

NORTH-7 ART COLLECTIVE IS SELECTED FOR PRESENT CONTINUOUS, V-A-C / M HKA ACQUISITION PROGRAMME 2018

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North-7 art collective has been selected for this year's edition of Present Continuous, the V-A-C / M HKA Acquisition Programme, taking place for the sixth time. The artists shortlisted this year were Ian Ginsburg, Irina Korina, Ivan Novikov, North-7, Tima Radya. The winner was selected by a jury consisting of V-A-C Director Teresa Iarocci Mavica, M HKA Director Bart De Baere and guest jury member Raimundas Malašauskas, curator, writer and visiting professor at HEAD Geneve.

'With the final choice of North-7, 'Present Continuous' has once again proven its value as a detector for the immense potential of contemporary art in Russia. North-7 has a unique way of working together. They are not a collective but a family, they say, in which every member has its own place. It will be a challenge to let their carnivalesque, performative art land in the collection of M HKA but they made a great proposal for this. I am immensely grateful to the group of curators and critics who put together the shortlist this year,' comments Bart De Baere.

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), Sasha Pirogova (2016) and collective Where Dogs Run (2017). In 2017 a work by Dimitri Venkov was also added to the M HKA collection, an acquisition made possible with additional funding provided by M HKA.

V-A-C invited the following curators, critics and editors to participate this year: Svetlana Baskova, Evgenita Chaika, Julia Grachikova, Sergey Khachaturov, Vera Martynov, Victoria Mikhelson, Vladimir Nadein, Dmitry Renansky, Ekaterina Sharova, Maria Smirnova, Anna Tolstova and Dmitry Volkostrelov.

The projects by the five short-listed artists are available at vac.ensembles.org

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V-A-C Foundation produces new culture together with artists and audiences alike. It is a platform for open discussion aimed at redefining the contemporary landscape. Working with local communities, V-A-C promotes its exhibition, publishing, performative and learning programmes beyond all disciplinary boundaries and thus constantly resets the coordinates for dialogue within a new global geography. This methodology is applied in all V-A-C initiatives, taking place in its Venetian space, through international, cross-institutional partnerships and in its future home for arts and culture in Moscow, GES-2.

www.v-a-c.ru

M HKA is the Flemish museum for contemporary art, film and visual culture, based in Antwerp. It takes the international post-war avant-garde as a base to engage with the art from the contemporary multipolar world. M HKA connects artistic issues and broader societal issues, international and regional perspectives, artists and audiences, tradition and renewal, reflection and presentation. It positions itself as a Eurasian museum, interpreting Eurasia in the vein of Joseph Beuys and Jimmie Durham. It organized substantial exhibitions of Russian art and has a major collection of contemporary art from the former soviet sphere.

www.muhka.be

North-7

North-7 art collective (Alexander Tsikarishvili, Nestor Engelke, Piotr Diakov, Leonid Tskhe, Anna Andrzhevskaya, Oleg Hmelyov, Nestor Kharchenko and friends) was formed in Saint Petersburg in 2013 with graduates of the School for Young Artists of the Saint Petersburg PRO ARTE Foundation for Culture and Arts and their friends, when they rented a basement workshop as a space for creative collaboration and dialogue. Over the past years they have moved from one location to another, lost some members and gained new ones, but seem as passionate and enthusiastic as ever.

In their first public project Towers (2014), presented as part of the Parallel Programme of Manifesta 10, each artist, conscious of the works made by his counterparts, had to produce his own object – a 'tower'. During that time the members of North-7 also participated in a site-specific group show Signal (2014) curated by Peter Belyi and Alexander Terebenin, where they put on display hours of footage of their meetings and discussions on their participation in the show.

These projects have been instrumental in defining what the group (of at least seven artists at the moment) have been mostly focusing on: research of collectiveness within one project; interaction process as an artistic statement; supremacy of the experiment over its outcome. In their most recent project The School of Active Drawing and Performative Posing regular studying practice turns into an experiment in plastic choreography. Having started in the front yard of the Academy of Fine Arts, where Leonid Tskhe is a teacher, the project has expanded much further – to the yard of the Saint Petersburg gallery Lyuda (where North-7 used to have their studio), moving on to Name Gallery and even to the revamped Ovcharenko Gallery.

Here lots of newly generated techniques (like drawing with a hatchet) overlap with the strategy of working and engaging with dubious actors, involved or uninvolved into artistic process (such as random people on the street, etc.). Combining elements of festivity, relational aesthetic, participatory art and modernist approach, the School drops some still relevant questions about the balance between the figurative and non-figurative, the dynamic and the static, gesture and image.