

Room & Board & Crate & Barrel & Mother Vertical
Ei Arakawa, Gela Patashuri and Sergei Tcherepnin
January 23 – March 12, 2016

*Minneapolis was one of three cities Joseph Beuys visited on his first trip to the US in January of 1974. The weather must have been as cold as it has been the past two weeks; the average low temp that month was 5 degrees. Later that spring, he made a performance in New York called *I like America and America Likes Me*.

*Georgian artist Gela Patashuri has never been to the US before; this visit to Minneapolis is his first. Last year, Gela had to sell the apartment in Tbilisi, Georgia that was originally given to his father by the communist government. He currently has no regular job and no home. His family's future remains uncertain as they wait for the next election. Gela asks Georgian politician and diplomat Davit Bakradze to "Make Georgia better place to live!"

* "Georgian domestic architecture has elements influenced by pre-Christian, Persian, Byzantine, and Arab cultures. Mother Verticals (deda bodzi) — large embellished structural pillars — are perhaps one of the most significant features of dwellings in certain regions of Georgia."

*While in Minneapolis for the month of January, we became fascinated by the elaborate home-making here. Everyone has a nice home (at least, the homes we visited were nice). We were obsessed with Room & Board. We were uplifted by Crate & Barrel. We decided to appropriate ideas from Room & Board and Crate & Barrel, and Gela built their furniture through his particular perspective of having never seen these stores before. Constructed furniture is mixed with objects specifically selected from these stores, as well as St. Paul's Hmong Village Marketplace, Somali Village Market, Menards, Home Depot, and CB2. From the balcony supported by the largest Mother Vertical in the gallery, the exhibition becomes a weekend-warehouse-showroom.

*We embedded speakers and interfaces in the furniture and architecture. A Hmong lucky charm in a bench is a switch activating music from a painting and a curtain. A copper strip along the railing on the balcony turns on and off the music from the *Metal Deda Bodzi*. The left wing of the *Chair with Wings* prompts the *Tongued Lamp* and *Side Table with Tongue* to communicate. These can be switched on in combination or solo. This creates a new kind of chamber music, where the furniture may speak out at any point, not as background, but as a living brain. Historically — dating back to the baroque period — 'furniture music' refers to a kind of domesticated music. Here the logic of furniture music is reversed, from decorative comfort to living sound. Changing the furniture's design alters the physics of a room, creating audible dynamics between objects that usually listen to us. We move through a space and encounter ever-changing conversations between furniture and bodies, becoming aware of contrasting listening spaces.

*Nabadi are Georgian shepherds' cloaks, traditionally constructed of very thick felt. The metal Nabadi on view in the library are an abstraction of that form and, like the felt version found in Georgia, serve as a kind of construction, a wearable architecture that can also stand on their own. These were made by participants of a FD13 residency for the arts workshop held earlier in January. Working closely with Arakawa and Patashuri, workshop participants cut, folded and secured the metal Nabadi structures, and then wore them outside for a performance and procession in Hampden Park adjacent to FD13 residency for the arts.

*Gela Patashuri and New York-based artists Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherpnin have been collaborating since 2005, when they worked together during a Tbilisi exhibition series organized by Daniel Baumann. In 2010, they produced their first project outside of Tbilisi, titled *Hurt Locker Instrument*, at Casco in Utrecht, Netherlands; it was followed by *Be a speaker. So be it...* at CAC Brétigny, France. In 2013 they presented their work at *Kamikaze Loggia* at the Georgian Pavilion for the 55th Venice Biennale. *Room & Board & Crate & Barrel & Mother Vertical* is their first collaborative exhibition in the United States.