



ARTISTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE COLD WAR



April 9 - August 12, 2016

Introduction

The Wende Museum aims to reflect on the legacy and topical relevance of the Cold War. Therefore, the Museum supports cutting-edge research by national and international scholars and artists who creatively reinterpret the remnants and ramifications of the past. The Museum has collaborated with renowned artists Jeremy Deller, Thomas Demand, Shepard Fairey, Thierry Noir, Taryn Simon, Kent Twitchell and Retna, among many others. For this exhibition, The Wende Museum invited Jennifer Vanderpool, Farrah Karapetian and the Dutch collective DRR (Richtje Reinsma and Daphne Rosenthal) to develop art installations inspired by the Museum's collection.

Farrah Karapetian, who participated in the Museum's *Wall Project* (2009), took the jeans from our Soviet hippie collection as a starting point for a critical yet poetic reflection on the cycle of consumption and desire in the East and West. East Bloc telephones are the protagonists of DRR's installation and film *Free Things*, which addresses issues of privacy, surveillance and human agency that are as relevant as ever in our present day. In her work *Piter*, Jennifer Vanderpool evokes the city of Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) around 1990 at the time of radical political transition, addressing both the sociopolitical and the personal aspects of memories and their potential to shape the present.



Installation photo of *Artistic Interpretation of the Cold War*.

Farrah Karapetian, *Nothing Comes Between Me and My Calvins and Me Between Comes Nothing* (2016)

Humans especially want what we cannot have, and advertisements, like propaganda, are always aspirational. Ads make even the most basic product seem out of reach, because the body of the model is unobtainable to all of us. In Communist countries during the Cold War, denim was literally inaccessible and outlawed as a symbol of Capitalist individualism. Images from CK Jeans' 1981 advertising campaign have been reenacted by individuals all over the world for decades. From Kim Kardashian to random Instagram users, women (and men) put themselves into the contorted, hypersexual positions that Brooke Shields modeled with a knowingness that her 15-year-old body could not convey.

What is the place of desire in politics? Does it matter which authority - the nation state, the church, or the corporation - toys with our personal sense of want and need? Here, artist Farrah Karapetian takes three core images from the 1981 Calvin Klein campaign and reworks them by hand in her studio, empowering herself as a maker rather than as consumer. Her effort parallels that of Soviet hippies during the Cold War, whose reworking of found denim through patchwork and sewing made the clothing their own. The title of the installation departs from the campaign's original copy, "Nothing Comes Between Me and My Calvins," in order to emphasize the circularity of desire and satisfaction that is a part of consumption before and after the end of the Cold War. Nothing indeed need come between a consumer and the thing consumed, for better or worse.





Patched denim jeans from the Wende Museum's Soviet Hippie Collection created by Tsen Baptist



Acidwashed: Push-up, 2016, unique chromogenic photograph from constructed negative, 40 x 96 inches



Acidwashed: Thrust, 2016, unique chromogenic photogram from constructed negative, 96 x 40 inches



Stonewashed: 26 Seconds of Desire, 2016, twenty-six unique chromogenic photograms from constructed negatives, 11 x 14 inch each



Details of *Stonewashed: 26 Seconds of Desire*

DRR (Richtje Reinsma and Daphne Rosenthal), *Free Things* (2015/16)

Dutch artists Richtje Reinsma and Daphne Rosenthal were artists-in-residence at The Wende Museum during May to June 2015. As artist collective DRR, a playful reference to their names and to the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik or DDR in German), they used everyday objects from the Museum's collection for their project *Free Things*, which examines the various ways in which ordinary objects and technologies help shape our imagination, behavior, relationships and memories.

For this exhibition their display consists of two drawings, a sculpture and a video referencing East Bloc telephones. As appliances, telephones connect the private, public, and political spheres, embedding every home, office, and institution in the same infrastructure controlled by the state. How to begin to imagine what kind of information has passed through those phones? DRR tries to get as close as possible to the phones fallen silent in their new museum-based environment, scrutinizing the scratched and worn surfaces of their casings, peeping into their mechanical intestines and supplying them with symbolic sound using 'loud' drawings and cut-out onomatopoeias (textual sound-imitations). DRR tries to evoke what the unknown mouths and ears may have been sharing and hiding while handling them.

Free Things was generously supported by the Mondriaan Fund





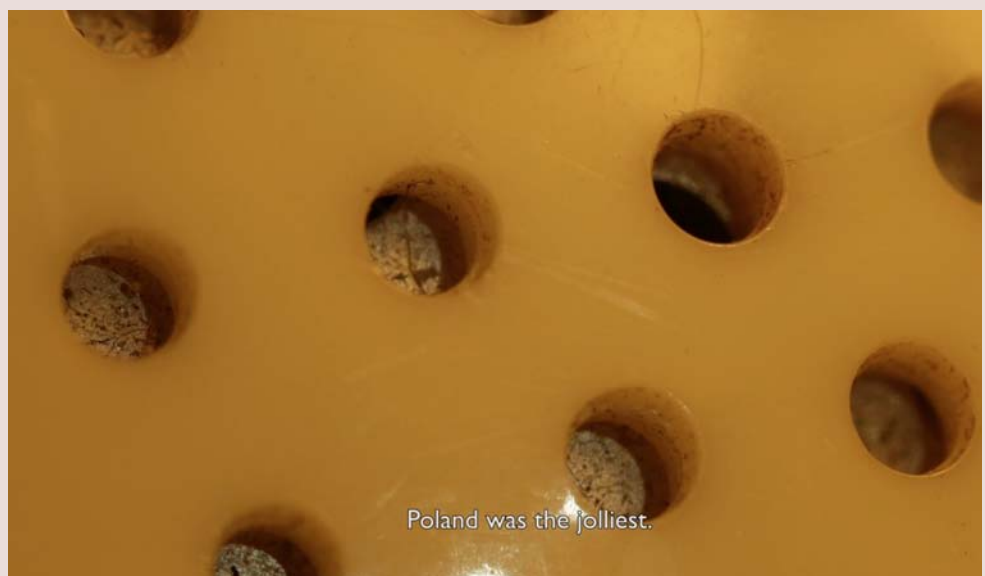
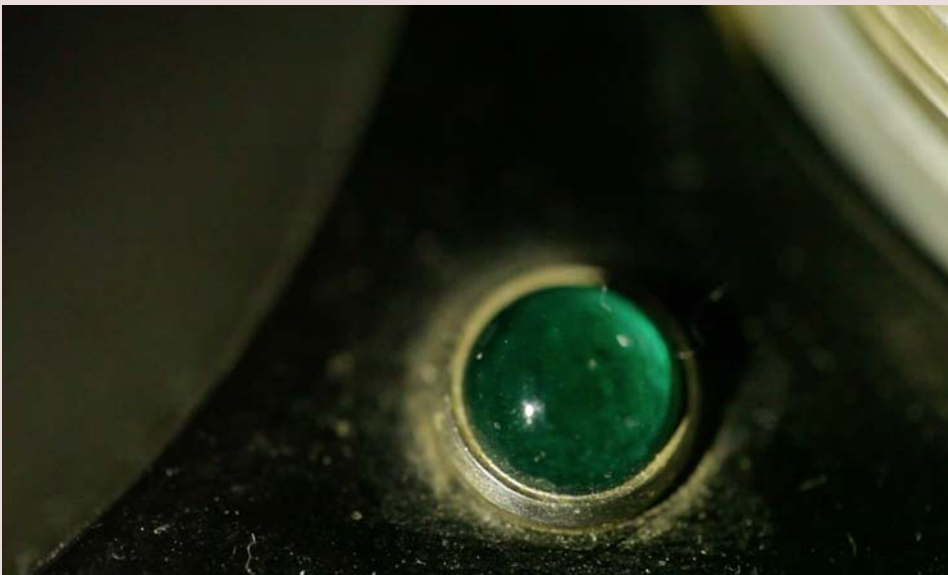
Long distance. The Sounds the Telephones No Longer Make, 2015, sculpture, wood, rope, plastic, textile, felt, tape, sponge, cardboard, paper, gouache, thread, iron wire, 39 x 13 x 35 inch



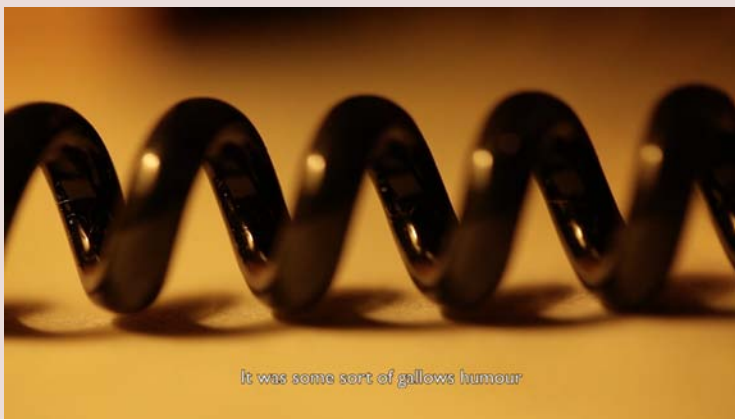
Top drawing: 2016, charcoal, colored ink, watercolor pencil and graphite, 39 x 39 inch. Bottom drawing: 2016, watercolor pencil and ink, 79 x 39 inch



At first someone felt nearby and then suddenly very distant



Poland was the jolliest.



Jennifer Vanderpool, *Piter* (2016)

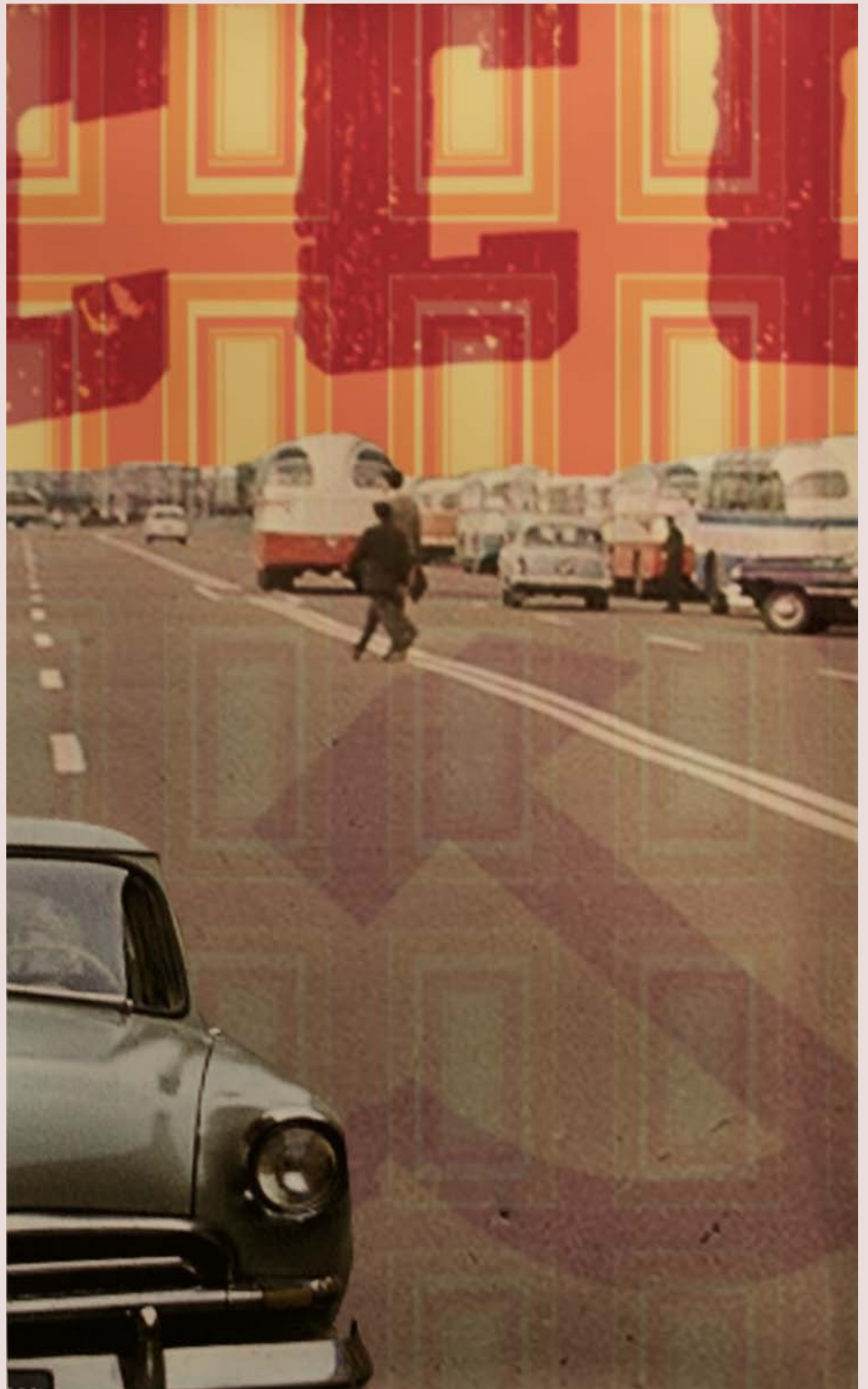
The subject of the installation *Piter* is the city of Leningrad, which was given its pre-revolutionary name “Saint Petersburg” in 1991 during Perestroika, the period of economic restructuring under Mikhail Gorbachev. The idea for *Piter* developed from the artist’s recent exhibitions in the Ukraine and Russia, where she employed family photos, traditional material culture, vintage postcards, as well as retro Soviet clothing and lifestyle advertisements to create mythical narratives influenced by private stories.

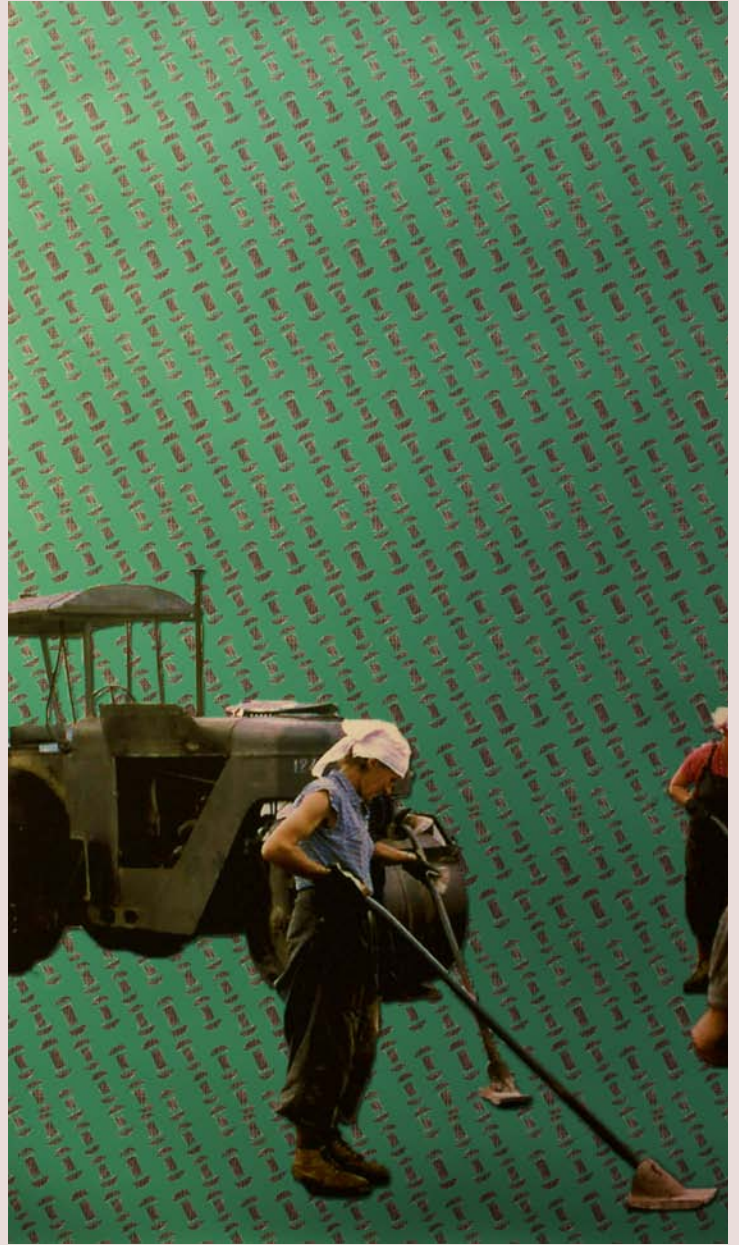
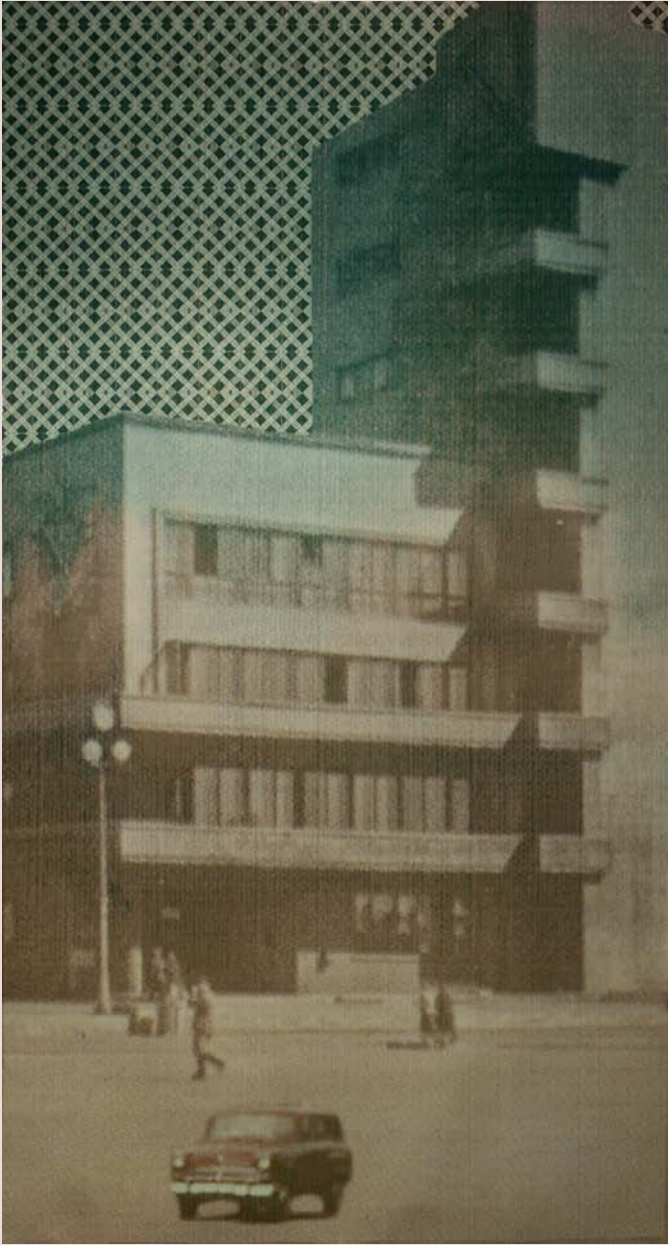
Piter includes new work created from vintage popular culture imagery, period news and T.V. clips and works selected from the Wende Museum’s Ferris Collection of Glasnost and Perestroika-era poster designs. Enhanced by an historical witness interview with Eugene Alper, a Russian immigrant from Leningrad who relocated to Los Angeles during Perestroika, together, these elements create a narrative that questions social issues.

Piter includes new work created from vintage popular culture imagery, period news and television clips and paintings selected from the Wende Museum’s Ferris Collection of Glasnost and Perestroika-era poster designs (these works are indicated on the following pages by a black border).





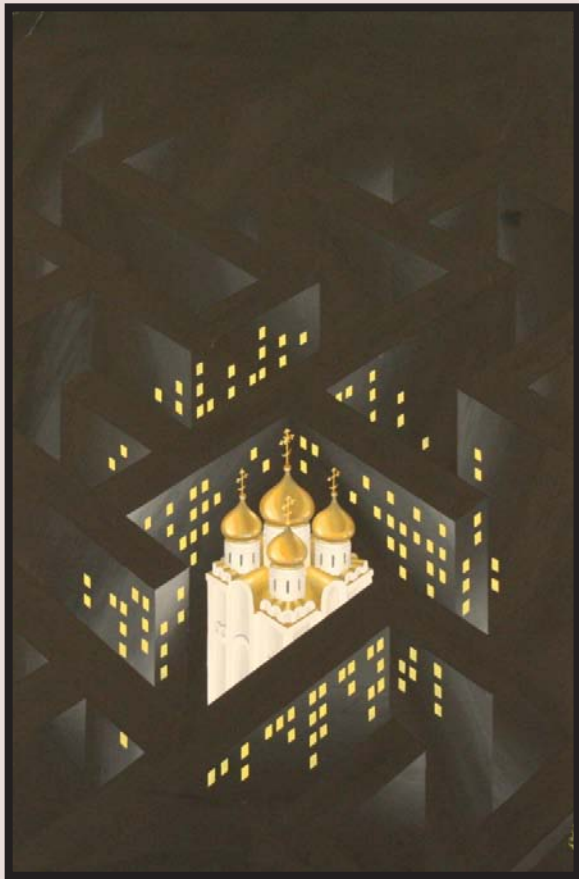
















Artistic Interpretations of the Cold War was organized by Chief Curator Joes Segal.

Special thanks to Vera Kopecky for object and installation images. The *Artistic Interpretations* catalog was edited by Donna Stein and designed by Amanda Roth and Armon Williams.

Learn more about the objects in this exhibition by visiting our online catalog at < <http://www.wendemuseum.org/collections/main.php?module=objects>>.

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