: Olga Glagoleva

Production: Alisa Bunkova, Veronika Smirnova,

Albert Kolambel, Anna Vetrova

Endeavour

2010

Video, colour, sound, 9'

Courtesy of the artist



In this video, Taus Makhacheva pushes an enormous rock in the mountains of Dagestan for nine minutes, in a futile but sustained effort.

Camera: Alexander Sinyagin
Costume design: Zulfia Kayumova
Sound: Alexander Obrant
Special thanks to Gimbat Gimbatov

Super Taus Untitled (Quick Fix)

2019

Installation, life-affirming practice



As part of her life-affirming practice, Super Taus invites visitors to re-write their past, honour their abilities and commemorate their achievements—actual or desired—on engraved trophies sourced on e-commerce platforms. Visitors throw a die to determine whether they will receive a trophy for an imagined competition of their choosing. If they throw a win, they then select and keep the trophy that best encapsulates their desired success.

Portable display showcase trunk:

Roman Afonin, Anton Yakovlev

Metal construction: Protokar.ru

Production: Malika Alieva, Andrey Efits

Research: Andrey Efits

Commissioned by Armory Show as part of the 'Platform' section curated by Sally Tallant, production supported by narrative projects gallery, London

Jameel Arts Centre (2022)

Production: Alisa Bunkova, Anna Vetrova

Super Taus (Untitled 1)

2014

Viral video, 2'16"

0/09/2014 16:28:13
GLOBAL



The superhero alter-ego of Taus Makhacheva, Super Taus, first appeared after the artist met Super Sohrab, a superhero from Iran. Her first recorded sighting took place on a mountain road in Dagestan in 2014. Filmed by a motorist's dashboard camera, she was captured lifting an enormous boulder.

Makhacheva describes Super Taus as akin to the realisation of a child's fantasy: the dream of a woman who grew up within—and still inhabits—a patriarchal society.

Super Taus (Untitled 2)

2016

Video documentation in four parts:
Dagestan, 10'18"; MMOMA, 12'37"; Road
to Moscow, 5'10"; Centre Pompidou, 14'20"



In these four videos, Super Taus is captured searching for an appropriate place to erect a monument to Maria Korkmasova and Khamisat Abdulaeva, the two attendants at a Dagestan museum who saved a painting by Russian constructivist artist Alexander Rodchenko, titled *Abstract Composition*, by seizing it from a thief's hands in the early 1990s. Khamisat Abdulaeva worked as an attendant in Room 6 of the museum, and Maria Korkmasova worked in Room 7, where the work was on display. After the thief cut out the canvas, rolled it up, tucked it in and rushed away, Khamisat Abdulaeva became aware of the empty frame. She promptly warned Maria Korkmasova, who ran after the thief and seized the canvas, successfully preventing the robbery.

Super Taus considered this story, recounted to her as an ordinary occurrence, to be a true feat. She observed that there were not many monuments to individual women in Dagestan and found that Korkmasova and Abdulaeva were deserving heroes. She decided to set up a monument for them and began her search for an appropriate place in Makhachkala, at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and in Paris at the Centre Pompidou. The undertaking included hiking from Makhachkala to Moscow with the monument on her back.

Super Taus and a Camel Yasha

2017

Photographic print on paper,
unlimited edition



Please take a poster, if you'd like to.

Photography: Imam Guseinov
Special thanks to Dzhamilya Dagirova,
Naida Omarova
Commissioned by RD Magazine

SABIH AHMED AND TAUS MAKHACHEVA

Superhero Sighting Society

2019

Mixed-media installation, five-channel
synchronised audio

Courtesy of the artists



Superhero Sighting Society brings together 31 witness accounts of superhero sightings from all around the world in an audio piece with over a dozen languages, in a scenography composed of unclimbed mountains, designed by Super Taus. Superheroes emerge when societies are in the midst of a crisis and desperate for solutions. In this work, however, superheroes don't stop the end of the world: they tackle everyday issues and injustices and address the barely-registered disappearances of many small worlds. The emergence of superheroes questions the meaning and repartition of power and interrogates the many geographies and desires that produce different superpowers and heroic figures.

Sighted superheroes include Angle Grinder Man, an angle-grinder wielding hero who spurs civil disobedience in a small British town; Le Spiderman, an undocumented migrant climbing a five-story façade to save a baby in Paris; Super Sohrab, a powerless but caped superhero from Iran brightening up long Schengen visa lines; and Super Luz SME, who gives hope to disenfranchised union workers at a privatised electricity company; among many others.

Superhero Sighting Society is conceived by the Society's founding secretary members, Taus Makhacheva and Sabih Ahmed, in collaboration with the Society's records clerk, Jessica Saxby.

Composed of additional anonymous members, the Society raises awareness and promotes conversations around figurations of power that have emerged in the 21st century.

Scenography: Super Taus

Texts: Jessica Saxby

3D visualisation: Nikita Kulchitsky

Sound design: Denis Dronov

Voices: Falak Ali, Ahmed Abouelela, Henriikka Ahtainen, Roman Bashtovoy, Daniel Begon, Sofia Poppius Brichta, Christopher Caffrey, Mike Cole, Jacob Ferree, Amira Gherbaoui, Ruben Gorkink, Olaoye Tundee Habeeb, Nishida Hidemi, Vojtech Jirka, Michael Koriche, Johan Brink Lorenz, Njegos Manojlovic, Victoria Moya, Martyna Nowinska, Ayodele Oluwaseun, Mary Rose, Talib Shillaev, Marie Vacher, Joa Verrijzer, Natalja Verrijzer, Olyvia Wilde, Xia Yin

Production: Clément Caignart, Kristina Cherniavskaia, Corégie Expo, Andrey Efits, Sophie Potelon, Guillaume Thireau
Translation: Pio Abad, Ayò Akinwándé, Abdelmalek Ben Salah, Chen Chen, Alfredo Hubard Escalera, Hiroyuki Kojima, Bruno Leitão, Magda Mietka, Iheanyi Onwuegbucha, Mégane Paradis, Rosa Preuss Illionga, Lala Rascie, Sini Rinne-Kanto, Jessica Saxby, Ruijun Shen, Jonas Staal

Research: Andrey Efits, Katia Porro, Sophie Potelon

Commissioned by KADIST, Paris;

production supported by narrative projects, London (2019)

Jameel Arts Centre (2022)

Arabic translation: Kattan Consultancy

Arabic editing: Abu Bakr Al Ani (thelingtwtst)

Booklet design: Sarah Chehab (waiwai design)

Sound design and installation: 21dB

Tightrope

2015

Video, colour, sound, 58'10"

Courtesy of the artist



Carefully crossing a canyon between two hills in Dagestan, fifth-generation tightrope walker Rasul Abakarov painstakingly transports 61 paintings and works on paper encompassing Dagestani art history from one side to the other, re-arranging them in the process. The artworks were selected from the P.S. Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts in Makhachkala and reproduced for the performance.

The perilous act of moving historic works of art between two mountains evokes the fragile relationship to history in the post-Soviet era, with a society eager to reinvent itself through a precarious connection to a complex and composite past. The work also reflects on the way artworks move from the so-called margin to so-called centre through shifts in market trends, art historical discourse and national interests.

Tightrope walker: Rasul Abakarov
Executive producer: Malika Alieva
Director of photography: Alexander Sinyagin
Camera: Pavel Filkov
Quadrocopter camera: Shamil Gadzhidadaeva
Editing: Alexandra Pustynnova
Colour grading: Mikhail Perelman, Nika Digital Studio
Sound engineer: Alexandra Pustynnova
Sound designer: Alexander Khokhlov
Foley artist: Sergey Radzievsky
Metal Structure 1: Malika Alieva, Robert Ashurbekov, Isa Charakov
Metal Structure 2: Malika Alieva, Aliomar Aliomarov, Isa Charakov
Tightrope technical assistance: Mukhtar Abakarov
Technical equipment: Kinozavod
Production support: Abdulla Abdullaev, Patimat Abdullaeva, Patimat Ataeva, Natalia Bezrukova, Ruslan Dadashev, Gusein Gimbatov, Iraiganat Kurbanova, Magomed Magomedov, Nurmagomed Nurmagomedov, Akhmed Yusupov
Research: Malika Alieva, Alexandra Pustynnova
Printing: Marat Suleimanov

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