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Exhibition

LENIN: ICEBREAKER *REVISITED*

DEC 11, 2014 – MARCH 09, 2015

Austrian Cultural Forum New York
11 East 52nd Street, New York

DEC 10, 2014 | OPENING EVENTS

Panel discussion 6–7PM (RSVP req'd)
Public opening 6–8PM (no RSVP req'd)



Image credit: Icebreaker Lenin.
Historic Photograph. FUE Atomflot

Artists include: AMY **BALKIN**, JUDITH **FEGERL**, YEVGENIY **FIKS**, JIM **FINN**, LISA **KERESZI**, MARKO **LULIĆ**, LISI **RASKIN**, ISA **ROSENBERGER**, LEONID **TISHKOV**

In 1957 the Soviet Union launched the icebreaker Lenin to international fanfare which included delegations from the United States and United Kingdom. As the world's first nuclear-powered civilian vessel it epitomized the "Soviet Peaceful Atom" initiative, which promoted the application of atomic energy for purposes of civil engineering – a program bookended by the opening of the world's first nuclear power plant in 1954 and the Chernobyl disaster some thirty years later. The Lenin would operate for 30 years before being decommissioned to serve as a floating museum, its hull worn too thin by decades' worth of ice to continue operation.

In its youth, the icebreaker Lenin served as an icon of the socialist utopian ideal: a classless society based on boundless technological progress through the lens of military advancement and limitless resources through the application of atomic power. In the world that has emerged in the ensuing years, in which a tiny portion of the world's population receives limitless services in an automated, computerized, late-capitalist utopia amidst a steadily degrading ecology and decentralized global strife, the exhibition "Lenin: Icebreaker *Revisited*" posits the question: Does utopia still have a social function?

Curated by **Olga Kopenkina**, "Lenin: Icebreaker *Revisited*" introduces works in a variety of media from nine artists hailing from Russia, Austria, and the United States. **Amy Balkin's** ongoing project, *A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting*, displays objects found in areas experiencing rising sea levels or land erosion, and includes a Russian contribution. Three works by **Judith Fegerl** examine the navigation of temporal and spatial reality and myth by way of sound and sculpture. Drawings and sculptures by **Leonid Tishkov** show deep-sea divers as a metaphor for the "forgotten utopia" as the early Soviet avant-garde envisioned it. Conversely, the abandoned and seemingly obsolete appears in American **Lisa Kereszi's** *Governors Island* series of photographs depicting the

island's current state after decades of serving as a military site. A slide projection and videos by **Lisi Raskin** show images of human-made environments and landscapes in Lithuania and Afghanistan, marred by Soviet construction, in an installation modeled on an American living room. An installation by **Yevgeniy Fiks** features images of locations in Moscow named after revolutionary leaders, which between the 1940s and 1980s served as secret meeting points for gay people. These photographs are directly attached to the volumes of Vladimir Lenin's writings, translated and published by the American Communist Party. A recent film by Austrian artist **Isa Rosenberger** tells the fictional story of a Soviet naval officer who immigrates to America amidst an eternal afterlife debate between Nixon and Khrushchev. **Jim Finn**'s film *Encounters with your Inner Trotsky Child* constructs the "utopia" of personal salvation using a language that combines hyperbolic Communist rhetoric, lo-fi video effects, and a 1980s' aerobics video. Another video work, **Marko Lulić**'s *Sacrifice*, documents a modern choreography which pays tribute to Stravinsky's seminal ballet piece *The Rite of Spring*, the conclusion of which serves as the starting point of a journey toward a better future.

The opening reception for „**LENIN: ICEBREAKER REVISITED**” will take place on **Wednesday, December 10, 2014**, from **6PM to 8 PM**. Also starting at **6PM** there will be a **panel discussion** featuring participating **artists Marko Lulić, Yevgeniy Fiks, Jim Finn, Austrian author and journalist Susanne Scholl, and curator Olga Kopenkina**. Admission is free. Due to limited seating, rsvp for the talk is required. Tickets are available by visiting <http://www.acfny.org/event/lenin-icebreaker-revisited-2/> or calling (212) 319-5300x 46.

“*Lenin: Icebreaker Revisited*” is based on “*Lenin: Icebreaker*”, a special cooperative exhibition which was organized by the Austrian Cultural Forum Moscow, the LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz, and Rosatomflot and presented at the 2013 Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. It was curated by Simon Mraz and Stella Rollig, and included exhibitions on the icebreaker Lenin in Murmansk, Russia (09/18/2013–01/10/2014) and at LENTOS Museum in Linz, Austria (2/28–05/25/2014). Curator Olga Kopenkina has revisited the exhibition for the Austrian Cultural Forum New York by including American artists.

Visit <http://www.acfny.org/event/lenin-icebreaker-revisited/> for more information.

>> **Press images** are available at:

<http://www.acfny.org/media/press-images-texts/lenin-icebreaker-revisited/>

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Olga Kopenkina is a Belarus-born, New York-based independent curator and art critic. Her exhibitions and projects include *Sound of Silence: Art during Dictatorship*, EFA Project Space, New York, 2012; *Reading Lenin with Corporations* (2008–); *Properly Past* at the BRIC Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, 2008; *Terror Tactics*, a film program at apexart, New York, 2007; *Russia:*

Significant Other, Anna Akhmatova Literary and Memorial Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (2006); *Post-Diasporas: Voyages and Missions* at the First Moscow Biennale, Moscow (2005). She is an Adjunct Professor at the Department of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University's Steinhardt School.

ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM

With its architectural landmark building in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York hosts more than 200 free events annually and showcases Austrian contemporary art across the board: visual arts, music, performance, film, literature, architecture, and academic thought. The Austrian Cultural Forum houses over 10,000 volumes in its state-of-the-art library, and enjoys long-standing and flourishing partnerships with many venerable cultural and academic institutions throughout New York and the United States.

Visit acfny.org for more information.

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Directions

Subway:
E, M Train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street
B, D, F, M Train to 47-50 Street/Rockefeller Center
E, M, 6 Train to 51st Street/Lexington Avenue
Bus:
M 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to 53rd Street

Open Daily, 10 AM – 6 PM | Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events is free. Reserve tickets online at www.acfny.org or call (212) 319 5300 ext. 77