

## WHERE DOGS RUN IS SELECTED FOR PRESENT CONTINUOUS, V-A-C / M HKA ACQUISITION PROGRAMME 2017

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Acquisition Programme 2017

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Russian collective *Where Dogs Run* has been selected for this year's edition of **Present Continuous**, the V-A-C / M HKA Acquisition Programme. The artists shortlisted this year were The Agency of Singular Investigations (Stanislav Shuripa, Anna Titova), Dimitri Venkov, Ivan Gorshkov, *Where Dogs Run* and Valia Fetisov. A jury consisting of V-A-C Director Teresa Iarocci Mavica, M HKA Director Bart De Baere and guest jury member Defne Ayas, Director of the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Netherlands, chose the work of *Where Dogs Run*, which will go to the M HKA collection.

**Present Continuous** is an annual scheme set up to support and promote the new generations of Russian artists living and working both in Russia and abroad and to open up Russian contemporary art to the wider world. A further objective of the project is to provide a platform for critical debate about emerging Russian artists and to raise the issue of existing collecting policies, thereby bridging the gap between aspiring young artists and artists whose works are typically represented in museum collections.

Established as a joint initiative of the V-A-C Foundation and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (M HKA), **Present Continuous** further develops a major objective of both institutions: V-A-C is dedicated to the international presentation, production and development of Russian contemporary Art all over the world, and its mission is to encourage and promote homegrown talent; while M HKA is the only European museum to consistently work with Russian contemporary art today, collaborating with other international institutions in the same field, making M HKA a primary starting point for post-soviet art in Europe.

The annual scheme is broken down into two different stages: Russian curators, critics and editors by invitation come up with an initial long list of who they consider to be the most talented young and emerging artists in Russia today. They bring the names to the table for discussion and narrow the list down to several finalists, whose details are then passed to the jury to select one winner. Previous winners include Olga Chernysheva (2013), Taus Makhacheva (2014), Evgeny Antufiev (2015) and Sasha Pirogova (2016).

V-A-C invited the following curators, critics and editors to participate this year: Boris Klyushnikov, Antonio Geusa, Alexey Maslyaev, Alisa Bagdonaitė, Katerina Chuchalina, Elena Ischenko, Alisa Prudnikova, Ekaterina Inozemtseva, Maria Kalinina, Alexandra Shestakova, Sergey Bratkov and Olga Shishko.

As well as commissioning a work by *Where Dogs Run* through **Present Continuous** this year, a work by Dimitri Venkov will also go to the M HKA collection, made possible through additional funding by M HKA.

The projects by the five short-listed artists will be available at [vac.ensembles.org](http://vac.ensembles.org)

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## Where Dogs Run

Yekaterinburg-based artists Vladislav Bulatov (born 1975), Natalia Grekhova (born 1976), Olga Inozemtseva (born 1977) and Aleksey Korzukhin (born 1973) formed their art group Where Dogs Run in 2000 and have since become one of the most prominent figures in Russian media art. Their works go beyond the traditional scope of science or media art: while they use scientific tools and modern technology, they are far from being techno-optimists or rigorous followers of scientific research, with irony playing a major part in all their multimedia installations, performances and kinetic sculptures. Their creations could be considered a possible response of a capitalist society to scientific theory: the desire to believe in science as a miracle manifests itself in their seamless blend of vision, superstition and trickery in the press and mass culture. Thus, in *Digitalized Water* (2008), *Faces of Smell* (2012) and *Collector* (2015–2016) technology becomes the material for creating a space of illusion. The group is essentially interested in manufacturing a myth, as well as in the problem of representing scientific language and view in art (this metaphor is evident in *Fields 2.1*).

**Dimitri Venkov** (born 1980) is a graduate of the Video and New Media department at the Rodchenko Art School and holds an MA in Film Studies from the University of Oregon.

Visual anthropology is the overarching theme of his work. In his videos Venkov questions the very possibility of an objective visual representation of reality. He is interested in the conditions for existence of critical lenses that allow a distant view – he in fact often reassembles rhetorics or the techniques used by various expert communities (whether anthropologists, historians or art critics), trying to discover flaws in the methods and forms of scientific discourse. At the same time the artist's position is not that of a detached observer, but rather that of an insider; with no intention of denuding or deconstructing media, Venkov cleverly uses stylistic means and genre clichés, balancing on the verge of a subtle, ironic critique and the legitimization of cinematic narrative. The artist pays equal attention to aesthetic and conceptual aspects of his works. It is through visual images that he contemplates the utopian values of the Thaw period (*Like the Sun*, 2012). While in the artist's view the discussion around the tear-down of the statue of Lenin appears self-centered and redundant from the artist's viewpoint / seem self-centered and superfluous to the artist (*Krisis*, 2016), the images captured in urban architecture (*The Hymns of Muscovy*, 2017, *In a Different Time*, 2010) and surrounding scenery (*Like the Sun*, 2012) make it clear that the conceptual apparatus unfailingly loses to the integrity and expressive power of visuals per se.

Previous Present Continuous winners are: 2016 Sasha Pirogova; 2015 Evgeny Antufiev; 2014 Taus Makhacheva; 2013 Olga Chernycheva.

**V-A-C Foundation** is dedicated to the development and international presentation of Russian contemporary culture – across a multitude of forms and within the framework of a joint exhibition, educational, and publishing programme. V-A-C Foundation considers artistic production as central to its activity and essential for understanding contemporary cultural processes and stimulating new answers to its challenges.

The opportunities V-A-C Foundation provides, to engage with and interrogate international cultural practices, aim to expand the platform for homegrown talent and encourage an independent artistic language. As a key speaker for contemporary Russia, V-A-C Foundation establishes new cross-cultural dialogues and incites an exchange of ideas through new collaborations and alternative settings for bringing different artistic practices together within a single vision for arts and culture.

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V-A-C has recently launched Palazzo delle Zattere, a new exhibition and education space in Venice and work is underway to develop a major art site in Moscow, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, due to open in 2019.

[www.v-a-c.ru](http://www.v-a-c.ru)

M HKA is a museum for contemporary art, film and visual culture, established in 1985 as an initiative of the Flemish Community. The museum integrates artistic questions and wider societal issues, the international and the regional, artists and public, tradition and innovation, reflection and presentation. It takes international post-war avant-garde as a base to engage with the art from present-day multipolar world. M HKA positions itself as a Eurasian museum, interpreting Eurasia in the vein of Joseph Beuys and Jimmie Durham. The museum has held several substantial exhibitions of Russian art and has a major collection of art from the former Soviet Union.

[www.muhka.be](http://www.muhka.be)