

TAUS MAKHACHEVA

D'une pierre, une montagne

For her first monographic exhibition in France, **Taus Makhacheva** presents at LE CAP – Art Center of Saint-Fons (FR) a set composed of a new installation produced for the occasion, films and postcards. The title of this assemblage, *D'une pierre, une montagne*, recalls the artist's excessive and funny gestures, offering an amused interpretation of the Dagestan culture and essential counterpoint to understanding ours. But the title also says how the mountain is already contained in the stone, that the stone contains the pride of the mountain and that, one inside the other, nothing really separates them.

Taus Makhacheva is known predominantly for her performance and video works that critically examine what happens when different cultures and traditions come into contact with one another. Having grown up in Moscow with cultural origins in the Caucasus region of Dagestan, her artistic practice is informed by this personal connection with the co-existing worlds of pre and post Sovietisation. Oftentimes humorous, her works attempt to test the resilience of images, objects and bodies in today's world. For the exhibition *D'une pierre, une montagne*, the artist has decided to invest LE CAP - Centre d'arts plastiques with four works and an original production. Each one recalls the harshness of nature and the difficult life that has shaped the culture of the Caucasus. Each one contains a wink, an ironic look at cultures from East to West and the misunderstandings that bring them together.

Untitled (Gros Caillou) is a work produced for the exhibition and attributed to **Super Taus**, alter ego of the artist. In 1861, the workers drilling the tunnel for funicular to connect downtown Lyon with the Croix-Rousse plateau, were interrupted by a hard rock, further excavated to become a symbol of the perseverance of Lyon's inhabitants. Respecting nature's ability to stop things, the loose inflatable replica of Gros Caillou blocks the entrance to the exhibition, but unlike the original, can be easily moved or mounted by the visitors, the same way Super Taus moves things.

The video on iPhone **Untitled 1** is also a work attributed to Super Taus. The work is inspired by the Adventures of Super Sohrab, a part-time super hero and an alter ego of Iranian artist Sohrab Kashani. This is a short viral video in which Super Taus intervenes and demonstrates his incredible abilities in front of passive and disbelieving workers.

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D'une pierre, une montagne

16 April – 8 June 2019

Opening

Saturday 13th April, 15p.m.

Access

Free
From Tuesday to
Saturday 14.00-18.00
and by appointment

rue de la Rochette
69190 Saint-Fons, France

Tram T4 Lénine - Corsière
Bus 60 Yves Farge
Bus 93 La Rochette-Clochettes

lecap-saintfons.com

Super Taus
Untitled (Gros Caillou)
2019
Inflatable stone,
dimensions vary
Production supported by
LE CAP - Centre d'arts
plastiques de Saint-Fons

Super Taus
Untitled 1
Dagestan, 2014
Viral video, colour, sound
2.16 min.

Baida is a video of a performance that was to take place daily during the 57th Venice Biennale (2017) in the open waters of the Adriatic Sea, where several performers were supposed to appear and disappear on a capsized boat transported from the Caspian Sea of Dagestan to the open sea in front of the Venice Lagoon. The work evolved from multiple conversations that the artist had with various fishermen living in the village of Starii Terek in Dagestan and working on the Caspian Sea. A recurrent motif in their stories is the risk of being lost at sea and never being found. In the event that a boat capsizes, the fishermen tie themselves to the prow so that their families will be able to find their bodies and mourn. The work reflects on the precarity of human lives struggling for survival, against overwhelming economic and natural forces. At the same it is a comment on the expectations and behavior of art biennial visitors.

Baida
2017. Video, 15.31 min.
Commissioned by the
57th Venice Biennale,
production supported by
Gazprombank and Art
Finance, Moscow.
Scripted by Tim Etchells
Performed by Zubair
Dzhavatkhonov and
Artem Krupin
Voices: Deborah Pearson,
Madeleine Botet de
Lacaze and Andy Field

As Ilna Korolova suggests, underlining the title, **Endeavour** video shows a human figure engaged in the impossible task of moving a massive rock, confronted with the majesty of Nature. The chosen position of the camera emphasises the subordination of the body, but the whole action is also slightly humoristic. In this way, the hopelessness of the undertaking loses its tragic character.

Endeavour
Dagestan, 2010
Video, colour, sound
9.00 min.
Camera: Alexander
Sinyagin

Coming from the personal archive of the artist, **Types du Caucase** postcards date back to the 19th century and can be considered representative of the 'popularised ethnography' of the Russian Empire. Their primitive typology follows the classical rules of exotification: they depict 'pittoresque' groups from various tribes, families or nationalities, or representatives of diverse professions. Tellingly, the captions on the postcards are in Russian and French, which designates them as being for the members of the elites of that time. This collection creates its own 'travelling exhibition space', reflecting on the Caucasus as an eternal 'travel-destination' and a place of conquest–reconquest and ongoing conflict. For the artist, archives emerge from a desire to understand, share, discuss and offer resistance against natural or state-organised amnesia. Makhacheva's collection gives rise to reflection on colonial pictorialism and the construction of 'The Other'. It also functions as its own space of display and analysis. (text: Elena Sorokina)

Types du Caucase
2013 to the present time
Antique postcard col-
lection
From the collection of M
HKA, Antwerp

In **Gamsutl**, the viewer observes a man performing what seems to be a ritual dance among the ruins of the abandoned Avar village of Gamsutl, situated in the Caucasian mountains. In the past, this village has been famous for its skilful jewellers and armourers. Since the seventies, however, Soviet agricultural and industrialisation policy has led to its rapid decay. The dance symbolically re-enacts poses and gestures from 19th century battle paintings, steps from *The Dance of the Collective Farm Brigade Leader* found on the pages of *Soviet Folk Art* magazine published in 1939, and also from the everyday life of the villagers. The human body attempts to physically merge with its surroundings, acting as an agent of re-connection with the 'then' and 'now'.

Gamsutl
Dagestan, 2012
Video, colour, sound
16.01 min.
Production supported by
Gazprombank and Art
Finance, Moscow
Camera: Alexander
Sinyagin
Performer: Usup Omarov
Choreographer: Anna
Abalikhina

Taus Makhacheva (b.1983, lives and works in Moscow, Russia) is graduated of an BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths (2007) and MFA from Royal College of Art (2013). Selected exhibitions: Liverpool Biennial (2018), Yinchuan Biennale (2018), Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2018), Venice Biennial (2017); Garage Triennial of Russian Contemporary Art (Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2017); Museum ON/OFF (Centre Pompidou, 2016); Shanghai Biennial (2016); Kyiv Biennial (2015); Moscow Biennale (2015 and 2011); Sharjah Biennial (2013). Awarded by 6th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art Foundation Prize (Moscow, 2015), "Future of Europe" Prize, Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig, (2014) and the "New Generation – Innovation" State Prize (2012). Represented by narrative projects, London.

Super Taus (b.1983, lives and works in Tsada Mountain village, Russia) graduated of the Department of Philology at the Dagestan Pedagogical State University. Super Taus has been awarded the Kandinsky Prize in 2016 as young artist of the year. Recent group exhibitions and performances include Platform at Armory Show, New York (2019); Alter Heroes Coalition, Mimosa House, London (2018); Supernature in Two Parts, Lisson Gallery, London (2018); Cloud Caught on a Mountain, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (2017); Second World, Third Attempt, Leo Xu Projects, Shanghai (2017); Museum ON / OFF, National Museum of Modern Art - Pompidou Center, Paris, (2016) VII Permanent collection display interaction: Contemporary Artists Respond to MMOMA Collection, MMOMA, Moscow (2016); Vababai Vadadai! *, narrative projects, London (2015).

Curator: Nicolas Audureau

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