

# ARTFORUM

## Slavs and Tatars

RASTER

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In Poland, pickle juice is traditionally thought to be an effective hangover cure; and if the nation's extreme right-wing PiS party seems drunk on their newly acquired power, then Slavs and Tatars' playful symbology suggests a remedy for their staggering nationalist rhetoric. In the center of the main gallery, a bar serves both juice and a dose of political commentary. Three varieties are offered: traditional cucumber, delicious mushroom, and a garlic so pungent that many might likely decline on the basis of scent alone. After downing a shot or two, visitors are free to take in the other works, which include *Pan Chrzan* (Mr. Horseradish) (all works 2016), a woolen rug depicting a cartoonish conjoined-twin horseradish root with one end menacing the other, and the banner *Hammer and Nipple*, featuring long cucumber breasts that leak milk-white letters spelling out, in Polish, "Sour on power: the tits of government only provide kefir." Hanging above it all is the large vinyl print *Life Is Like a Cucumber: One Day in Your Hand, One Day in Your Ass*, which shows a cucumber-thumb thrust between the index and middle fingers of a fist, a gesture that translates to "You aren't getting anything."

This country has a history of political rebellion as satire—the Orange Alternative for instance, operating mainly during the 1980s, created happenings that burlesqued authority through various hijinks, including dwarf-themed graffiti and cardboard mock-military parades. Slavs and Tatars' slick presentation contrasts with the DIY aesthetic of protest objects made during the material scarcity of Communist rule, but the sentiment is the same: Perhaps the only way to counter the recklessness of the current government's actions is with absurdity.

— *Bean Gilsdorf*



Slavs and Tatars, *Hammer and Nipple*, 2016, digital UV print on PVC, 77 x 27 1/2".