

# CULTURE WITHOUT A HOUSE A ROSE WITHOUT ROOTS



Toward a history of the Rosa's House of Culture  
(DK Rosa St. Petersburg 2015-2022)

Installation at Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz  
(8.-31.8.2024)

**Realization:** Chto Delat International (Tsaplya Olga Egorova,  
Dmitry Vilensky, Nikolay Oleynikov and Ada Abdrushevitch)

**DK Rosa** - a social and educational center founded by the collective "Chto Delat" in St. Petersburg in 2015. It was forced to cease its activities in May 2022, due to persecution for its anti-war position. In the seven years of its existence, **DK Rosa** became home to many activists, artists, researchers, poets and musicians, hundreds of events (intensity of 8-10 public events per month) were held here: lectures, film screenings, parties, shared meals, workshops, union meetings.... Our space, which changed its location 3 times in the city, became a convivial place where you could sit down, drink tea, read books from the **Zetkin library**, find like-minded people and start doing something together. Now, we revisit our experience of co-living, education and political confrontation trying to understand how a community that has lost its home and habitat can survive.

This exhibition display is an attempt to create an affective poetic archive that we hope is able to convey our aspirations, our different practices, our intense togetherness, and these memories help us in the situation of emigration to learn, to form new kinship and act together in the situations and places where we could not imagine to be.

This exhibition is entirely dedicated to a project that has already been completed and has a precise timeframe. But it was important for us to show the possibilities for the continuation of its community and we, as part of the "Clubs of the Future" project, held two events in the **Emergency Project Room in Berlin**, which develop the various practices of **Rosa's House of Culture** in a new situation of lost roots and a new public. The day after the opening we invited to the evening "**How to Sing Together**", a live Improvisation based on songs of political solidarity from different times. Also, as part of this program, on August 30th, we opened the Alice Creischer showcase "On machines/on not being allowed to stand still/on the sources/on dust/on thirst".







# MY SISTER ROSA SAYS

Duration: 5:05 min. Video documentation and edit: Dmitry Vilensky

A rap poem written and performed by Nikolay Oleynikov, dedicated to the foundation of Rosa's House of Culture

Presented at the symposium "Draft", organized by Institute for Contemporary Art Research (IFCAR), Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, June 2016

see the web version of the film here: <https://vimeo.com/1001935857>

[listen to this]  
WHAT?!  
my sister Rosa tells us  
WHAT?!  
my sister Rosa whispers  
HOW?!  
the alliances grow  
AT HEART  
how they grow  
UP HIGH  
When the things are breaking  
A-PART  
How we wanna be ONE  
Altogether to be ONE  
Everybody's gonna be Oh Kay  
There's always something  
collectively to get gained  
Won't you hear me sing  
A little story, hey  
Of a tiny place named  
After a scarlet flower, hey!  
Remember H. C. Andersen's  
fairy tale?  
A bedtime story  
of real love and glory  
Of Kai and Gerda  
Hey, There were roses growing  
on a balcony, right?  
Those kids did know how to fight  
Right?  
But what did they do  
for their love, right?  
They fought, right?  
they thought that it's okay to fight  
for that kind of revolutionary love,  
alternative education,  
building spaces for possible change  
is so hot that they won over  
that goddamned polar frost!  
and as we've learnt  
they were right to fight, right?!  
So, lest start  
Our fairy tale  
Once upon a time  
We end up to search for a space  
It was a really tiny place

In the center of the town  
In a middle of nowhere  
Right in the middle of  
NOW and HERE  
and we tried our best  
to find people around  
to make this noisy sound  
to bother neighbors around  
to make our clear statement  
we won't hesitate  
cuz we felt it's okay  
to bother neighbors around  
as we speak about  
and AS LOUD  
so, it can't be allowed  
but because we were in fact  
about how to build a public space  
question mark  
a radical place for  
ENCOUNTER  
AGGREGATION  
AGITATION  
Assembly And Argument  
in the northern emptiness  
in the dark void  
in the cultural capital of political  
amnesia  
in the society that is so proud about  
their eternal conservative values.  
Talkin'bout political memory?!  
NO!  
Talkin'bout history of struggle?!  
NO! NO!  
Talkin'bout language of comradeship?!  
NO! NO! NO!  
Talkin'bout communities in solidarity?!  
What the fuck is that?  
SO! Question number one  
Over and over again  
Remains the same:  
How to build such a space?  
First: you find allies  
Those tiny groups  
of politically conscious folks.  
Sister Rosa give me a torch  
Otherwise, I will search forever

Sister Rosa give me  
your microscope let me find them  
Let me bring them together  
Whether place matters for politics  
It's actually a quote  
Listen carefully, take a note:  
"There is something about  
shared physical presence  
that transforms or at least  
intensifies political changes."  
Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes  
End of quote  
Period  
Here comes the notion of Time  
Period  
Do you have fear of it?  
Are you afraid to take time?  
To take a pause?  
To start thinking together?  
To start arguing to involve senses  
Of the new radical space  
That is yet to be built  
However long it may take  
To ask yourself again and again  
If it make sense  
Or does this space  
look like a spaceship?  
A safe space to feel okay  
among your friends  
A comfort zone  
of mutual agreement?  
Or is it a Sputnik  
launched already out there?  
Undone, unfinished,  
a still-under-construction one  
That falls apart  
not even being built yet  
A place where  
the arguments matter even if  
they can cause you damage  
Does it make sense?  
My sister Rosa says:  
You better keep it

My sister Rosa says:  
You better deal with it  
You better be doing it  
Ha-haha-ha  
You better doing it better

You better make it better  
Ha-haha-ha  
That better thing is  
better to be done  
What is to be done?

Same old question  
What is to be done HERE  
My sister Rosa says HOW  
My sister Rosa says WHY  
My sister Rosa asks HEY





# WHERE HAVE WE BEEN FOR 8 YEARS?

*A slide film by Dimitri Vilensky*  
2014-2022

see the web version of the film here: <https://vimeo.com/1001759393>

*Many thanks to all the participants and guests of the Rosa's House of Culture and the School of Engaged Art.*

*This slide show is not a comprehensive and chronologically accurate representation of the events. Full documentation can be found on the School's and Rosa's House of Culture websites with a complete list of names, guests' presentations and attribution of works.*

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The question "where have you been for 8 years?" is usually addressed in Russia to those who, from different angles, have not noticed the reality of the war in Ukraine, which began with the annexation of Crimea in March 2014.

It is happened that our project of the School of Engaged Art and the place where our classes were held - the Rosa's House of Culture, just started in this tragic moment of time and all our programs were in one way or another connected with this emergency situation.

This selection of photographs is not intended to be a chronological and detailed documentation of our work. To some extent it is both an accusation and an apology. Looking back, we realize how we could not understand the catastrophic nature of the moment, and how much we tried to preserve and cultivate a (un)possible creative community capable of resisting the pressures of a rapidly fascization of our society.

These photographs look different to those who lived this moment together, who remember the textures, the touches, the acoustics, the rustles, the shadows in the darkness of the Rosa Palace until the lights were turned on. Or when it was turned off and the screen was not yet on. I hope that these flashes of my individual memory can resonate with other recollections of the stories of cultural houses and communities that have lost their home, and give a little hope that what was once embodied can be re-emerged. (Dmitry Vilensky)





# SCROLL DIARIES OF THE ROSA'S HOUSE OF CULTURE 2023

**Realization:** Ada Abdrushevitch and Dmitry Vilensky

This scrolls are based on the photo and graphic documentation of the events and publication realized at the context of activities of Rosa's House of Culture



## HISTORICAL TEXTILE CURTAINS

2015

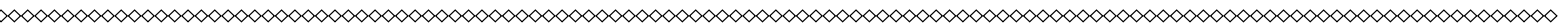
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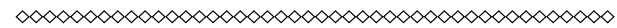




Visitors to the guided tour with many participants of Rosa's House of Culture, august 2024



This curtain were produced by the **sewing cooperative Shwemi (St. Petersburg-Kyiv)** and they have traveled and used in all 3 venues of Rosa's House of Culture in Saint-Petersburg. This one of the three curtain with a text Equality. Other two pieces (Solidarity and Freedom) are lost at the moment.



## **ALERTA**

The textile banner realized by Nikolay Oleynikov for the **Zetkin Library** in 2015



# "ONCE UPON A TIME, AFTER WE LEFT"

The model of the space of the Rosa's House of Culture, Bolshaya Raznochinaya ul. 24, Saint Petersburg

**Realization:** Ada Abdrushevich and Dmitry Vilensky

Scale 1:100

The historical building of the architectural complex of legendary textile factory Red Banner Factory from 1930th (partly attributed to the work of the architect Erich Mendelsohn) where the Rosa's House of Culture was located was demolished due to illegal gentrification process in 2024.







# HERE-THERE

Digital photo collages, print on mesh fabric, 180 gram.

Realization: Dmitry Vilensky

The series of photo collages combined the historical photos taken by activities of Rosa's House of Culture and google maps of the cities (Yerevan, Berlin, Istanbul, Tbilisi, Bishkek, Samarkand, Buenos Aires, Hamburg and other cities) where members of its community were forced to move into.







# PRINTING MATTERS

## 2014 -2022

**Rosa's House of Culture** always distributed local cultural and political zines and also produced its own newspapers and zines. Here you can find a few examples of our publications.

Now in Berlin we feel in political solidarity with editorial team of Art of Working Class and distribute its new very important issue «**Teams and Antagonism**» dedicated to the situation in Palestine for donation in our installation.

Protection price 2,50 Euros – all donations will be forwarded to the **Art of Working Class**.





## A wall paper intervention

Based on the pages from the newspaper *"Houses of Culture. Yesterday-Now-Tomorrow"* published in 2015





# HOW TO SING TOGETHER

09.08.2024

Chto Delat Emergency Project Room

Brunnen Str 43, 10115 Berlin

separater Eingang von der Rheinsbergerstr

**Live Improvisation** "How to Sing Together". based on songs of political solidarity from different times. How singing and dance can assemble political bodies to resist the spectacle logic of power and mass media?

**Roman Osminkin** is a poet, theorist of art and literature, writer, performer. Born in Saint-Petersburg (Russia). Since 2023 he has lived in Leipzig. Musik background: **Petr Papisov** - an artist, modular synthesizer operator, micro-propaganda interface engineer from Saint Petersburg, now lives in Germany.

Petr and Roman were very active residents of Rosa's House of Culture in Saint Petersburg from 2015 to 2022 and left Russia as political refugees.

**Food:** Migrant Mobile Kitchen

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**Emergency Project Room** is initiative of collective **Chto Delat International**. Its activity is realized in the form of House of culture with open structure of study circles fostering different artistic and social practices. The main focus of the Emergency Project Room and its program are devoted to the analysis of various emergency situations and attempts to find an artistic language able to relate to the dangers and absurdity of the current state of things and minds. A range of events have already been realized since its inception - a series of Mad Tea Party performative discussions, The school of Emergencies workshops, film screenings and book launches.

**The Emergency Project Room** is open to various friendly initiatives, currently its program is based on 3 circles: the absurd studies circle, the circle for the development of board games dealing with different crisis situations and the performative practices circle «Unplanting the seeds of Hatred». Participation in the circles is free and open to various people on an open call basis. Each circle interacts with the others and presents its work to the general public in the format of performances, public exhibitions - the signals' window - a large street window at our space where we can send signals to outside world and hopefully receive a responses.

join us at <https://www.instagram.com/chtodelatemergencyprojectroom/>





