

SURVIVAL KIT

Evgeny Granilshchikov
Larissa Araz
Irina Petrakova
Cansu akar
Dima Filippov
Özgür Demirci
Marina Ragozina
Didem Erk
Dmitriy Lyashenko
Eşref Yıldırım



September 8th — October 7th, 2017

Opening: September 7th at 6 PM

Space Debris Art, Istanbul, Turkey

Kemankeş Mahallesi, Hoca Tahsin Sokak, No:15

15th Istanbul Biennial parallel event

October 6th — 26th, 2017

Opening: October 5th at 7 PM

Cultural Transit Foundation, Ekaterinburg, Russia

12 Pushkina str.

4th Ural Industrial Biennial parallel event

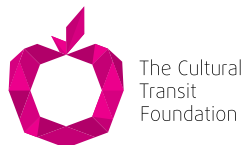
Curators

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Naz Cuguoğlu

Serhat Cacekli

www.survival-kit.art



**SPACE
DEBRIS**



INTRODUCTION

by Nikolay Alutin, Naz Cuguoğlu & Serhat Cacekli

The exhibition “Survival Kit” sets out to raise questions on subtlety in artistic practices within countries that develop low intensity democracies, in this instance Turkey and Russia, and invites artists to research possible methodologies of survival in the context of (self) censorship.

While relations between the two states have been somewhat of a question mark lately, a spectrum of almost identical patterns occurs, particularly concerning consistent cuts of support for contemporary culture in all forms. A point at which socio-political art discontents both governments is by far gone and a vast majority of emerging artists lives in a state of uncertainty being unprotected from the forms of pressure that they expect to follow.

As a result, censorship is becoming a common practice. In Turkey, despite legal provisions, freedom of speech and media has steadily deteriorated from 2010 to 2016. This situation is marked by increased censorship of social media accounts, arrested journalists, closed printing houses and newspapers, and (self-)censorship of art practices as the inevitable result of cancelled art exhibitions and banned artworks/artists. Russian authorities became interested with independent media, cultural clusters & individuals mostly after the wave of protests in 2011—2012. As of 2016, freedom of speech has been effectively strangled by passing a number of notorious bills among which are the blasphemy and gay propaganda laws.

At this specific point in time, direct imageries seem to lose not only their possibility to exist but also their emotional relevance, especially in politically oppressed communities. Artists face a situation in which they are being censored or induced with self-censorship, thus having to find a way to express themselves through more subtle conceptual frameworks to be heard by the audience and to be able to raise awareness locally and internationally.

Because of current existing governmental control mechanisms and censorships of artistic and cultural events, there is a necessity to establish alternative methods to deal with these fragile and urgent

topics. Otherwise, there is a possibility of losing even a scarce number of public or private spaces for artists to be heard, to exhibit artworks and to talk about them.

“Survival Kit” can be perceived as an attempt to remove the ambiguity by establishing a certain framework that may or may not be mandatory for contemporary art to function in the future to come. By collaborating for six months, five Turkish and five Russian artists will research different methodologies, such as camouflage and irony, to create works that are both united by the idea of “subtle art” yet divided by their specific subjects & practices.

EVGENY GRANILSHCHIKOV

At Dawn Our Dreams Become Brighter

2017, film

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



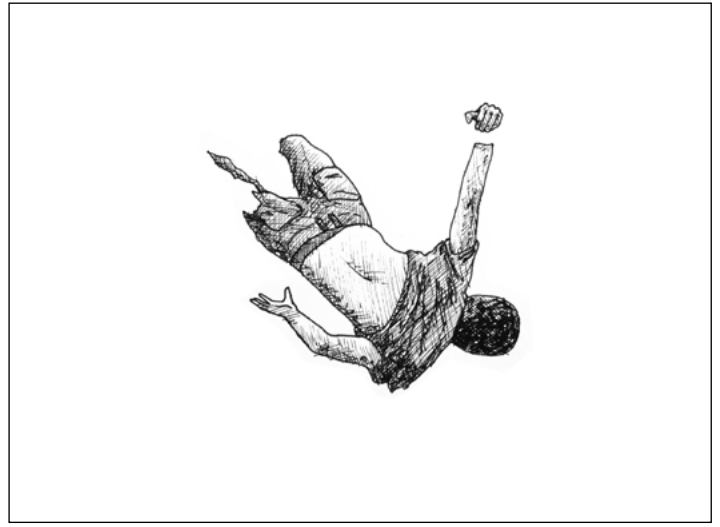
At Dawn Our Dreams Become Brighter is a short film that follows the story of two young Russian people living abroad. Actually, “surviving” would be a proper word in this case. They spend unremarkable days in one of Europe’s major cities, while following troubling world news, missing their homeland, feeling they won’t be returning there soon.

Artist’s statement: *“Everyone does films here in fall. Time blends with space, turns into a kind of mysterious thing. We’ll remain in Paris forever. Far from home, anxiety is all the more acute. The most important things unfold right now, at the moment when everything looks still around. There must be something in this stillness. Dust settles down to the floor, the air is charged, and something’s hidden in the contrast between the shadow of the tree and the asphalt surface. And nothing works without love.”*

Untitled (Gravity)

2017, digital print on acetate paper, 12 pieces

Shown in Istanbul



Untitled (Gravity) is connected to the arrests at Bolotnaya Square on May 6th, 2012, which was a traumatic and a significant moment in contemporary Russian history.

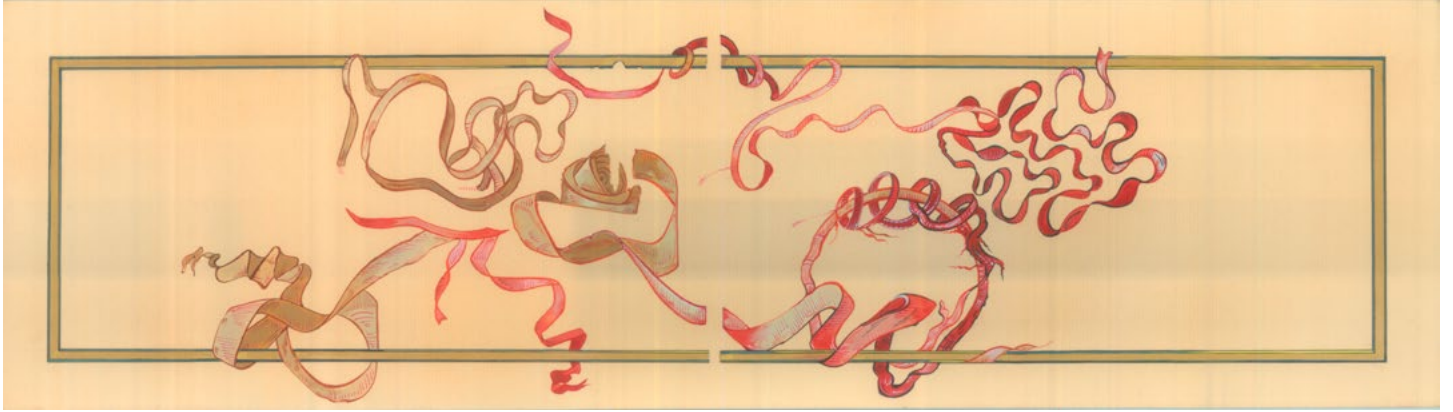
We see people in moments, when they are grabbed by the police. Thus the reason for their strange poses — bodies seem to fall apart, being blocked by something or someone not present in the work, as if they were levitating.

CANSU ÇAKAR

The Grand Opening,

2017, watercolor, gouache, ink, gold on paper

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



The Grand Opening I, 2017, Istanbul



The Grand Opening II, 2017, Ekaterinburg

Cansu Çakar's *The Grand Opening* focuses on the "detail" as a survival technique for self-censorship that can distract the viewer, taking them away from the whole. Generally when the distracting whole is vanished, we can find the way that leads to the core. Exhibited work depicts a picture of a bridge opening ceremony, hidden in the figures of ribbons.

Showing the whole composition in Yekaterinburg, and only ribbon details in Istanbul, Cansu Çakar links these two cities to each other.

IRINA PETRAKOVA

Coming Out

2017, embroidery on tracksuit

Shown in Istanbul



Coming Out is an embroidery of a resistance symbol on Adidas tracksuit. As the embroidery is inside the tracksuit, it creates a manipulation of perception for the viewer. As an outsider, you can feel that there is something sewn inside, but you cannot really grasp the whole meaning behind it.

All a stranger knows — there is resistance going on, while the real image is being kept safe inside, and more importantly, closer to the body of the one who resists.

Levitating Cerement

2017, embroidery on cerement

Shown in Ekaterinburg



The work that Irina presented in Ekaterinburg is an embroidery on a piece of textile used to cover up a body of a deceased person.

Just like in the first part of the work, in *Levitating Cerement* the embroidery is inside out, closer to the body of the deceased — after death the protest still is first and foremost a personal act.

LARISSA ARAZ

Nevermind

2017, board game

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



Nevermind is a board game by Larissa Araz that was created after the terrorist attack in one of the Istanbul's famous nightclubs in the New Year's Eve, 2017.

News coverage of the terrorist attack had subtle nuances — calling the subject either terrorist, or attacker. The people who lost their lives in the attack didn't become martyrs as in the previous incidents and terrorist attacks.

The board game simply questions how a slight change in the wording can be used to manipulate the public perception.

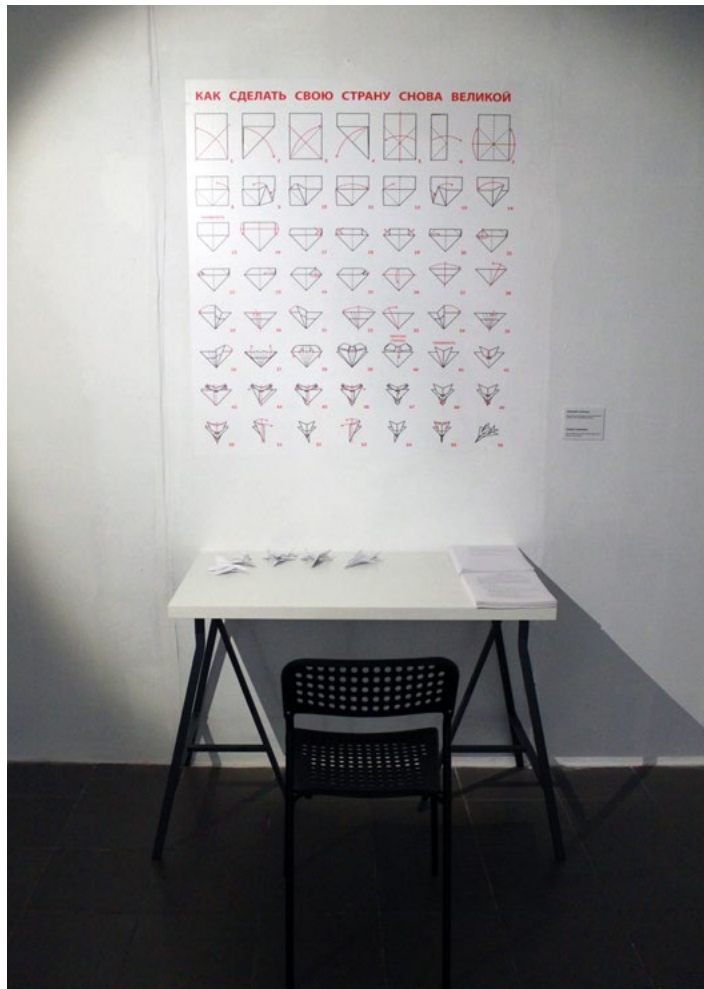
The participatory work includes instructions, dictionary and news cards with missing words to be filled in.

DMITRIY LYASHENKO

How To Make Your Country Great Again

2017, installation

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



Participatory installation *How to Make Your Country Great Again* invites visitors to build fighter jets by folding the A4-sized papers that are composed of the overruled articles of the constitution. Reminding the tradition of writings on fighter jets and bombs, the work draws connections between militarism and autocracy while revealing the vulnerability of the constituting laws of the nation.

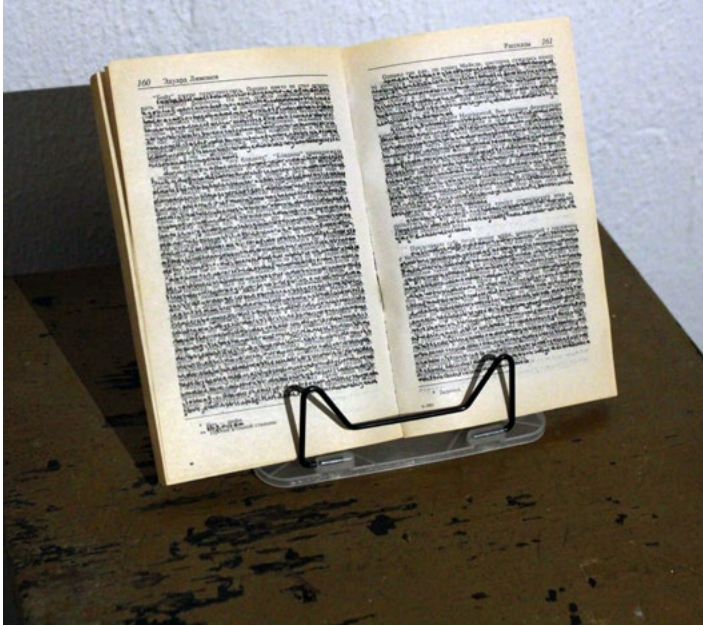
The schematics Dmitriy uses in his work are very complex and hard to follow, more often than not bringing visitors to a conclusion that their effort isn't worth the end result.

DIDEM ERK

Do We Ever Get Out of the Monologue?

2017, performance book

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



In *Do We Ever Get Out of the Monologue?*, Didem Erk uses the technique of “stream of consciousness”, with books censored for different reasons. In order to expose involuntary memory, writing is used as a form of inner voice to free her from self-censorship to the maximum extent possible.

Referring to the work as “performance book”, Didem stresses out that the physical object presented at the exhibition is not an artwork itself, but becomes one, combined with the timely process of writing.

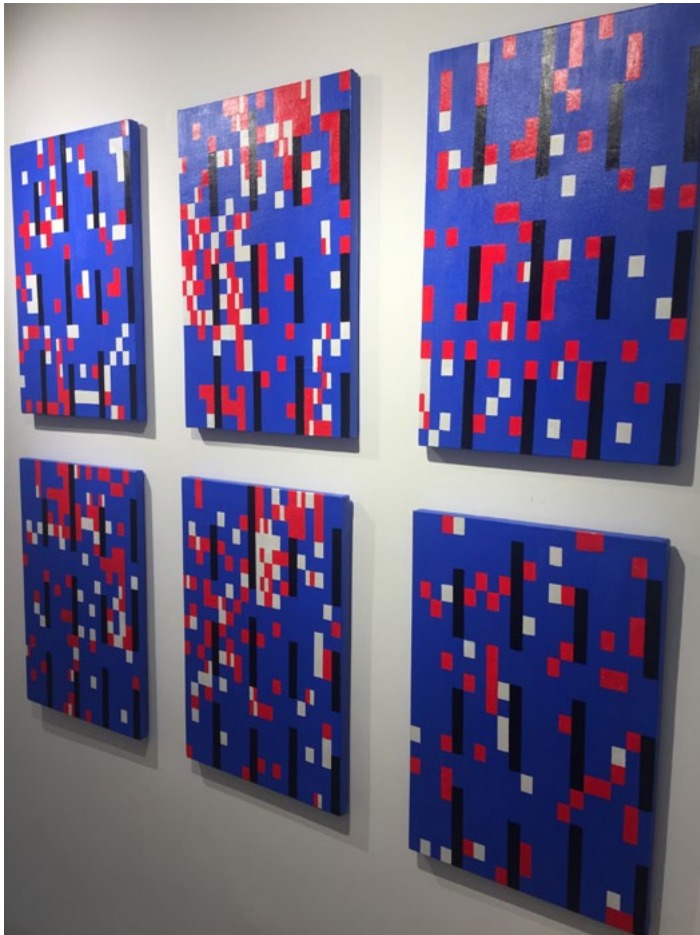
Exhibited in the show, independent almanac “End of The Century” was published in the early 1990’s by an independent publishing house to revive Russian novels and essays that were banned during the Soviet Union.

MARINA RAGOZINA

Censorship Celebrations

2017, acrylic on canvas

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



Marina Ragozina collaborated with one of the biggest media monitoring systems in Russia to create six wall calendars of Russian scandals connected to acts of censorship in arts and culture from 2011 to 2016 titled *Censorship Celebrations*.

On a clear blue-sky background, there are red blocks—political, religious, and social censorships—engaged in endless battles with white blocks—artists, writers, directors, and human rights activists.

For the exhibition in Ekaterinburg, Marina has created an additional calendar for the year 2017. The seventh canvas was left unfinished, thus defining the artwork as work-in-progress, rather than a censorship memorial.

ÖZGÜR DEMIRCI

Director's Cut

2017, film

Shown in Ekaterinburg



Director's Cut is a video collage that contains scenes from the movies that have been censored by the Turkish authorities.

Censorship started with ignoring the Manaki brothers movie in 1905 which was supposed to be the first movie in Turkish history.

According to the authorities, however, the first movie in Turkey was called *Demolition of the Monument at San Stefano (Ayestefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Yıkılışı)*, made by Fuat Uzkınay in 1914.

Until today, no trace of the Manaki brothers' movie can be found.

Films used:

Infinite Road / Bitmeyen Yol
(Director: Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1966)

Dry Summer / Susuz Yaz
(Director: Metin Erksan, 1964)

The Great Hate / Büyük Kin
(Director: Tunç Başaran, 1969)

Revenge of the Snakes / Yılanların Öcü
(Director: Metin Erksan, 1962)

Wall / Duvar
(Director: Yılmaz Güney, 1983)

Frontiers Rule / Hudutlar Kanunu
(Director: Lütfü Ömer Akad, 1966)

Waking in the Dark / Karanlıkta Uyananlar
(Director: Ertem Göreç, 1965)

Hope / Umut
(Director: Yılmaz Güney, 1970)

DIMA FILIPPOV

All I Can Do

2017, digital print

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



All I Can Do is a meditation on self-expression. Inspired by the lack of communication between him and his artist pair in the project, Dima Filippov's visual diary keeps track of the artist's isolation from his daily environment.

Drawing similarities between escapism and self-censorship, Filippov investigates the possibility of revelation through isolation.

EŞREF YILDIRIM

Postcards (Insult)

2017, digital print

Shown in Istanbul and Ekaterinburg



In his *Postcards* series Eşref Yıldırım uses different alphabets ranging from Cyrillic to Urdu to cipher politically charged statements that are subject to censorship in both countries.

In contrast to presenting only a limited number of avoided slogans by opposition groups, Yıldırım's postcards offer people a chance to express their opinions with the help of the medium's anonymity.

Although lacking the visual charm of touristic landmarks, Postcards utilize typographical tools and phonetic plays to give hints about their origin as well as their destination.

