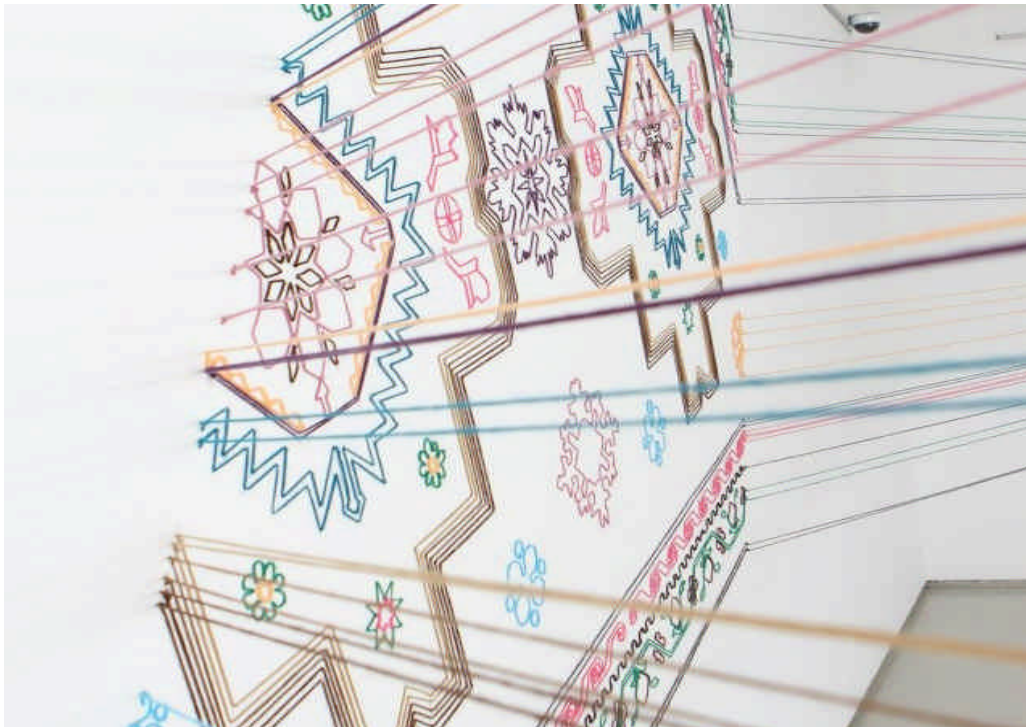


Love Me, Love Me Not
Contemporary Art from Azerbaijan and its Neighbours
Collateral Event for the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

Faig Ahmed, Kutluğ Ataman, Shoja Azari, Ali Banisadr, Ali Hasanov, Orkhan Huseynov, Taus Makhacheva, Farhad Moshiri and Slavs and Tatars, amongst selected artists.



Faig Ahmed, *Untitled*, 2012. Thread Installation, dimensions variable

Love Me, Love Me Not is an unprecedented exhibition of contemporary art from Azerbaijan and its neighbours, featuring recent work by 17 artists from Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, Russia, and Georgia. Produced and supported by YARAT, a not-for-profit contemporary art organisation based in Baku, and curated by Dina Nasser-Khadivi, the exhibition will be open to the public from **1st June until 24th November 2013** at Tesa 100, Arsenale Nord, at The 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia.

Artists featured:

Faig Ahmed (Azerbaijan)
 Rashad Alakbarov (Azerbaijan)
 Afruz Amighi (Iran)
 Kutluğ Ataman (Turkey)
 Shoja Azari (Iran)
 Rashad Babayev (Azerbaijan)
 Mahmoud Bakhshi (Iran)
 Ali Banisadr (Iran)

Ali Hasanov (Azerbaijan)
 Orkhan Huseynov (Azerbaijan)
 Sitara Ibrahimova (Azerbaijan)
 Aida Mahmudova (Azerbaijan)
 Taus Makhacheva (Russia)
 Farhad Moshiri (Iran)
 Farid Rasulov (Azerbaijan)
 Slavs and Tatars ('Eurasia')
 Iliko Zautashvili (Georgia)

"Each piece in this exhibition has a role of giving the viewers at least one new perspective on the nations represented in this pavilion, with the mere intent to give a better understanding of the area that is being covered. Showcasing work by these artists in a single exhibition aims to, ultimately, question how we each perceive history and geography. Art enables dialogue and the Venice Biennale has proven to be the best arena for cultural exchange." explains curator Dina Nasser-Khadivi.

The exhibition offers a diverse range of media and subject matter, with video, installation and painting all on show. Pieces range from those steeped in historical reference, to those with more site-specific responses through to those which are inspired by personal history.

Faig Ahmed takes the motifs found in Azerbaijani carpets as a starting point for his work, reinterpreting these to underline the rapid shift Azerbaijan is experiencing towards modernity. His thread installation **Untitled** (2012) deconstructs the notions of craft inherent to the traditional process of weaving, extending the usual two-dimensional plane of the finished carpet across a three-dimensional space.

Kutluğ Ataman's video installation **Mesopotamian Dramaturgies / Column** (2009) is inspired by the Trajan Column in Rome and was originally commissioned for the MAXXI (National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome). A tower of 42 used TV screens each feature the silent face a villager from Erzincan in Eastern Turkey, Ataman's place of origin. This key work is both an attempt to show a story without narration as well as a tribute to the history of Anatolian people, who he sees as silenced throughout history.

In his most ambitious project to date, **Shoja Azari** will show a specially commissioned film which recreates the *Haft Paykar*, the romantic epic of the 12th century, by Nizami of Ganja. *Haft Paykar* or *Seven Beauties* is an allegorical romance, which takes self-knowledge as the essential path to human enlightenment as its central theme.

Ali Banisadr will be producing his largest work to date for the exhibition, in the form of a triptych inspired by the pervasive symbolism of fire and light. These elements, prevalent in both Azerbaijan and Iran, relate to the origins of Zoroastrianism as well as the etymology of 'Azerbaijan,' which derives from the Persian name for 'Guardians of Fire'. Through effective use of colour and painterly control, Banisadr translates the imagery of his childhood, his extensive understanding of art history, and his sharp observations of everyday life onto canvas, capturing insightful details of humanity with movement, energy, and abstraction. Banisadr's works are housed in public collections worldwide including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Saatchi Gallery and the British Museum in London.

Ali Hasanov, from Azerbaijan, uses a contemporary appropriation of everyday materials. His work **Masters** (2012) features hundreds of "veniki" (brooms made of bundled twig and common in post-Soviet countries) which are bound together to form a sculptural whole.

Taus Makhacheva, will re-produce a film, recently shown at the Liverpool Biennale about an abandoned silk-road city **Gamsutl** (2012) through a young male protagonist who "dances" to enact

the fragmented qualities of the city, now half forgotten.

Slavs & Tatars' installation entitled *Molla Nasreddin The Antimodernist* (2011) is a life-size sculpture as a playground "ride" for adults and children alike and refers to the popular Sufi philosopher of the 13th century. By creating works that can be directly engaged with by the public, the collective addresses notions such as generosity and participation through the disarming use of humour. *Molla Nasreddin* also refers to the legendary Azerbaijani satirical periodical of the early 20th century, which not only contributed to a crucial understanding of national identity, but offered a momentous example of the powers of the press. In their installation *Love Me, Love Me Not*, the collective pluck the petals off the past to reveal an impossibly thorny stem: entire metropolises are caught like children in the spiteful back and forth of a custody battle, representing the evolution of the region over time - a theme which is at the core of this exhibition.

By bringing artists from Azerbaijan and its surrounding region together in one exhibition, *Love Me, Love Me Not* will create new perspectives on the contemporary art of Azerbaijan, as well as that of Iran, Turkey, Russia and Georgia.

The catalogue:

Edited by curator Dina Nasser-Khadivi and Farah Rahim Ismail, contributors to catalogue include:

- Nada Raza, *Assistant Curator at Tate Modern*
- Nicholas Cullinan, *Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at Metropolitan Museum of Art*
- Negar Azimi, *writer and Senior Editor of Bidoun Projects*
- Monica Steinberg, *PhD Candidate, The Graduate Center, City University of New York*
- Suad Garayeva, *writer and curator specializing in Contemporary Art from Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus.*
- Slavs and Tatars, *a faction of polemics and intimacies devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. The collective's work spans several media, disciplines, and a broad spectrum of cultural registers (high and low) focusing on an oft-forgotten sphere of influence between Slavs, Caucasians and Central Asians.*

Love Me, Love Me Not is produced by YARAT contemporary art organisation, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion and nurturing of contemporary art in Azerbaijan.

For press information and images please contact:

Anna Cusden or Sophie Furse at Pelham Communications

Tel: +44 20 8969 3959

Email: anna@pelhamcommunications.com or sophie@pelhamcommunications.com

Notes to Editors:

Exhibition details

Title: Love Me, Love Me Not

Location: Arsenale Nord, Tesa 100, Venice, Italy

Exhibition dates: 1 June until 24 November (open to the public)

Vaporetto stop: to get to Arsenale Nord the closest are Bacini and Celestia stops, vaporetto lines 5.1, 5.2, 4.1, 4.2

Directions to access: By clicking the link below you will find a map with the two stops, the shuttle and Tesa 100 pointed out.

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=200760762308548777660.0004db95b4106388708a1&msa=0&ll=45.437188,12.356079&spn=0.003572,0.0064>

Website: www.loveme-lovemenot.com

Twitter: @LMLMN_Yarat **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Love-Me-Love-Me-Not>

About YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation:

Founded in 2011 by Aida Mahmudova, YARAT is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to nurturing an understanding of contemporary art in Azerbaijan and to creating a platform for Azerbaijani art, both nationally and internationally.

Based in Baku, YARAT, (which means CREATE in Azerbaijani) realises its mission through an ongoing program of exhibitions, education events, and festivals. YARAT facilitates dialogue and exchange between local and international artistic networks, including foundations, galleries and museums. A series of residencies further fosters opportunities for global cultural dialogue and partnerships.

YARAT's educational initiatives include lectures, seminars, master classes, and the Young Artist Project ARTIM (meaning PROGRESS in Azerbaijani). ARTIM aims to encourage the next generation of Azerbaijani creative talent to seek a career in the arts and gives young practitioners the opportunity to exhibit their works in a professional context.

Founded as part of YARAT's ongoing commitment to growing local art infrastructure, YAY Gallery is a commercial exhibition space. In line with this, YAY (meaning SHARE in Azerbaijani) shares all proceeds from sales between the artist and YARAT and supports a range of national and international artists.

About the Curator:

Dina Nasser-Khadivi is an independent curator and consultant, specialising in Contemporary art from the Middle East, Iran and selected areas of the Caucasus. Originally a 19/20th century Orientalist art specialist at Christie's, Dina began to work with Middle Eastern and Iranian Contemporary art in 2006, developing an international platform for the artists by organising numerous awareness-raising initiatives, such as the landmark symposium An Introduction to the World of Iranian Modern and Contemporary Art held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles in the fall of 2010. With projects that have included curating private collections and advising major institutions, Dina divides her practice between New York, London, Geneva, and Dubai.

Over the last three years Dina's shift towards the Caucasus region has been driven by an affinity with the people and culture of Azerbaijan, a neighbouring country of her native Iran, and her interest in the artists who belong to the growing contemporary art scene in Baku in particular.

Sponsors:



A consumer company with a number of brands in Azerbaijan



A market-leading brand of juice in Azerbaijan

Artists' biographies:

Faig Ahmed (b. 1982) deconstructs motifs and formulae of Azerbaijani carpets, which remain a popular art form on walls and floors across Azerbaijan its neighbours. Making two-dimensional arrangements into sculptural and spatial objects, and mixing hand-woven carpet elements with fibreglass forms, he offers a contemporary vision of a cultural icon.

After graduating from the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Art (2004), Ahmed represented Azerbaijan in their first appearance at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. Selected exhibitions include: "Fly To Baku", London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013); Sharjah Islamic Art Festival, Sharjah, UAE (2012); Museum of Modern Art Baku, Azerbaijan (2012); 012 Baku Public Art Festival (2012) Kunsthalleim Lipsiusbau, Dresden, Germany (2008); 52nd Venice Biennale, Azerbaijan Pavilion (2007); Caucasus, National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia (2006).

Faig Ahmed lives and works in Azerbaijan.

Rashad Alakbarov (b. 1979) uses installations involving incongruous objects and coloured shadows to play upon expectation and allude to cultural issues. For the 55th Venice Biennale, he will create an installation focusing on the development of the Azerbaijani alphabet which was changed over three times in the past seventy years, reflecting as such the nation's history, identity and evolution.

After graduating from the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Art (2001), Alakbarov was chosen to represent Azerbaijan at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. Selected exhibitions include "Fly To Baku", London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013), Sharjah Islamic Art Festival, Sharjah, UAE (2012); YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012); 012 Baku Public Art Festival (2012); Den Frie Centre for Contemporary Art Copenhagen (2010); 52nd Venice Biennale, Azerbaijan pavilion (2007).

Rashad Alakbarov lives and works in Azerbaijan.

Afroz Amighi (b. 1974) reflects upon history to create her multimedia installations. She has an in-depth and critical understanding of Iran's visual culture, from both an insider and outsider point of view. Her largest work to date, specially commissioned for the 55th Venice Biennale, focuses on the crossroads of culture at the Biennale itself as well as the history of Eurasian exchange. Developed from a parable about a contest between Chinese and Greek artists by Jalal al din Rumi, it fuses patterns of Venetian lace with water, shadow and architectural design.

Selected group exhibitions include Museum of Art and Design, New York (2012); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2012); Museum of Fine Art, Houston, Texas (2010); Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2009). Selected solo exhibitions include "Suspended City", Bloom Projects, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, California (2012); "The State Within", Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York (2011); "Angels in Combat", Isabelle Van Den Eynde Gallery, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2010).

Afroz Amighi lives and works in New York City.

Kutlug Ataman (b. 1961) Considered to be one of the forerunners of a new language in film and video art blurring the lines between fiction and reality, Kutlug Ataman's work focuses on individual and collective identities, as well as historical and geographical narratives as constructs, revealing the ways in which identities are constantly re-written and negotiated. For the 55th Venice Biennale Ataman will show the work Column from the Mesopotamian Dramaturgies (2009) a video sculpture commissioned by The British School at Rome, Italy; Francesca Minini, Milan, Italy; The Henry Moore Foundation, UK; MAXXI -National Museum of the XXI Century Arts, Rome, Italy and UniCredit Group, Italy. Inspired by the Trajan Column in Rome, revisited in the Eastern context, Column is a tower constructed with 42 used TV monitors facing outwards, with each one showing the expressive face of a villager from Eastern Turkey, all of whom are completely and decidedly silent. It is an attempt by the artist to tell a story without any narration as well as a tribute to the history of Anatolian

peoples silenced in political, economical and cultural oppression throughout the entire history of the region. Ataman was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2004, the same year he won the Carnegie International Prize. Recipient of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2009 and European Cultural Foundation's Princess Margriet Award in 2011, Ataman's works have been shown in Istanbul (1997, 2003, 2007), Venice (1999), Sao Paulo (2002, 2010) and Berlin (2001) Biennales, as well as in Documenta (2002). Recent solo exhibitions include ARTER, Istanbul (2011); Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (2010); MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts, Rome (2010); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2009) and Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz (2009). His upcoming exhibitions include Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2013) and Galeri Mana, Istanbul (2013). Kutlug Ataman lives and works in Istanbul, Islamabad and London.

Shoja Azari (b. 1958) is a visual artist/filmmaker who uses film, painting and photography to create striking and culturally referenced works. In 1998, Shoja met the renowned visual artist Shirin Neshat and together they started a close collaboration still continuing today. Amongst their most famous projects was *Turbulent* a double screen film installation, which won the Golden Lion in Venice in 1998 and *Rapture* (1999) which was acclaimed as "a masterpiece" by Arthur Danto. In the following years, Shoja and Shirin produced more than 15 film/art installations that have been exhibited widely in museums and art festivals around the globe. In 2000, Shoja adapted three short stories of Kafka into a trilogy and presented it as his first feature film *K* which premiered at the Venice film festival in 2002. *Women Without Men*, a feature film written and directed in collaboration with Neshat won the Silver Lion in Venice in 2010. Based on the controversial novel by Shahrnush Parsipour the film interweaved the lives of four Iranian women in the summer of 1953 -a pivotal moment in Iranian history during an American-led coup d'état. For the 55th Venice Art Biennale Azari is doing his most ambitious project to date, a 25 minutes video projection which will tell the story of the Black dome, or King of Benighted from the romantic epic poem of the 12th century poet Nezami Ganjavi's "Haft Paykar" or "Seven Beauties". Completed in 1197 by the poet Nizami of Ganja, it is an allegorical romance of great beauty and depth, and its central theme of self-knowledge as the path to human perfection is conveyed in rich and vivid imagery and complex symbolism. Shoja is using contemporary actors set within the background of Persian miniature to tell his story. Selected exhibitions include: Solo Exhibition, Leila Heller Gallery, New York (forthcoming 2013); VIP Art Fair, New York (2012), *The Elephant in the Dark*, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India (2012); *Live Art/Expanded*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK; *Special Project*, Marco Noire Contemporary Arts, Basel Art Fair, Switzerland (2007); *Project Rooms*, ARCO, Madrid, Spain (2006). Shoja Azari lives and works in New York City.

Rashad Babayev (b. 1979) is a painter and installation maker who works in a variety of ways, calling upon beliefs and symbols to create works, or simply using abstract compositions to explore colour. For the 55th Venice Biennale, Babayev plans to bring a real fig tree to recreate the symbolic attachment many have to "the Tree of Wishes." On this tree in Ashperon, Azerbaijan, many hundreds of scarves representing individual wishes are secured each year. Babayev's installation however, critiques this ritual through attaching scarves that include, for example, designer brands, to imply the materialist wishes increasingly prevalent in the country. Selected exhibitions include: *Fly To Baku*, London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013), *Commonist YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation*, Baku, Azerbaijan, *Merging Bridges*, MOMA, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012). Rashad Babayev lives and works in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Mahmoud Bakhshi (b. 1977) creates remarkably subversive work, commenting on the hypocrisy he sees around him. In *Verdicts of Looking* (2008) mannequins wearing the hijab have hollowed-out plastic eyes with explicit videos showing inside them, aimed at confronting the hypocritical modesty imposed on the public sphere. For *Air Pollution of Iran* (2004 -2006), he framed Iranian flags stained by the capital city's pollution of the atmosphere. For this year's Venice Biennale he will parody the oil wealth of the region by creating a fountain of oil that flows down a stepped, tin-plate pyramid.

Mahmoud's work is included in the permanent collection of the Tate Modern. His exhibitions have included: Art Gwangju, South Korea (2012); Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris (2011); Delfina Foundation (2010); the Barbican, London (2008). Prizes include the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize, which enabled him to have a solo show at the Saatchi Gallery in London in September 2010. Mahmoud Bakhshi lives and works in Tehran.

Ali Banisadr (b. 1976). Through effective use of colour and painterly control, Banisadr translates the imagery of his childhood, his extensive understanding of art history, and his sharp observations of everyday life onto canvas, capture insightful details of humanity with movement, energy, and abstraction. For Banisadr, painting is his means of visually understanding the world, and is a medium through which emotions, ideas, and sensations successfully come together. Banisadr's works are housed in prestigious public collections worldwide including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Saatchi Gallery, the British Museum in London and the Museum der Moderne Salzburg amongst others. Selected Exhibitions include: Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg (2012); Green Art Gallery, Dubai (2012); Leslie Tonkonow Artworks, New York (2011); Gemeente Museum, The Hague (2011); the Saatchi Gallery, London (2009).

Ali Banisadr was born in Tehran, Iran and currently lives and works in New York.

Ali Hasanov (b. 1976) is an artist, musician and filmmaker. His works have explored media in all three areas, with a notable project Arsenium (performed in 2012) inspired by the landmark performance of Symphony of Sirens by a Russian Avant Garde composer Arseni Avraamov, in Azerbaijan in 1922. Creating an animation and musical score to commemorate this, a performance took place on the docks, with full choir and brass band to accompany it.

Hasanov graduated from the Azerbaijani State University of Culture and the Arts and received a degree in Filmmaking from Baku International Film School. He represented Azerbaijan at the 52nd Venice Biennale and selected exhibitions include: Fly To Baku, London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013) Museum of Contemporary Art, Perm, Russia (2011); Deop, Istanbul (2009); Mars Gallery, Moscow (2009); National Centre for Contemporary Art, Moscow (2006). Ali is also the founder and leader of a musical collective called PG Large Used Project.

He lives and works in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Orkhan Huseynov (b. 1978) creates work that is playful and peculiar, in media including video, computer prints and plastic sculptures. With plexi-glass and computer imaging he creates child-like images that at first seem innocuous but may refer to oil wealth, political power, or religious space travel.

Orkhan Huseynov graduated from the Azimzadeh State Art College (1995) and the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Art (1999), before going on to complete his Master's degree at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Art in Baku. He represented Azerbaijan at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. He works in a variety of media from painting to installation but his works are united by their celebration of Azeri customs and history. Selected exhibitions include: Fly To Baku, London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013), Communist YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation, Baku, Azerbaijan, Merging Bridges, MOMA, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012).

He lives and works in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Sitara Ibrahimova (b. 1984) creates work that is largely photographic, with some recorded performance work. She looks at many subjects, from everyday domestic spaces to memorabilia of people who left for war and never returned. Varying from emotive portraits to images of deserted areas and abandoned objects, each project sets out new questions for the viewer. In her work titled The Edge Ibrahimova's photographs capture the human experience beyond political or geographical borders, often alluding to forms of historical and collective memory. Her images focus on emotive instances conveyed through an individual's facial expression or pose, or expressed by a fragment or an absence. The compositions capture the poignant moments that

characterize the everyday and encourage viewers to construct a narrative around each dramatic composition. The series of photos collected for this exhibition similarly seeks to both capture and convey the challenges and complications associated with historical and collective memory in the Karabakh region. The project consists of scenes of a now abandoned town that exists on the border of multiple political, cultural, and social groups. Sitara Ibrahimova completed her first degree in Psychology at Baku State University (2004), before graduating in Still Photography from the FAMU University in Prague (2010). Selected exhibitions include: Commonist, YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012), USSR Remix, Prague, Czech Republic (2011), 7, Photo Festival, Tbilisi, Georgia (2010). She lives and works in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Aida Mahmudova (b. 1982) is both an artist and the founder and director of YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation. She creates multimedia sculpture, paintings and installations; many of which recall memories of specific places or a sense of place. One of Mahmudova's concerns is the rapid modernisation of Azerbaijan since the republic gained independence from the Soviet Union; this fuels her paintings of what she calls 'untouched places' that are often barren or featureless locations outside of the city. Her public art work *Recycled*, which now stands by the site of an old puppet theatre in Baku, uses windows from a beautiful building that once stood opposite her home. When it was knocked down she felt she had to acquire the windows, several years later she was able to make an art piece out of them. Aida Mahmudova graduated with a degree in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins, London. She has solo upcoming exhibitions in Zurich and Baku and has exhibited in numerous galleries in Baku including Philips de Pury (2012). In 2011, Mahmudova founded YARAT contemporary art organisation. Selected Exhibitions include: *Fly To Baku*, London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013), Commonist YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation, Baku, Azerbaijan, *Merging Bridges*, MOMA, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012). She lives and works in Baku and London.

Taus Makhacheva (b. 1983) is an artist exploring her nascent regions (Dagestan, the Russian Caucasus Mountains) and the people, places and behaviours that are significant in it. Makhacheva's work is often imbued with nostalgia and loneliness and in others with critical themes, such as masculinity, or ideas of luxury in USSR. Previous works have included a set of films exposing games of masculinity in her local region, such as dog fighting and car racing; for the 55th Venice Biennale she will re-produce a film about an abandoned silk-road city Gamsutl through a young male protagonist who "dances" to re-enact the fragmented and largely forgotten history of the settlement. Exhibitions include: the Liverpool Biennial (2012); *Aluminium* at the Baku IV International Biennale, Milan, *Impronte Contemporary Art* (2011); *Moscow Museum of Modern Art* (2010). She was educated at Goldsmiths College in London and later studied at the RCA. Taus Makhacheva lives and works between Moscow and Makhachkala.

Farhad Moshiri (b. 1963) is known for his satirical depictions of consumerist culture in Iran and abroad. He uses unusual materials and his play on iconic images, be they of popular or traditional figures. Using objects from knives and icing dispensers to Swarovski crystals, he offers a novel and boundary-pushing interpretation of culture in Iran. Fusing religious imagery with childish cartoons, using weapons to spell-out statements or imitation cupcakes to mark out a chalk silhouette, he employs the playful to spell out the sinister and satirize the iconic. Group Exhibitions include: *ARTandPRESS*, Martin Gropius-Bau Museum, Berlin (2012), *The World Belongs to You*, François Pinault Collection, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy (2011), Raad O Bargh, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, France, *Iran Inside Out*, Chelsea Art Museum, New York (2009). Solo Exhibitions include: *The Fire of Joy*, Galerie Perrotin, Paris 2012; *Shukran*, The Third Line Gallery, Dubai; *Love is not Everything*, Farjam Collection, Dubai, 2011. He lives and works between Tehran and Paris.

Farid Rasulov (b. 1985) produces installations, sculptures, photographs and paintings that play upon modernity and its relation to visual elements of the past. He denies symbolic meanings in his work, which are piqued with humour and often relate to the rapid modernisation of Azerbaijan by calling upon familiar Azerbaijani visual elements. His installation for the 55th Venice Biennale will combine concrete and “Shebeke” (stained-glass window frames and gratings assembled from standard wooden components held together only by dowels and frequently ornamented with pieces of varicoloured glass and they were in wide use in the 18th and 19th century Azerbaijani architecture. They can only be found in the city of Shaki). By combining simple cement with this ornamented stained glass, the artist shows the contrast between the old and the new, past and present, evolution of a nation from tradition to modernization and globalization.

Farid Rasulov originally trained as a Doctor at the Azerbaijan State Medical University. Since becoming an artist, he has represented Azerbaijan at the 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009 and selected exhibitions include: Selected exhibitions include Fly To Baku, London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Rome (2012-2013), Sharjah Islamic Art Festival, Sharjah, UAE (2012); Commonist YARAT Contemporary Art Organisation, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012); 012 Baku Public Art Festival (2012); 53rd Venice Biennale, Azerbaijan pavilion (2009).

He lives and works in Azerbaijan.

Slavs and Tatars (est. 2006) is a faction of polemics and intimacies devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. The collective’s work spans several media, disciplines, and a broad spectrum of cultural registers (high and low) focusing on an oft-forgotten sphere of influence between Slavs, Caucasians and Central Asians. The piece Molla Nasreddin The Antimodernist (2012) was produced by Slavs and Tatars into a life-size sculpture as a playground “ride” for adults and children alike. Molla Nasreddin The Antimodernist also refers to the legendary Azerbaijani satirical periodical Molla Nasreddin of the early 20th century, which not only contributed to a crucial understanding of national identity in the case study of the complexity called the Caucasus, but offered a momentous example of the powers of the press both then and today.

Recently published works include Molla Nasreddin: the magazine that would’ve, could’ve, should’ve (2011), Love Me, Love Me Not: Changed Names (2010) and Kidnapping Mountains (2009), Not Moscow Not Mecca (2012) and Khhhhhh (2012), Their forthcoming book is titled: Friendship of Nations: Polish Shi’ite Showbiz. Selected solo exhibitions include: the Dallas Museum of Art, USA, (2014 -forthcoming); GfZK, Leipzig and Arsenal (2014-forthcoming); REDCAT, Los Angeles (2013); Kunstlerhaus, Stuttgart (2013); Museum Of Modern Art New York (2012); Selected Group shows include: participation in the 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012), Secession, Vienna (2012) New Museum Triennial (2012), Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten Gent (2011); and a group exhibition at Tate Modern (2011) the 10th Sharjah Biennale and 3rd Thessaloniki Biennials (2011).

The collective live and work in ‘Eurasia.’

Iliko Zautashvili (b.1952) is an artist and professor of Art History at the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts. A regular speaker at conferences he has participated in many exhibitions as a visual artist, but also as a director of video and cinema. He has founded several important centres and initiatives in Tbilisi such as the National Art Center and the “Artactive Evolution”. Selected exhibitions include: Nampo Art Museum (2012); Atlantis, Palazzo Zenobio, Collateral Event at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); Museum of Georgian Literature (2010); Born in Georgia, Cobra Museum, Netherlands (2009); Emergency Biennale in Chechnya Artisterium (2009), Art Center Zamok, Uyezdovski, Warsaw, (2009); Voyage a Tbilisi, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, France (2009); 2nd Asian Contemporary Art Fair, New York (2008); Beyond Stereotypes, Art Caucasus, Tbilisi, Georgia (2005); Aspect de la Photographie Contemporaine du Caucase du Sud, Centre d’Art Contemporain, Brussels, Belgium (2004).

Iliko Zautashvili lives and works in Tbilisi, Georgia.