

## Vababai Vadadai!\* by Taus Makhacheva List of Works clockwise left to right



It is like a child's fantasy, a dream of woman who grew up and lives in a very patriarchal society. It's a wish to show self-containment of women and to super-heroically wipe one's eye.

\* the work is inspired by the Adventures of Super Sohrab

*Super Taus*  
2014  
viral video, colour,  
sound 2.16'  
unlimited

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The work is a collection (in progress) of wooden objects representing human noses, modelled after North Caucasian faces. In Dagestan there are several legends referring to men losing their noses. In order to find them again, and thereby to prove their manliness, they set off on adventurous journeys. In the Avar language, for instance, the word merlep means 'mountain' as well as 'nose'. The highlanders' identification with their mountains and peaks is also deeply rooted in the region

*Landscape*  
2013 - ongoing  
Series of wooden objects  
Dimensions Variable  
Carved by Kazbek Alikhov



Coming from the personal archive of the artist, these postcards date back to the 19th century and can be considered representative of the 'popularised ethnography' of the Russian Empire. Their primitive typology follows the classical rules of exotification: they depict 'pittoresque' groups from various tribes, families or nationalities, or representatives of diverse professions. Tellingly, the captions on the postcards are in Russian and French, which designates them as being for the members of the elites of that time. This collection creates its own 'travelling exhibition space', reflecting on the Caucasus as an eternal 'travel-destination' and a place of conquest-reconquest and ongoing conflict.

*Types du Caucase*  
2013 - ongoing  
Antique postcards  
Artist collection  
Dimensions variable



*Vocabulary*

2012 – ongoing  
video, colour, sound  
Duration variable  
Performed by: Shamil  
Alibegov, Magomed  
Kerimov

Acting as a contemporary anthropologist, here Makhacheva observes the gestural vocabulary in the street life of Makhachkala (Dagestan), predominantly performed by men. She records a theater of masculinity constantly on display: men with torn ears (tokens of practicing wrestling), a peculiar way of showing off back underarm muscles (popularly known as “wings”), and many others. Captured and isolated by the artist’s camera, the gestures of power and ritualized violence come across as self-consciously artificial and constructed, forming their own codified space.



*A Space of Celebration*

2009  
video, colour, silent  
16.10'  
Camera:  
Alexander Sinyagin

Makhachkala. The only free dates at the wedding hall ‘Marrakesh’ are July 29 and August 7. The same applies to ‘Afalina’, ‘Oriental Palmyra’ and many others. Summer is the wedding season. As the capital of the republic of Dagestan, Makhachkala boasts many such spaces, built to accommodate 200, 500 or as many as 1000 guests. An eclectic mix dominates the architecture of these purpose-built halls. The ritual of the wedding ceremony is also dominated by the same mix of secular forms and traditions. These have become universal, resulting in a new local culture of celebration.



*Vababai Vadadai!*

2015  
sound installation  
42'

Site-specific sound work recorded on the streets of Makhachkala for the exhibition at narrative projects. Recordings collected by Malika Alieva, Patimat Ataeva and Ira Kurbanova.

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