

## CHTO DELAT?

### About the work

Project authors: Chto Delat? Olga Egorova (Tsaplya); Dmitry Vilensky; Natalia Pershina (Gliuklya); Nikolai Oleinikov Director: Olga Egorova (Tsaplya) Composer: Mikhail Krutikov Screenplay: Tsaplya, Dmitry Vilensky, Gliuklya Camera and lighting: Artem Ignatov Sound: Sergei Knyazev Set design: Nikolai Oleinikov, Dmitry Vilensky

*Perestroika Songspiel. Victory over the Coup* is a video structured in the form of a song that conveys and analyses a key episode in the final period of Perestroika in the Soviet Union. In August of 1991 an unprecedented popular uprising against the established order took place. This uprising represented the end of the Soviet period and was deemed by the West to be the final triumph of democracy in Russia. This film is part of the trilogy *Songspiels* that the collective Chto Delat? made between 2008 and 2010, in which it uses the term created by Bertolt Brecht ("songspiel") as a perversion of "singspiel" (German popular opera). The video speaks ironically about the epic genre that tinges certain historical processes, such as the one that meant the end of the Cold War and plays with a distanced re-writing of history.

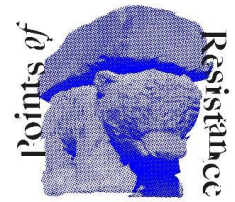
Shown in *Points of Resistance* in Berlin's historic Zionskirche, the format of the songspiel invokes the tradition of choral church music, while furthermore addressing the remarkable history of this church as a crucial point of resistance during the GDR. With the proximity of the Zionskirche within meters to the former path of the Berlin Wall (on the East side!), and to the struggles of the many once trapped within it, *Perestroika Songspiel. Victory over the Coup* takes on a particular significance in light of Berlin's divided past – a legacy that exists to this day in the ongoing tensions between East and West.

### Bio

The collective Chto Delat? (What is to be done?) was founded in early 2003 in Petersburg by a workgroup of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers from St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism.

The group was constituted in May 2003 in St. Petersburg in an action called "The Refoundation of Petersburg." Shortly afterwards, the original, as yet nameless core group began publishing an international newspaper called Chto Delat?. The name of the group derives from a novel by the Russian 19th century writer Nikolai Chernyshevsky, and immediately brings to mind the first socialist worker's self-organizations in Russia, which Lenin actualized in his own publication, "What is to be done?" (1902). Chto Delat sees itself as an artistic cell and also as a community organizer for a variety of cultural activities intent on politicizing "knowledge production".

In 2013, Chto Delat initiated an educational platform—School of Engaged Art in Petersburg and also runs a space called Rosa's House of Culture. From its inception, the collective has been publishing an English-Russian newspaper focused on the urgent issues of Russian cultural



politics, in dialogue with the international context. In 2014 the collective withdrew from the participation in Manifesta 14 in Petersburg as a local protest against the developing the Russian military intervention in Ukraine and with this act has triggered a current debate on the participation and boycott of art events.

The artistic activity is realizing across a range of media—from video and theater plays, to radio programs and murals—it include art projects, seminars and public campaigns. The works of the collective are characterized by the use of alienation effect, sur- real scenery, typicality and always case based analyses of a concrete social and political struggles. The aesthetics of the group is based also on heretic unpacking the artistic devices offered by Bertolt Brecht, Jean-Luck Godard and Reiner Fassbin- der. The collective make a strong focus on the issue of cultural workers labour rights.

These activities are coordinated by a core group including Tsaplya Olga Egoro- va (artist), Artiom Magun (philosopher), Nikolay Oleynikov (artist), Natalia Pershina / Glucklya (artist), Alexey Penzin (philosopher), Alexander Skidan (poet and critic), Oxana Timofeeva (philosopher), Dmitry Vilensky (artist) and Nina Gasteva (choreo- grapher).