

**CONDITIONS FOR SHOWING "Trust Workshop / Untitled  
(Moscow, 2007)"**

**1- Credits**

Title: Trust Workshop / Untitled (Moscow, 2007)

Year: 2007

Medium: use of psychology techniques

Materials: Ex – KGB agent, street photographers, eagles, monkeys, photographic paper, printer, ink.

Dimensions: 13.12' x 9.84' x 6.56'

**2- One paragraph description of the piece (suggested):**

*Trust Workshop / Untitled (Moscow, 2007)* It consists of a space fitted out to enable Russians to share and solve their problems of trust in a workshop led by a former KGB agent.

**3- Conditions for showing Trust Workshop / Untitled  
(Moscow, 2007):**

**I- Context for the presentation of the work:**

a) A former KGB member active during the Soviet Government period should be found.

b) The former agent should make use of the benefits acquired in his psychological training and experience manipulating the collaborators to extract information so the person finds solution to his or her problems of adaptability to and reliance on the new post-socialist society.

c) Sessions should be held in an unidentified place not functioning as a museum or an art center in the moment the piece is made.

d) In a not very visible place in meeting room where the sessions are to be held there should be a framed picture of Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky no larger than 6 x 4 inches.

e) Participants will be those who answer the advertisement. Sessions entirely covered by people who know that this is an art piece, a part of an exhibition or who belong to the world of art should be avoided. The ideal audience would be people who had had an experience of psychological persecution or are having difficulties adapting to a post-totalitarian society.

## **II – How to announce / promote the piece:**

a) An advertisement of a service of psychological aid will be placed in a newspaper. The advertisement will never mention it is as an art piece or present it as such.

b) The fact that the person offering the service and conducting the session is a former KGB agent will not be mentioned in the advertisement or during the sessions.

c) Tania Bruguera's name may appear in the promotional materials of the exhibition, but the piece should not be revealed to the general public or the media before it ends. This included group exhibitions.

## **III – How to produce the piece:**

a) A former KGB agent in active service during the Soviet period (before 1990) will be hired. It is important that he had been a trained agent belonging to the security service and not a collaborator.

b) The former KGB agent will check the place where the sessions will be held and he will try to reproduce the conditions in which he used to meet with his collaborators when still on active service.

c) During the sessions, the former agent should use individual approach techniques through psychological scrutiny and emotional manipulation as used and recommended in the manuals when he was in active service. It is important that the result obtained with the use of these techniques, contrary to their original use, restores their lost trust to the participants in the sessions or does away with the paranoia acquired during the totalitarian era. The intention of this interaction is to subvert the techniques once used for surveillance, obtaining information for the government, hunting detractors of the system in power and promoting elements of ideological propaganda. It also intends to revert the consequences created by the implementation of these techniques in those times, as repression of citizens and suspicion on the structures of society, which infiltrated the individual and family life of many and remain as a mark transcending ideologies

#### **IV – Documentation resulting from the piece:**

a) The documentation on the piece may be shown provided the work sessions have ended. It should never be shown simultaneously so as to protect the former agent and not predispose participants before they undergo the experience. This includes documentation on the piece when previously performed.

b) Once the work sessions end, the entire information on the piece may be revealed to the press and the public in general.

c) During the work sessions, audio and video recording will be made and stills will be taken. These will be made under instructions of the former agent and will reproduce the surveillance techniques used during his meetings with collaborators and were collected and stored in the KGB files.

d) In case of using visual materials (videos or stills), all identification of the agent should be deleted.

e) Documentation should be preferably accompanied by information explaining the piece, whether in a descriptive paragraph or exhibiting the document with the conditions to perform the piece.

**V – How to hold the piece when there are no KGB agents who have worked under Soviet Socialism. How to hold it in a country other than Russia.**

a) This piece can only be held in countries that have lived under totalitarianism and ideological persecution, whatever their ideology might have been.

b) In case it is exhibited in Russia and no former KGB agents from the socialist stage survive or in case of exhibiting it in other countries, the equivalent of an already dismantled national security agency that has used surveillance techniques which had caused psychological damage, citizen fear and paranoia should be found.

Rather than create objects or events, as an artist, I have chosen 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 the 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 or access, but an announcement of the project's existence. The existence then lies in the imagination and speculation of the audience, or a real event conducted in the same discrete way in which the secret police works. 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, initial fear was transformed into a comfort zone that slowly dissolved into a deeper and more permanent horror when manipulated with our permission. Entering a room where you are entertained and can fantasize on your "family picture" being taken by nice and very energetic young people providing tame animals dressed as babies, covers the very fact of the act, as does the picture of Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky, the creator of the Bolshevik secret police, the "Cheka," later the Committee for State Security or KGB. Of almost 76 people taking pictures during the two-hour opening reception, only one declined to participate after seeing his portrait on the wall. It was a middle-aged Russian man.

The relationship between reality and art has been endlessly explored; but oftentimes art produced under such parameters only relays its existence in a representative manner that only the art world can recognize. 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 the audiences on either side to cross over and gain a deeper knowledge of the issue at hand.



TANIA BRUGUERA

March, 2007