

# I DECIDED NOT TO SAVE THE WORLD

## TATE Modern & SALT Exhibition Collaboration

Curators: Duygu Demir and Kyla McDonald

Tate Modern  
Level 2 Gallery  
November 4, 2011 – January 8, 2012  
SALT Beyoğlu  
March 20 – May 20, 2012

In 2011, London-based Tate Modern initiated a new exhibition series based on a program of international collaborations involving reciprocal research and curatorial exchanges for its Level 2 Gallery. As a national museum exhibiting international modern art, Tate Modern is developing collaborations with partner organizations in the Middle East, Asia Pacific, South America, Africa and Eastern Europe. For the fourth exhibition in this international series, Tate has partnered with SALT.

In the past year, a curator from each venue – Kyla McDonald from Tate Modern and Duygu Demir from SALT – undertook short research residencies in İstanbul and London, respectively. This process resulted in *I decided not to save the world*, an exhibition that took place at Tate Modern from November 4, 2011 - January 8, 2012 and featured four emerging artists. The exhibition is now traveling to İstanbul and will be on view on the 1st floor of SALT Beyoğlu from March 20 until May 20, 2012.

Curious acts and apparently small gestures unite the works in this exhibition. Artists Mounira Al Solh, Yto Barrada, Mircea Cantor and the collective Slavs and Tatars devise playful interventions into their everyday environments, combining social commentary and investigation with humor or irony to throw off our habits of thinking. Emerging from the specific contexts in which they are working, the light-hearted approach of these works belies the artists' acute socio-political insights.

The title of the exhibition is taken from Mircea Cantor's 2011 video of the same name, in which a single take of a child saying, "I decided not to save the world" is shown on a continuous loop. The work is emblematic of the complexity that underlies the simplest of statements, and is typical of the way Cantor responds to contemporary concerns using simple and direct gestures.

Yto Barrada is known for the playful nature of her work, rooted in the specific context of Tangier, Morocco, where she lives and works. Her sculpture, manifesto and film included in this exhibition use humor and satire to address the country's rapid modernization.

*Rawane's Song* (2006), an autobiographical video by Mounira Al Solh, is a witty take on her struggle to make work about the Lebanese wars in the wake of the previous generation of Beirut artists. Ironically, it ends up addressing exactly the issues she claims to be avoiding.

Slavs and Tatars' practice examines a region it describes as "east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China." Its text-based works are taken from a variety of sources and play with double-meanings, mistranslation, language barriers and notions of the dichotomy between east and west.

## Curators

Duygu Demir is a programmer for SALT Research & Programs. Duygu worked on the inaugural exhibition at SALT Beyoğlu, *I am not a studio artist*, a retrospective of Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin that opened in April 2011, and was the editor of a comprehensive publication that accompanied the exhibition. She also organized *Across the Slope* – Ahmet Ögüt, the first in a series of projects titled *Modern Essays*, and most recently worked on another institutional collaboration, *İstanbul Eindhoven SALTVanAbbe: Post '89*. Duygu has contributed to magazines and online platforms including *Art Asia Pacific*, *Articulus*, *Art Unlimited*, *EyeBall* and *Ibraaz*, and

previously acted as managing editor for *RES Art World / World Art*. Duygu held curatorial internships at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and MoMA PS1 in New York, as well as at the ICA, London.

Kyla McDonald has been Assistant Curator, International Art at Tate Modern since 2008. She currently works on the acquisition of international art for the Tate Collection with a special focus on the Middle East, North Africa and, more recently, South Asia. She curated Haris Epaminonda's *Vol. VI* in 2010 at Tate Modern and is a member of the project team for the *Oil Tanks* program opening in 2012. Kyla previously worked as an assistant curator at Tate Liverpool from 2005-2008, where she co-curated *Niki de Saint Phalle (2008)*. She also worked on exhibitions including the Liverpool Biennial (2006 and 2008), *The Real Thing: Contemporary Art from China (2007)*, and *DLA Piper Series: The Twentieth Century: How it looked & how it felt (2008)*.

### **Artist**

Yto Barrada was born in 1971 in Paris. She lives and works in Tangier.

Mounira Al Solh was born in 1978 in Beirut, where she lives and works.

Mircea Cantor was born in 1977 in Oradea, Romania. He lives and works in Paris.

Slavs and Tatars is a collective of polemics and intimacies devoted to Eurasia!

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