

Disability, ableism, and the Russian art world:  
Notes on the project "Tracings Out of Thin Air" (Work in Progress)

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"Tracings Out of Thin Air" (2015 -) was conceived as a hyperlocal multidisciplinary programme created in response to contemporary Russian artistic, inclusive and educational initiatives centred on a collaborative work with a given community. Arising out of a sense of professional frustration and a desire to practically confront the ideals of corporate public pedagogy, the project was conceptualized and implemented in this overall setting, but outside the sphere of influence of large institutions. This modest, small-scale initiative was organised independently, albeit with a critical awareness that no one is ever free from any institutional behaviour. This presentation is an attempt to reflect upon "Tracings Out of Thin Air" whys and wherefores after a year and a half of work. It offers an introspective perspective, not free of doubts, and modestly aims at defining the practical and conceptual framework of the project's curators own practice and commitment.

Bios:

Alexander Ivanov and Joana Monbaron are independent researchers, educators and curators based in St. Petersburg, Russia, who have initiated community, pedagogical, artistic, and research projects for the last four years. Their sphere of professional interest are critical pedagogy, the educational turn in art, and institutional criticism. They collaborated with a number of Russian and international institutions (the 10th and 11th editions of Manifesta, the European Biennale of Contemporary Art, the International Public Art Festival "Art Prospect", the CYFEST annual media art festival, etc.). They are the organisers of the project "Tracings Out of Thin Air", a long-term interdisciplinary programme that investigates issues of ableism and normalisation in contemporary art.