As Russia is recovering from the post-perestroika turmoil and struggling to find its new place on the international arena, its art serves as a litmus of what is truly at stake and how the country sees itself from the inside. Trying to overcome the bounds of the historical and aesthetic traditions (conceptualism and sots art of the 1970-80s), Russian artists of today feel responsibility to express the points that are vital for contemporary Russian society to reflect upon. The talk will focus on some of the key thematic lines in Russian contemporary art, such as political resistance, anti-Church provocations, the quest for “new spirituality,” cultural and economic critique, formal and media experimentation, as well as regional development and institutional context.

Ksenia Fedorova (PhD. student, Cultural Studies Graduate Group, UCD) has been a curator at the Ural branch of the National Center for Contemporary Art, where she co-curated and co-organized several international exhibitions and conferences. She is an author of articles and essays in Russian and international editions and is a co-editor (with Nina Sosna) of Media: Between Magic and Technology (2013, in Russian). She served as a member of the Jury of PRIX Ars Electronica-2012 and the selection committee for PRO&CONTRA, a symposium and media art contest based in Moscow. She holds an MA in Philosophy and Art History and is currently completing her PhD in Philosophy at the Ural Federal University.