Press Release / Pressemitteilung
September 3, 2026

Handdschob: Slavs and Tatars Curate a New Exhibition on Craft, Labor and Desire at Haus Esters

Slavs and Tatars: Handdschob
HLHE Dialogue: Art x Crafts
October 4, 2026–March 7, 2027 | Haus Esters

Press conference: October 1, 2026, 11 a.m., Haus Esters
Opening: October 4, 2026, 11.30 a.m., Haus Lange Haus Esters
The curators and artists will be present.

The starting point for the dialogue with the internationally renowned artist collective Slavs and Tatars is the exhibition *Kunst Hand Werk Brücke* at Haus Lange. Having previously exhibited as artists at Haus Esters in 2019, the collective Slavs and Tatars now returns as curators with the exhibition *Handdschob*. In it, they explore craft as a field in which labor, sexuality, and identity intersect. *Handdschob* will be on view at Haus Esters from October 4, 2026, to March 7, 2027, as part of the *HLHE Dialogue: Art x Crafts*. Featuring nine artistic positions from seven different cultural and geographical contexts, the exhibition opens up a cross-disciplinary dialogue between historical and contemporary understandings of craft.

Handdschob brings together nine contemporary artistic positions, including the curators themselves–the collective Slavs and Tatars–who are represented with their own works and have also developed the exhibition architecture. Rather than celebrating craftsmanship and technical mastery, the exhibition understands craft as a field of embodied experience, social regulation, and political negotiation. The title *Handdschob* is a deliberate linguistic provocation, playing on the German word “Handarbeit” or “Handwerk” (craft or skilled trade). More than an act of making, “Handwerk” evokes a pillar of the German economy, a highly regulated profession, and a recognized social class. *Handdschob* unsettles these associations by exposing the mess, the grit, and the grind behind idealized notions of craftsmanship.
Rather than presenting perfected and productive bodies, the exhibition foregrounds bodies that work, desire, transform, and exceed prescribed roles. Ceramics, glass, furniture, painting, sculpture, performance, and poetry become vehicles for exploring the body as a site of skilled labor—and as a technology through which selves and collectives are continuously produced.

“Taking the exhibition *Kunst Hand Werk Brücke* as our starting point, we invited Slavs and Tatars to respond from a contemporary viewpoint. They are the ideal position for this: both Brücke and Slavs and Tatars share an engagement with craft, art, and everyday life, as well as the idea of thinking of art as a collective practice and working together as a community. With *Handdschob*, Slavs and Tatars create a contemporary space of resonance in which different cultural perspectives meet and established narratives are reconsidered. In this way, unexpected connections emerge between historical perspectives and questions of the present,” says museum director Katia Baudin.

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Haus Lange Haus Esters

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"We're thrilled to return, this time as both curators and artists, to Kunstmuseen Krefeld, which has long championed works which explore the ambiguities between the applied and fine arts. With *Handdschob*, we aim to rescue the notion of craft from the sentimentalism and exoticism which has accompanied the increasing interest in crafts over the past decade", explain Slavs and Tatars.

Artists, performers, and writers from China, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, Germany, Hungary, and Azerbaijan bring together historical and contemporary perspectives on the relationship between labor and sexuality. Implantations, offshoots, transfers, and bodily extensions populate the exhibition, unfolding as both spatial environments to inhabit and narratives to navigate. The tensions between art and craft, self and other, innovation and tradition, and the individual and the collective form the exhibition's central motif.

Known for their distinctive combination of linguistic play, cultural archaeology, and geopolitical inquiry, Slavs and Tatars transform Haus Esters into a space where craft is no longer understood as a stable category, but as a contested cultural practice. Within the serene architectural clarity of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Haus Esters, *Handdschob* stages a provocative encounter between intimacy and production, ornament and labor, avant-garde aspirations and the material realities that sustain them.
In dialogue with *Kunst Hand Werk Brücke* at Haus Lange, the exhibition expands the conversation around craft from the historical avant-garde to the present.

Working at the intersection of language, politics, religion, and identity, **Slavs and Tatars** draw on the geographical and cultural diversity of Eurasia as the narrative and visual source material for their capacious practice. Since its inception in 2006, the collective has shown a keen grasp of polemical issues in society, clearing new paths for contemporary discourse via a wholly idiosyncratic form of knowledge production: including popular culture, spiritual and esoteric traditions, oral histories, modern myths, as well as scholarly research. Slavs and Tatars has published more than fifteen books to date, including most recently *Simurgh Селф-Хелп* (Self-Help) with JRP Editions and their first children's book, *Azbuka Strikes Back* with Walther und Franz König. In 2019, they were already part of the exhibition *Anders Wohnen* at Haus Esters, which was held to mark the Bauhaus centenary. For the exhibition, they developed the works *Honey Dew, Kitab Kebab (Modern Male Messiahs)*, and *Soft Power*, which they brought together in a site-specific, immersive installation. The works are now part of the collection of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld. In 2020, Slavs and Tatars opened Pickle Bar, a slavic aperitivo bar-cum-project space a few doors down from their studio in the Moabit district of Berlin as well as a residency and mentorship program for young professionals from the region.

The contributing artists are:

Shadi Al-Atallah (*1994, Saudi Arabia)
A London-based artist, Shadi Al-Atallah's work combines drawing and painting to explore the human body in moments of transformation, connection and vulnerability. Bodies are often fragmented or blurred, grappling with each other and the space around them. Al-Atallah's recent work explores holes as sites of transformation. From black holes and the underworld to bodily orifices and wounds, he examines how voids may dissolve boundaries and shift identities.

James Gregory Atkinson (*1981, Germany / USA)
James Gregory Atkinson is an artist whose practice critically engages with the complexities of Afro-German identity and Black experience within established cultural narratives.

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His work frequently explores themes of Black masculinity, resistance, and the colonial histories embedded within contemporary structures. Through mediums such as video installation and sound, Atkinson recontextualizes historical narratives, often utilizing music as a space for memory and critique.

Jan Bačynsjkyj (*1991, Ukraine)
Yana Bachynska aka Jan Bačynsjkyj (born 1991 in Lviv) is a Ukrainian visual artist, curator, and film director whose practice focuses on queering grand narratives. He uses the method of induction, which means going from individual experience to reach the collective one, trying to achieve wholeness within contradictions.

Egana Djabbarova (*1992, Azerbaijan/Russia)
Egana Djabbarova is a poet, scholar and author. Her debut novel, My Dreadful Body tells recounts a young woman's vexed coming of age in a traditional Azerbaijani community in Russia, grap-pling under the weight of Muslim patriarchal norms and a debilitating neurological con-dition. The book received the 2025 Hamburger Literature Prize for Book of the Year.

Zishi Han (*1990 China)
With a focus on installation, Zishi Han's practice encompasses a range of media, including sculpture, video, and performance. Growing up in Beijing and spending time in London and Frankfurt, Han has been observing the mega-scale architectural environment where power structures have been solidified in their physicality. Often informed by research into transcultural figures, artefacts and events, Han constructs orchestrated apparatuses that enable densely layered spatial experiences.

Wei Yang (*1994, China)
Wei Yang (b. 1994, Liuzhou) is an artist living and working between Liuzhou and Frankfurt am Main. He studied at Städelschule and holds a MFA from Sandberg Institute. Through painting, sculpture, and performance, Yang explores human conditions as a fluid and diasporic geography, which is ever shaped by memory. By layering intimacy, belonging, and companionship, he creates hybrid images drawn from folklore, myth, marginalized histories, and personal landscapes.

El Kazovszkij (1948–2008, Hungary)
One of the most important Hungarian artists of the last half century, El Kazovszkij developed a rich theatre-like world where personal character, subjectivity, classical mythology and philosophy intertwined. Stage-like spaces and drop-like elements, cypresses, chimneys, rock and curtains all refer to the theatre with the story focusing on constant, unfulfilled longing. Faceless torsos, ballerinas, half-dog half-human creatures, the Fates, Venus, Pygmalion and Galatea are some of the characters who populate his cosmology of longing.

Nadia Markiewicz (*1992, Poland)
Nadia Markiewicz is a visual artist, performer, and creator of spatial installations and video works. Her practice examines disability from an autobiographical perspective, seeking metaphors within the surreal potential of entertainment and mass visual culture.

Curators of the exhibition: Slavs and Tatars
Artistic direction: Katia Baudin
Project assistance: Linn Gesche Küsters

The publication accompanying the exhibition will be published in German and English by grass publishers.

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HLHE Dialogue:
Since 2017, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld have presented the HLHE Dialogue series in Mies van der Rohe's neighbouring villas, bringing together historical and younger as well as contemporary positions in art, design, and architecture. The series continuously re-examines and reflects on the legacy of modernism from new perspectives. Parallel to the exhibition at Haus Esters, *Kunst Hand Werk Brücke* will be on view at Haus Lange as part of the *HLHE Dialogue Art x Crafts*.

Visit
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Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
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The Kunstmuseen Krefeld are a cultural institution of the City of Krefeld.

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