

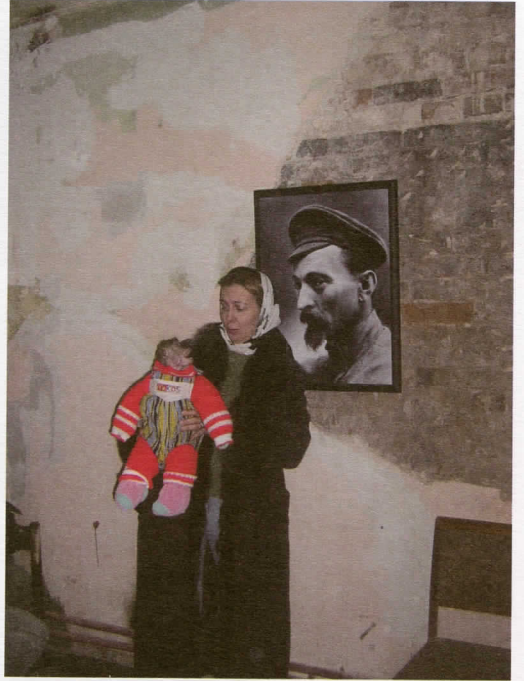


TRUST WORKSHOP

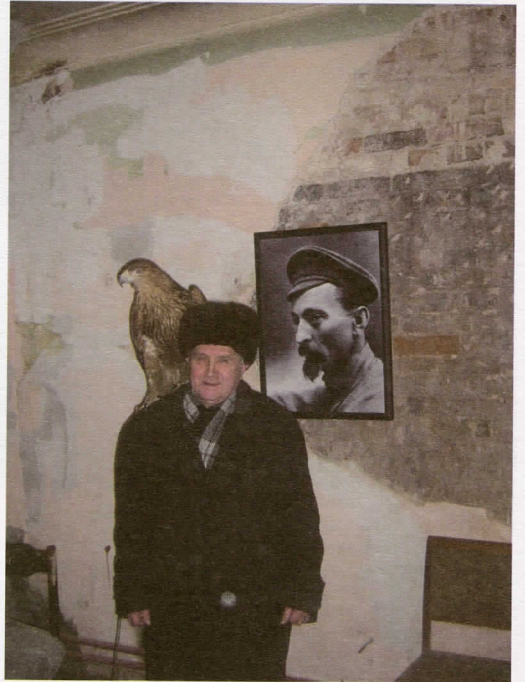
-OPENING CEREMONY-
RUSSIA 2007

A PROJECT BY TANIA BRUGUERA

The "Trust Workshop"
is a year long project



consisting of a space set
up to enable Russians to
share and resolve their
trust issues



ORKSHOP



with a workshop conductor, an ex-KGB agent.



The retired agent giving the service should have worked during the times of the cold-war Soviet, needed for his specific skill set instilled by the training program in a reversed manner.

Instead of using training given by the secret service for surveillance, propaganda, and persecution of the Socialist defectors,



the agent uses these skills to repair the psychological damage inflicted to victims of the era.





Such damage has combined with new challenges brought on by the new society to become a source of major impact on Russia's current political system.



The project tries also to propose a way in which a large section of the population, rendered unemployed after the fall of the Socialist Era, could be re-activated by updating their previous skills under the new conditions of the social and political system in Russia towards new goals.

The Russians attending the workshop can address trust issues in a range going from their personal and family life to the government.



The ultimate goal of the workshop is to develop a sense of trust amongst the attendants





and break free of negative
preconceptions



associated with those in
the government.

Rather than create objects or events, I've chosen as an artist to embark on a series of works where I create temporal institutions that embed the contradictions they are dealing with as their symbolic dimension/capital. How to present this project to the art world poses an ethical question. Accordingly, the only appropriate audience for such a work is the group of Russians for whom the work was created. I solved this problem of exhibition by a formal announcement of this project's title, *Opening Reception*, at its commencement during the second Moscow Biennial. Display in this case means not a public showing, but an announcement of its existence. The existence then lies in either the imagination and speculation of the audience, or a real event conducted in the same discrete way in which the secret police work. The art world then serves as an advertisement space for the project with no concrete physical evidence.

For years, I have worked with the concept of fear as a powerful manipulative tool. In this piece, the initial fear was transformed into a comfort zone that slowly dissolved into a deeper and more permanent horror, being manipulated with our permission. Going into a room where you are entertained and where you can fantasise on your "family picture" being taken by nice and very energetic young people providing domesticated animals dressed as babies, covers the very fact of the act and the picture of Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky, the creator of the Bolshevik secret police, the "Cheka"; later the Committee for State Security or KGB. From almost 76 people whose pictures were taken during the 2 hours opening reception, only one person declined their participation after seeing the portrait on the wall, it was a middle age Russian.

The relationship between reality and art is one that has been explored endlessly – but oftentimes the art produced under such parameters only relays its existence in a representative manner recognised only in the art world. Such projects evade their responsibility as an active part of the reality that they are meant to address, and as a result what should be strategy exists only as a tactic. The works I create inhabit the parallel worlds of art and the reality of the addressed issue, encouraging audiences on either side to cross over and gain a deeper knowledge of the issue at hand. Ultimately I am interested in developing creative and symbolic activities seen as novel by both worlds.

Tania Bruguera
March 2007