



**kvadrat**

# Petrit Halilaj

## *RU*

### ***RU* by Petrit Halilaj launches three-year partnership between Kvadrat and New Museum, New York**

In March 2017 the New Museum and Kvadrat announced a three-year partnership focused on supporting the realisation of ambitious new works by emerging artists who have not yet had a significant exhibition in New York or in the rest of the US. *RU* by Petrit Halilaj is the first of three commissioned installations that are developed within this partnership.

Petrit Halilaj (b. 1986, Kostërrc, Skenderaj-Kosovo) often uses his own biography as a point of departure for his works, incorporating materials from his native Kosovo, and using drawing, text and video to create ambitious spatial installations through which he translates personal relationships into sculptural forms.

Excavation, archives and the intertwining of personal, political and mythic history are recurring themes in Halilaj's work. Continuing his exploration into lost, concealed and repurposed histories, Petrit Halilaj's new multifaceted installation *RU* explores stories and objects connected to a Neolithic settlement beneath his hometown of Runik.

The results of a past archeological dig in the town uncovered 505 objects that comprise part of the country's most significant material history from the period. Now spread across several countries as the result of the Kosovo War in the 1990s, the most valuable of these objects currently reside in storage at the Natural History Museum in Belgrade, Serbia. Out of public reach and inaccessible to the people of Runik, these objects hold great symbolic value for a nation missing parts of its shared frame of reference, all the while evidence of the early civilisation regularly manifests itself within present day Runik, forming part of a collective narrative in a site still marked by conflict and fracture.

In Petrit Halilaj's *RU*, Halilaj presents a number of new video works, several large textile sculptures, and an extensive environment that draws on his research on the flight patterns and habitats of migratory birds.

*RU* is entered through the bare branches of a forest-like space of oral history and myth making in which 505 ceramic artefacts are reimagined as a flock of migratory bird-like forms on brass legs. Halilaj's friends and neighbours tell stories of Runik's Neolithic civilisation through mysterious objects they have discovered on their land and interpreted – horns, heads, torsos – which are attributed with mystic significance.

Soft, earth-like textile versions of these 'discoveries' litter the floor, functional décor that are used by visitors to the exhibition and suggest the comingling of history and myth in the absence of official narrative.

Alongside the provision of institutional support, Kvadrat has assisted the artist with the fabrication of the textile elements within the installation. A catalogue will be published documenting the exhibition and giving insight into Halilaj's practice.

*"Embarking on this three-year journey with the New Museum as an ever curious and inspiring partner is a privilege as we share a common vision of pushing boundaries and experimenting. We are honoured that we have been given the opportunity to collaborate with Petrit Halilaj and the New Museum on his first exhibition in New York. It has been an interesting journey and a great collaboration with both the artist and the museum."*

Anders Byriel, CEO Kvadrat

**Petrit Halilaj *RU***

27 September 2017 – 7 January 2018

New Museum

235 Bowery

10002 New York

Opening hours

Tuesday – Wednesday 11am – 6pm

Thursday 11am – 9pm

Friday – Sunday 11am – 6pm

Monday closed

### **New Museum and Kvadrat**

In March 2017, the New Museum and Kvadrat announced a three-year partnership focused on supporting the realisation of ambitious new works by emerging artists who have not yet had a significant exhibition in New York or in the rest of the US. *RU* by Petrit Halilaj is the first of three individual projects that will be supported by the partnership. Alongside the provision of institutional support, Kvadrat has assisted the artist with the fabrication of textile elements within the installation.

The selection of artists to be supported by the partnership is overseen by Helga Christoffersen and Massimiliano Gioni, respectively the Assistant Curator and *Edlis Neeson Artistic Director of the New Museum*. This three-year partnership, facilitated by South into North, follows on Kvadrat's recent and successful collaborations with Pipilotti Rist for her exhibition "Pixel Forest" at the Museum in 2016/17 and Cally Spooner's "On False Tears and Outsourcing" in 2016.

### **About Petrit Halilaj**

Born in Kosovo in 1986, Petrit Halilaj lives and works between Bozzolo, Berlin, Pristina and Runik. The laureate of the 2017 Mario Merz Prize, Halilaj received a special mention from the jury of the 57th Biennale Arte in Venice for his participation in the main exhibition. His work has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at HangarBicocca (Milan), Kölnischer Kunstverein (Cologne), Bundeskunsthalle (Bonn), Kunsthalle Lissabon (Lisbon), Galeria e Arteve e Kosovës (Pristina), Fondation d'Enterprise Galeries Lafayette (Paris) and WIELS Contemporary Art Centre (Brussels).

### **About New Museum**

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a centre for exhibitions, information and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

[newmuseum.org](http://newmuseum.org)

## **About Kvadrat**

Kvadrat was established in Denmark in 1968 and has deep roots in Scandinavia's design tradition. Kvadrat continuously works to expand the aesthetic, technological, and artistic boundaries of the use of textiles through a long series of collaborations with some of the world's best designers, architects, and artists, including Tord Boontje, Miriam Bäckström, Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, Thomas Demand, Olafur Eliasson, Alfredo Häberli, Akira Minagawa, and Peter Saville. Art projects include Pipilotti Rist at New Museum, New York (2016); Philippe Parreno at Tate Modern, London (2016); Joana Vasconcelos, AroS, Aarhus (2016); Goshka Macuga at Fondazione Prada, Milan (2016); Jesper Just at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2015); Shilpa Gupta at la Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2015); Günther Vogt and Olafur Eliasson at Your Glacial Expectations, Kvadrat Headquarters, Ebeltoft (2012); and Thomas Demand at Städel Museum's Metzler Hall, Frankfurt (2011). From 2015, Kvadrat has been collaborating with South into North for the curatorial development of the company's art strategy.

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