

POSTMASTERS

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CHTO DELAT/WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Chto delat works through collective initiatives organized by "art soviets," inspired by the councils formed in revolutionary Russia during the early 20th century. These "art soviets" want to trigger a prototypical social model of participatory democracy, translating an open system for the generation of new forms of solidarity into the realm of contemporary cultural work. The "art soviet" takes on the function of a counter-power that plans, localizes and executes projects collectively.

Usually, this process results in artistic interventions, exhibitions, or artworks (video films, radio plays, performances), which, in turn, trigger new issues of the newspaper. Most of these projects have a two-fold intent: on the one hand, we are interested in the translatability and actualization of left theory (classical Marxism, post-structuralism, post-operatism, critical theory) and artistic practice (situationism, documentalism, urbanism, realism) under post-Soviet conditions and how this relates to parallel efforts elsewhere. On the other hand, we have also often focused on actualizations of the potential of the Soviet past repressed in the course of Soviet history, floating signifiers that need to be captured and used before they are subsumed totally by the present mode of production.

David Riff and Dmitry Vilensky

Chto delat/What is to be done? was founded in Petersburg, Russia in 2003 by a group of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers from Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod. It originally consists of following members: Olga Egorova/Tsaplya (artist, Petersburg), Artiom Magun (philosopher, Petersburg), Nikolai Oleinikov (artist, Moscow), Natalia Pershina/Glucklya (artist, Petersburg), Alexei Penzin (philosopher, Moscow), David Riff (art critic, Moscow), Alexander Skidan (poet, critic, Petersburg), Kirill Shuvalov (artist, Petersburg), Oxana Timofeeva (philosopher, Moscow), and Dmitry Vilensky (artist, Petersburg).

Currently, the collective's videos are being shown in *Etats de L'Artifice* at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and at Der Haus Der Kulteren Der Welt, Berlin. Their videos have recently been screened at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, The First Ural Industrial Biennale of Contemporary Art in Ekaterinburg, the Creative Time Summit: Revolutions in Public Practice in New York, and at the 11th Istanbul Biennial in 2009.

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