

The Right to Be Creative

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Art, Tech & Culture

with **Margarita Kuleva**

National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg

Gail: Good evening everyone. Welcome to the Berkeley center for new media arts technology and culture colloquium. Just so you know tonight's speaker professor Margarita Kuleva and I are in the same room. When she appears our backgrounds will look identical. I just didn't want to confuse anyone. I am associate professor of new media and theater dance and performance studies and director of Berkeley center for new media which we call BCNM. It is an interdisciplinary research center that studies and shapes media transition and emergence from diverse perspectives. Through critical thinking and making, we cultivate fairness and equity in our classrooms, communities and on the internet. Our art technology and technology colloquium is an internationally respected forum for creative ideas. Free and open to the public it presents leading artists, writers and critical thinkers who question assumptions and push boundaries at the forefront of multiple intersecting fields. BCNM is committed to promoting technological equity and justice. Our free events are inclusive, respectful and harassment free spaces. We invite everyone to participate by responding to tonight's lecture in the chat or Q&A portion and ask that the attendees help us maintain a respectful space. Attendees who violate our guidelines will be removed from the event and may be disallowed from future online events. If you are new to our events, welcome. We will share a link to our community agreements in the chat. I would now like to take a moment to honor the land. We recognize Berkeley is located in the territory of Huichin the ancestral and uncharted lands of Ohlone. The technological development in this region has always depended on this land and all of our technological infrastructures and activities take on and in relation to this land. We commit to supporting the sovereignty and ongoing stewardship of this place of the Ohlone peoples by building long-term Ross porosity and relationships with tribal leaders and organizations. I would like to honor the [Indiscernible] in the Philippines, my homeland and the Tonga people of the place of the Russias now called Alameda, California. The Ohlone tribe I reside in the city and county of San Francisco. Before introducing tonight's speaker I want to say that the Berkeley center for new media expresses solidarity with and support for the nation and people of the Ukraine who have been defending themselves against I am purgence by Russia, ordered by Vladimir Putin for the past eight years with the conflict escalating into open warfare in many regions of Ukraine three weeks ago. We will put a link in the chat to top rated charities from the nonprofit charity watch. We support the Russian anti war movement. Russia against Ukraine is not called for or

endorsed by many citizens of Russia. We encourage everyone to not complete the actions of the leader with the wishes or beliefs of the citizens.

Now on to tonight's event. This event has been long delayed. I first issued an invitation to RITA three years ago and we planned for her to come to Berkeley in spring of 2020 which was canceled due to the first year of the COVID pandemic and canceled again in spring 2021.

Finally Rita was able to arrive in the bay area after barely managing to exit St. Petersburg under strenuous conditions. I am grateful she was able to arrive safely at last. I did not initially invite Rita alone. In 2019 I issued an invitation to Rita and one of her mentors, the brilliant professor Natalia Sumutina who sadly passed away last February after a long battle with cancer. He was on higher education in Moscow and head of contemporary culture center. He had a fantastic international conference called challenges of participatory cultures in Moscow to which she invited me to speak. I engaged in fabulous cross culture cross-cultural conversations with Rita and researchers from the Netherlands, Sweden and the U.K. That event and its participants will always remain close to my heart as an exemplar of the value and importance of research exchanges thanks to her brilliant curation and flawless work. All of the fans down here miss you. We dedicate tonight's event to you in member more yum. It is a great pleasure to introduce Margarita Kuleva. The department of history of arts, arts research center Doreen B. Townsend center for the humanities and Berkeley arts plus design.

Margarita Kuleva, PhD, Sociology, received her BA in Liberal Arts from Smolny College, the joint program of St Petersburg State University, Russia and Bard College, NY. She graduated with an MA in Sociology from the Higher School of Economics. Currently she works as a senior lecturer at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, where she holds the position of chair of the Department of Design and Contemporary Art. She also is a fellow of the Centre for German and European Studies at St. Petersburg State University-University of Bielefeld and the Centre for Art, Design and Social Research . She has collaborated as a researcher and curator with a number of Russian and international cultural institutions, including Manifesta Biennale, Garage MoCA, Goethe Institute, Street Art Museum, Ural Industrial Biennale and New Holland St. Petersburg. One of her main research interests is creative labor. She also adopts a network approach and feminist theory to the sociology of the art sand clothing consumption/fashion production. In 2012-2016, she studied post-Soviet creativity, looking at the example of the careers and professional identities of young cultural workers in the hybrid cultural economy in Russia. Some findings from these studies are presented in recent journal publications for example, Cultural Studies and International Journal of Cultural Studies. Please welcome Rita to BCNM.

Rita: Thank you, Gail, for this fantastic introduction. I mean it says nothing like if I just mentioned that I am happy to be here, and it was a long way, and it is hard for me to talk at the moment because the war in Ukraine is a devastating situation, and it is a crime against humanity. But I think we need to keep together for future peace and dialogue and stay together even though it is hard to express very complicated and mixed feelings, because the heart is broken. I hope I can share some thoughts not just on the current situation my research can be an introduction to very distinct and different forms of culture that are present in Russia and the Soviet space. Gail said all of the right things I think already. But for me personally, I want to repeat that this event is dedicated to memory of Natalia. She was a very important friend and colleague, and though she is not here for this year, I hope that I can give a little bit of presentation of your perspective. The planned talk was called invisible Russia and I hope together we can give a little bit of visibility, and voice for many brave cultural producers that are present in Russian speaking world. I hope to share my presentation. We did a little rehearsal of that, and I hope it works and Gail can just -- yeah, has worked. The talk as Gail also mentioned called "the right to be creative " you can see the picture also needs to be updated so previous Biennale and that's one of the works of [Indiscernible].

Here I think beautifully co-exists three things. One is cultural heritage here we see some resemblance of Rembrandt which is largely presented in the state Hermitage. You can see technological innovation and we can see oppression from the little character. This picture still works for my presentation, and this associations I planned to unfold a little bit later. I would start with the context which is all familiar. So I want to speak on risks and struggles of creative workers of Russia and beyond. So as I said, the talk is a result of ten years of my studies, of cultural workers. Today we mainly present Russian part, a huge part was a comparative study with a U.K. based cultural workers. I want to start, when we talk about risks I want to mention the most [distorted audio] at the risk of losing life and freedom. How cultural workers struggle against -- [audio distorted] That is my first example from Pittsburgh. As you may suggest it is [Indiscernible] it is called. I am a sociologist. I am not a art historian. So I can't define general. Like if I say ice graffiti would it be correct? I am not sure. That is an anti-war sign written on ice of one of the canals. Administration tries to get it over with paint. So basically what they do is paint ice while trying to review this powerful message.

The other example of process creativity is recent international women's day. It is on the city center in my home town. Usually in a patriarchal way men give flowers to women. But here we can see protesting women giving flowers to police. Among the most direct signs of struggle against the Ukrainian war it is a sad story as many others. It was a letter. There was a letter for cultural workers of Russia against the war signed more than 12,000 people. Later their letter was removed as one of the

organizers of the latter sat on Facebook like I did some homework for police and repressive cultural institutions by giving them a list of those people to fire from their work. Now the list is safe and just exists privately. My favorite example of today, and I am very, very proud of marina, the editor of channel 1 which is often called the main source of Putin's propaganda shared here today during the news presentation. There's a poster you can actually see they lied to us. It is propaganda. It just happened several hours ago, but to me she symbolized a lot. Not also because she is extremely conscious, brave woman and especially proud of, but also, because she worked politically with a distinction I analyzed a lot. Because I write about inequality of arts in culture and media. It happens so those cultural workers who get more visibility, more resources, which is an example of the TV presenter. They are back office workers. They don't have any [Indiscernible]. She was not only demonstrating her powers in process, though it was very, very dangerous, and I just hope she will be free soon, because now she is detained. And but also she breaks the barrier for visibility. She is a powerful cultural workers. So these are examples of struggles, resistance and protests that clearly given. And we can understand that.

But I would just give you more of a context of those struggles that are still situated in visible Russia. Those struggles are more long-term, and ask for like a very fragile and uncomplicated balance between what cultural workers would like to do and what they can in a very restricted situation of cultural production in Russia. Before going into that, I will present my approach.

So as I mentioned already I work with social inequality of the arts. I am not the first one who deals with that agenda. Here you can see the list of researchers I would particularly assign myself to a research on critical labor, studies but also sociology of the arts. Devoted a lot of pages and time to inequalities, and as I said the clear between the top of the art pyramid who gets more resources and are those people who are included in the distribution. But this model, which kind of -- I mean it is hard to resist against this model. But nevertheless, I think it is to simplify and fighting with inequality I would recommend to jump from this kind of a binary picture towards more complicated models so it is not just less concepts of under representation of people of color and people with social class. But I would rather go for speaking for those inequalities that are performative that are performed at certain place and time and sometimes are invisible in their information. That's why I would go for ethnographic approach. Some say I am developing at the moment. You see inequalities in the way they are formulating as some more complicated interplay of gender class and other factors, so I call this approach Ethnography. I would call them creative ecologies. And here I would include not only those people who are assigned, who are recognized as creative workers if we deal with the cultural institutions in visual arts. They would be artists, research fellows, directors, those people who work with archive, not just that but I would also new in this

creative ecologists those people who are technical workers, who are cleaners, who have worked in clock rooms. By broadening this approach I would give recognition to no human agents that represent institutions as plans architecture and so on. I would place my approach here and to give you more visual reproduction.

It is nice to bring this picture while being here in San Francisco and California, one of my favorite artist creators and great conceptionalists Michael Asher who did this iconic work in mid '70s in one of LA between galleries. He just removed the wall between clearly assigned place for exhibition like white cube for art works and those -- the back door office workers who will not be seen. I follow this at methodology too. Like little homage to Michael Asher. That is what all would do at some point. That is me at back door of one of cultural institutions in Moscow. I find it interesting because I can't name the institution. Trust me, you would never recognize this institution from this point of view, because you can't see beautiful architecture of those. You can't see smiley gallery assistants. You can see cheap affordable furniture -- here you can't see it but they are there, security guards having nap on an old sofa. Many workers in the technical department migrant from middle Asia. I would like this picture to have more systematic view on inequality in the arts and the ways of resistance connected to that. So now I want us to move to Moscow for my first example. And this is a timeline I would present is already incomplete.

They are private and public cultural institutions that appeared in Moscow alone since the 190s. And of course a great shift happened in 1991 after the collapse of Soviet union. As you know contemporary art was nonexistent. Contemporary art, especially I would focus on those institutions that became available that opened in 2000s. Many of them private. Many very dissimilar you would imagine as a classical fine art museum in Russia. I am sorry that you are limited duration of my talk today. I can't bring you many of those examples which are not from Moscow but there are many many self organized center and something we would call top down institutions, they exist in [Indiscernible] and St. Petersburg and [Indiscernible] and there are many disaster cultural workers who sometimes do impossible things to make the institutions running.

For those of you who didn't have a chance to visit, I would just give you some visual examples of what are these places. That is kind of a col Raj. I would just go one by one. This is garage museum that was opened in the center of Moscow. They changed the building since then. It was opened in [Indiscernible] -- you may remember the opening scenes from man with a movie camera. They are located in this new building which is Soviet restaurant from the 60s. Modern this building redesigned by [Indiscernible]. The next one would be institute for urban design and Planning also located in center of Moscow. It is important to mention that Russia is located in gore key park. It is in the center of Moscow there's a place for

open lectures and the newest one was opened in December last year, and similar to Tate modern in London. That's a form of electricity station. Here you can see the public art commission which was discussed many times with different opportunities of public debate.

A lot of people didn't like it in the center of Moscow, so here those photographs made by me during the visit. Here you can see the recent project over there which is Santa Barbara by Icelandic artist who had to stop his project because of disagreement as he said with Nazi politics of Vladimir Putin. And currently their exhibition space, actually all three they stopped the public activities. So what I did during my ethnographic project that took me some years, I was there with cultural workers. I interviewed all together about 50 of them, not in Moscow alone but St.Petersburg and went to London and did a comparison. Also I did many observations with some of them I became like very good friend, and they let me stay with them in their offices and sometimes a little bit assist with their hard work which sometimes took them for more than 14, 16 hours, some of them spent nights at the cultural institution. Let me just give them some voice and their perspectives on cultural work space they implement. It is interesting to me and even a bit confusing that despite hard-working conditions they have, they are very, very loyal, and proud of those institutions they have been running together and for Soviet collective. They sacrifice a lot of their lifetime and talents and creative effort. They invested in the institution.

You can see the bunch of quotes from my interview as showing their respect and loyalty to the institution. They find not only cool workplace but also their home. For many of those, when I analyzed my interview archive, I noticed that the line of given special metaphors to those institutions, on the one hand it is no wonder. They call it [Indiscernible] or islands or micro state, because most of them locate islands in parks, or they are a part of gentrification and they are from factories. Not many things are connected or close to this institution. That's the kind of contrast between the rest of urban environment and institutions themselves. Marina Bragovich is to confirm what she says here. It is given in Russian, it is a promotional video for garage museum what she says is Garage Museum is an island of most. I started to unfold this metaphor. To me that was very interesting. Why do they use this particular way of describing this. Not everybody would say like I have worked on an island or oasis or mirage, that one I enjoy a piece of Europe in Russia. That's because those places which are actually gated communities, and they have security guards at their entrance. So they check the visitors, they may exclude some social groups. They give more filtered and on the one side they give more filtered audience, so a lot of people can't access these places, but on the other hand they give some safe place to the workers and some of the visitors. They secure the borders, like physical borders and boundaries of their lifestyle, which is -- I keep saying about that middle class, but together with that

they in this oasis they can perform multiple identities they have more openly in the rest of Russia. I mean gender identity that can be different than the majority or limited ways to perform gender, to be a woman, a man or a non-binary person and sexual identities. I think that despite their limitations, I describe this island is a safe space for cultural workers. They feel they belong to. They invest their dreams, their prospects to future from it and as I said many talents.

I already started to discuss the meaning of government, which seems -- of course one thing I should mention, most of the economy in Russia is controlled by the government. Many institutions are state funded, but not only. Legally it is also controlled. For instance to create a museum that will be legally defined as the museum, an institution should be following many rules. But in this unique oasis, workers and visitors but mostly workers feel there is less control and there is less government and they feel they are out of Russia. So I would say the spaces of pretty much negotiated and restricted freedom. But still there are places of freedom, which now can just disappear. It is limited opportunity to create and basically frees for these cultural workers. Interesting paradox, by excluding states the cultural workers also exclude welfare state. Like the guarantees for work in contract and they don't really follow the contract that can be sometimes pretty good formulated, because they find them and their employees being on the same side creating the same space from the state and the government. So if a working conflict, a PS, the cultural workers as I said before over work, sometimes in many cases invisible, excluded. Discriminated. They can't fight for their rights these legal terms, because they don't want the government to be involved in the struggle. This quotation I would find pretty much clear and illustrative of one of the creators sad I don't need cops as labor police in my house. That's how they would call institutions. So so being in this institution being part of the teams, they as they said sacrificed a lot of their lifetime, of their resources, many of them they don't have families or an opportunity to start a family, financially and because they sacrificed that much in terms of their lifetime. Also they don't have a way out of sometimes very toxic labor relations. So that was one of the examples.

And now I hope this is still good this timing. Now I would move to my other example, because that's a major part of my work, it was devoted to cultural institutions. But I don't want to limit our vision of Russian culture by only saying that -- of course the place of culture is very contested in Russia. The same culture we still see it in a very narrow way excluding a lot of vividly developing things. Who wrote about many phenomenon excluded from popular visions of Russian culture as Japanese [Indiscernible] in Russia is fun fiction, writers community especially. Female writers graffiti and so on. Today I want to bring another case. Today is special and up setting date. I think it is a historical day. Russia blocks Instagram. As an organization.

Sorry it is in Russian but it is authentic. That is a screen grab from my e-mail box. The website [Indiscernible] like literal translation. It is E government website, so here they state that Instagram will be blocked in Russia. The interestingly there is situations with Putin putting dots or exclamation points, but they said Instagram prohibits international law first in history. Calls for violence towards the citizens of Russia, that's why Russia decided to ban, to prohibit Instagram, and I can still hardly believe in this fact. Nevertheless it is happening. It is happening today. That is why especially I want to give some time and place in my talk to Russian Instagram, which is huge. There's some statistic given by private company Statista. So 69 million users of Instagram in Russia and as you can see on this graph, young people a very low percentage of teenagers. More than that, the people young people and middle aged people then we have not that many users after 50. You can see some percentage of those people over 65. That probably my parents in their 70s, both of them are active Instagram users. So Instagram is a huge part of digital life in Russia. I would just put some perspective on my good colleague Ellen RUTIN from University of am center damn who extensively rides on I am perfection in culture. Imperfection plays a role in Russia. Given the gates to perfection is extremely important for users of Russian Instagram to switch and to live in a different reality, which is a sort of -- someone may call escapades and someone would present relatively in them. Many cities of Russia, many users they would travel by Instagram. They would create the alternative in digital self as probably many users. That was a very significant phenomenon in Russia. But here I would question like when we say Russian Instagram, what do we mean in particular?

And here I would bring an example of one of the most popular bloggers first on Instagram, but also on YouTube and TikTok. So, Olesandr Dmitrenko is played a perfume thief. Together for these three platforms I think he's got more than 1 million followers at least. The story of Olesandr illustrates many places and ideas of multi presence of Russian Instagram in particular, so Olesandr was born in Kyiv and now based in U.K. and he was there for many years.

So his main audience. He speaks Russian with his followers, and his main audience in Russian -- is Russian. What he develops there are multiple formats but mostly he does drag culture and one of the most popular characters he impersonates is [Indiscernible] who is an employee at a supermarket in Russia at a chain called [Indiscernible] kind of 7-11 if you would put it in American context. She is got a very traditional family, she has her husband and she is a mother of a teenage boy. Here I will present -- I hope the video will work. Like a summary of Olesandr creativity and also many other characters. That's his Instagram profile. If you want to follow.

I hope that the video will work. Yeah. It is down roading.

So that was his original voice, which is popular for voice in cats and he also does a lot of dancing on TikTok, and now I just want to get back to my next slide which is here. For those of you who will be able to follow Oleksandr on YouTube and look a bit more, the show he runs you can possibly see very careful work of at reproducing, again, kind of an invisible worker of Russian supermarket Alexander I interviewed him, and he was in Russia just one day. So with this given context, the visual context he fantasized about possible live in ways of living women in RussiaRussia, and in his U.K. apartment, he basically reproduced Russian supermarket. You can see the handwritten with Instagram and YouTube Oleksandr travels within Russia. He found himself to be part of never been in the given context himself as one of the examples, I would just bring his Instagram account where he sends greetings in his popular -- voice and non-binary persons who sounds advanced for Russian YouTube and Instagram. Here with geo tech you can see that he is located in imaginary [Indiscernible] which is central part of Russia but obviously here he is in the U.K. in London. This very extravagant career perspective, I just want to put the importance of horizontal collaboration between many of Russian, Ukrainian and bloggers and representatives of other ways of cultural labor. Though physically not many of those saw each other.

And one of -- I just think that I need to finish soon and this example I don't want to give fully, but one of my work was team of translators for a TV series. Of pretty much self organized collective that existed not in -- they spoke in Russian language but they existed not in Russia alone, but many of them the teams work simultaneously in Ukraine, in Kazakhstan, in Belarus, in Russia, never been present together in one place, but working as a team for disseminating their collective result in translating culture. Most of them TV series, western TV series or American TV series were actually translated in that really collaborative way. So for this example I think just, oh, yeah, I have been speaking a lot. I need to finish. There is one more beautiful image of Olesandr who recreates Russian or Ukrainian or any kind of Soviet market. And he plays a seller of shoes. I will finish and then that's us together while our joint performance in London, at Pushkin house. I know Q&A session will follow, but please keep in touch. That's my website with all of the contact details, but mostly let's be in touch on Instagram. Let's keep Instagram alive. My very good colleague, his Instagram posts I would put quotation on. He said if someone would block Instagram, unbelievably, is political organization as the next organization which is shocking. That still means that Instagram and they co created that.

It is still very important in differentials. Let's keep those places as Instagram running together. That would be all. Thank you and again this war needs to stop. I am in solidarity with Ukraine.

Oh, I need to stop sharing my presentation.

Gail: Okay I am going to face you since we are in the same room. We had talked before the lecture about perhaps you being willing to share some of your experiences in Russia over the past three weeks, so however you want to talk about that, I think our audience would be really interested. By the way please put your questions in the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen. We will select a couple of questions for Rita in a moment. If you could please, describe how has it been observing what's been unfolding first in St. Petersburg and also you had such difficulty leaving the country too. Anything you want to share about the last three weeks I think would really be enlightening for our audience.

Rita: I am ready to share. As I said that's hard time for me because many reasons connected to this war, but also very interesting time, because that's my second time -- second trip in them to the U.S. And like most of the time of the war I actually spent here, so I think I laughed on the sixth day of war and we tried really hard, and again I am grateful pretty much to Berkeley center for a new media for making it possible, because it was a very, very stressful period. And, I mean, as many of my colleagues and friends, I feel -- I felt and feel like being -- it is a difficult time for us, because I think locked would be the key concept, first I felt locked in my own country, because for me bringing international experience, and I would say for my University it was one of the key points to connect and actually to be connected, and my work was pretty much associated with international creative labor for many, many years. In one week I just realized that all of us will be losing these opportunities. Secondly I realized that my work is doing the work for mine and my colleagues for many years. It just disappeared, because when we say Russia, we associate it violent, militant behavior. The though all of the networks, all of the art works, all of the corporation we tried to create for this many years, and I mean like maybe I am 35. So maybe less of me, but I would actually extend it to the post-Soviet period and it just disappeared at once. I am saying how it is ruined and locked. The other is a very conflicting understanding of self for many people who are representatives of Russian Intelligence. I would say some say we would call a culture -- the culture of shame, because a lot of people shared a person is guilty on Facebook when it still existed in Russia like multiple postings of colleagues and friends, they all said the same like I am guilty, and I don't know how to express the shame and feeling of guilt. I would say that all educated class why in Russia they find themselves in had this situation of I would just say, self harm, and they have postings like it is really hard to leave these spring days, because they are so sunny and I feel guilty if I just enjoy good lunch, good coffee, sunny day. So emotionally, I mean, it was and is a devastating situation. Of course the priority is to get the troops out of the Ukraine. But it is trauma for I think all Russian people. Just some recognize it, some not. But I would say it has been -- it will be with us not just one generation but mainly-- many generations, so that's a question how we can work with that, because clearly that's a lot of work, and that the conditions are in

perspectives they are impossible. I would just say one more word about being here. Actually, again, I am very happy I could make it. Also I would say that many people I knew in the U.S. before, and some people that I just met, they were very sympathetic and friendly to me, but this condition is very human to just have a chat like a small talk with someone and this person asks where are you from, where are you traveling to? Did you hear -- you say, I am Russian, and it is not just like it used to be like saying I am German, I am Italian, I am Bolivian, but it is a start of a conversation. And I mean, like always when I have this conversation I share my position. I think it is important, and I think it is a privilege to be here to have personal dialogues with those people who are interested. But I would say many people are very friendly to me, because as I said before, I feel like I am traumatized. There's not the country I live in, and I don't know how other people see myself being here, but it gives a lot of support, and willingness to talk, to create, to continue my work despite, like in Russia it basically feels like the end of the world with no future and given perspectives. So it gives support gives a lot in this time.

Gail: Yeah, and I think another thing -- another way we were talking today about what it has been like for Russians over the past several weeks is that I said Americans in the past, you know, when this country has occupied other nations, which has happened many times, that Americans don't feel that guilt, I think. I mean, I think sometimes Americans have felt shame and certainly there were times especially under the previous presidential administration, when Americans I knew to say Canadian that has happened they don't own their Americanness when they travel. But I don't think, well, because the U.S. is -- it is hard for other nations to sink the U.S. when the U.S. invades other countries, you know. Even when this country has occupied other countries, it doesn't feel like the end of the world here. So I think that there's something -- there's a way that as an American I can sympathize with Russians right now as residents of the invading nation and being against the war. I like millions of Americans Marched under exactly the same slogan not in my name. Not in our name was the major slogan for anti war protestors when the Bush administration invaded Iraq. I really feel with the Russian populace of this time also acknowledging it is very different because of the sanctions. Of course I have more questions, but let me ask a question from the audience. DOLEDA how can international networks of cultural institutions support dissident Russian artists and scholars as well as Ukrainian refugee artist and scholars and what does this current moment open up for understanding the importance of sport for other refugee and exile communities of scholars and artists. What are the commonalities of the global precarities that result in our/your traumas. That is a lot of questions. Dalida and I have worked together. There are many other people very international team of center for design arts and social research. That is a very important question because first the situation is unfolding just right now so we just started, but there are some outcomes that are visible.

There are many initiatives to support Ukrainian artists and scholars, and I have seen a lot of people actually send some announcements to me. So with those Ukrainians. I shared it with them, their scholarships and so on.

The Russian cultural academic workers I would say that's kind of Beverly lens. Some institutions would ban Russian scholars and exclude them from their networks. And some of my colleagues receive these mails that based on your citizenship we would exclude you. At the moment some joint project with Russia stopped, so many international institutions they left Russia, and that's very, very sad outcome. And that's a lot of work in the future. I mean that's a very interesting question about refugee artists and scholars, yeah. Because this communities they have just been information and me personally, what I see a lot of people who in many situations, in many countries we are not that close but they are in touch and more solidarity. So just some of my colleagues from St. Petersburg, some of them in Mexico, some of them in China, actually, and many of them in Georgia and Armenia. And, yeah, it is interesting how the arts scene goes – it is a force, but it goes global in some unpredictable way. The support for refugees – the importance of support for other refugees and exile communities of artists and scholars? I think that also an important theme for the future. Now the main feelings would be shock, and I mean, as I said three times today, I think it is hard to talk literally and metaphorically, it is hard to present yourself. I mean, should I present myself as international scholar, as a Russian scholar? Do I have the right to create? Do I have the right to talk at the moment during military action. Would other people want to hear they open questions? Of course that's another step towards precarity, and I know how detailed I gave the picture and what you know already, but I would just say that, I mean. It has been very precarious. Russian cultural scene. It is like losing opportunities. I think it just -- I mean, Russia is about to lose its culture, because I mean, the voices of people who immigrated or just left for a while works they speak for Russia? And of course, I mean, that's we hear more dialogue with other communities definitely need it. And I hope we can try to work it through together, but I mean, in historical scale, it gives so many opportunities for understanding. Thanks to my dear friends I was able to visit Walter house near Boston. As you remember he had to leave Nazi Germany. He had to run. He came to the U.S. He found new foundations for his design and architecture.

Gail: I was there listening to this story and I thought like, Walter Gropius, I do understand kind of what you felt. Like what does it make to find yourself in this desperate conditions losing home and even more importantly, losing cultural identity. So, yeah, that's -- there are many, many important questions for the future. I would just state like that. And in addition to the specific, you know, the really particular situation Russians are in today I think we will see unfortunately many, many more refugee and exile communities just because of climate change. In the next 50 years I think we will anticipate the questions of cultural presentation,

trance national sorts of co-operations to keep institutions alive, and this question of culture surviving great change, massive earth shaking changes, I think will grow. I think this question will grow in the coming decades. So it is important that we begin to work on these questions now. Because they will only become more important and more frequent went. So unfortunately there is more ways that your talk is so relevant today, Rita, because I believe just yesterday Saturday afternoon, rather, your work is on cultural institution employees, and on Saturday two employees were stabbed seriously by a would be guest who was refused entrance. Their stab wounds were very serious that both of the employees are 24 years old. One was a woman and one was a man. The woman suffered two stab wounds to the lower back and one wound to the back of her neck. And the man was stabbed once in his left collar bone. They are expected to survive, but it is shocking and horrifying, and one thing that has been discussed on sort of our Twitter today is how precarious, literally vulnerable museum workers are to the public. And there have been, you know, museum employees and former museum employees talking about the conditions in which they are touched or harassed by the guests, you know, by the visitors to the museum, the museum doesn't protect them, because they don't -- they see them as part of the exhibition to some extent. So they are, you know, part of what the visitors buy tickets to are the staff, but the staff have really emotional, you know, reactions to having their personal space being beaded and of course if anything dangerous chaps. Something they have been saying on our Twitter is how the visceral and emotional reactions to people to art cannot be taken out on the art. The art has to be left alone. It has to be untouched. There are people in the space who can be touched who are the employees. So I think it is uncannily relevant to some of the issues that you have brought to light today, this luminescent ethnography...

Rita: Thank you for bringing this to the table. I mean honestly because I was so into the Ukraine news feed, I read a lot of telegram channels. This news is sad I missed. And I mean, that is an upsetting event, clearly. And shows risks. This risk I would say they not -- they are not like the most frequent. That is an interesting case to discuss and to speculate on. And yes, of course, a lot of risks connected with the fact that front row workers and they need to secure the institution and they in a way they have some responsibility to share for the security of artworks that are priceless. That is a lot of responsibility for this very, very little resources against they can access. So that is a problem. Of course, I mean, it is not about life plans, but in many cases I would say that museum workers they are between two flames. So first it is a risk I devoted my talk to. They can't really talk about because they secure the institutions. So they need to always be coordinated with institutions. They can't criticize it, because they are the main adapts. So that's one trap. The second one is -- I know how it concerns the American art community, but what I know about Russian and European communities is that there is always assumption that artists, they are precarious. And those people who have full-time

jobs and museums they are kind of fat cats of the art world, so that is actually a question. So again, they can't speak against their own institution, they can't openly criticize. So but they can be not too many solidarities created with artists, because artists would say that they are in better conditions. And they are more privileged which is absolutely not true. So that is a group that basically can't speak out. So that's another reason. But I mean, I always find internationally concerned studies when you can compare context are very rewarding. Here I would bring Russian context, for Soviet context. Usually they have a lot of power, and that is the kind of a very clear way to work to play these museum hierarchies.

Gail:

Okay. It is a closing thought the older women who work in Russian museums even though they have such low power see themselves as the queens of the museums and feel really empowered to direct action in the museum too?

Rita: Yeah. So that approach they used to fight for their own rights. Sometimes they move to museums and directors. Just because they feel they deserve more. This work is not rewarded financially very much. Though in many cases they have open ended contracts which are very good in the world. They have their little own crowds and they spend a lot of time together. I mean, I would research it that would give me much perspective theoretically. So, yeah, because I also do performance sometimes I would create it as a performance. I want to recreate a character in a context that is far from post-Soviet. Imagine someone in an American or British museum shouting that.

Gail: For sure, for sure. I think that's all we have time for. Of course you and I will continue the conversation later but join me wherever you are thanking professor Kuleva for joining us. For those watching thank you for coming tonight. Yeah, peace to the world and solidarity with Ukraine. Thank you all so much.

Rita: Thank you. Keep in touch.