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MUSEUM

**New Museum Extends “Ostalgia” Exhibition to Governors Island with Installation by
Russian Artist Andrei Monastyrski**

New York, NY...The **New Museum** is pleased to collaborate with **Governors Island** on the first U.S. presentation of Russian artist **Andrei Monastyrski's** *Slogan* (1977), on the occasion of the exhibition “**Ostalgia**”—a survey devoted to Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Republics, on view at the New Museum from July 14- September 25, 2011. The work consists of a red and white banner which carries the message in Russian: “I DO NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT ANYTHING AND I ALMOST LIKE IT HERE, ALTHOUGH I HAVE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE AND KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THIS PLACE.”



Andrei Monastyrski, *Slogan*, 1977, at Governors Island, New York. Photo: Naho Kubota, 2011

Virtually unknown in the United States, Andrei Monastyrski (b. 1949, Petsamo, Russia; lives in Moscow) is one of the most respected and internationally acclaimed figures in Russian contemporary art. He recently represented his country at the 2011 Venice Biennale, and has influenced generations of artists. Monastyrski is the founder of the Moscow-based artist group Collective Actions. This loose association of artists was founded in 1976 and practiced a brand of conceptualism which made use of poetic language and simple performative gestures. Monastyrski and his collaborators (Nikolai Panitkov, Igor Makarevich, Elena Elagina, Sabine Hänsen, and Sergei Romashko) organized their works clandestinely with a limited audience that was actively involved in the creation of the work. In a typical Collective Actions event, a small group of viewers would be invited to travel to an isolated location on the outskirts of Moscow. There they would encounter a variety of mysterious actions and objects which made use of the surrounding landscape to activate the viewer's experience of the site. Possible events could include a man walking through an empty field and falling into a pit, the sound of single ringing bell, or the presentation of enigmatic messages on banners hung from trees. For Monastyrski and his collaborators, the work extended beyond the event itself to include the duration of the viewer's journey and the persistence of the event in memory and written descriptions.

As with all of Monastyrski's projects, the public is expected to stumble upon the piece almost accidentally. The presence of a Russian sign on Governors Island acts as a kind of urban myth—a small, discrete intervention in the New York landscape that gently plays with our expectations. Facing the Statue of Liberty, the banner turns into a commentary on American democracy and the history of displacement and relocation that characterizes New York's harbor. The installation also connects to the history of the Island when, on December 8, 1988, President Ronald Reagan, President-elect George H.W. Bush, and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia Mikhail Gorbachev held a private meeting there after Gorbachev's historic speech signifying the end to the Cold War.

This installation of *Slogan* (1977) maintains the sense of hermetic discovery inherent in Monastyrski's original actions while allowing the message to reverberate to an entirely new audience, space, and time.

About “Ostalgia”

“Ostalgia,” is an exhibition that brings together the work of more than fifty artists from twenty countries across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics. The exhibition takes its title from the German word *ostalgie*, a term that emerged in the 1990s to describe a sense of longing and nostalgia for the era before the collapse of the Communist Bloc. Contesting the format of a conventional geographical survey, the exhibition will include works produced by Western European artists who have depicted the reality and the myth of the East. “Ostalgia” is curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Associate Director and Director of Exhibitions with Jarrett Gregory, Assistant Curator, and will be on view at the New Museum from July 14 through September 25, 2011, occupying all four gallery floors and the lobby. Read the full press release here: <http://bit.ly/iXAqYK>

Exhibition Support

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Special thanks to The Trust for Governors Island.

About the New Museum

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum was conceived as a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding, dedicated building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of ongoing experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

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