

## Preface

**Amy Ingrid Schlegel, Director of galleries and collections,  
Tufts University, and exhibition curator**

In the course of our lives, we have all felt that certain places have special qualities that impart great feelings of power, serenity, spirituality, or a sense of connection to the universe, even to the cosmos. These special places are analogous to reservoirs containing an inexplicable force that renowned Russian-American artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov call "cosmic energy." In all likelihood many more such places exist on Earth than we realize. During construction excavation of the Aldekman Arts Center, where the Tufts University Art Gallery is located, cryptic drawings and vessel-like objects were reportedly discovered in the late 1990s which suggest that this site may once have been used to capture and preserve cosmic energy. Could it do so again? If so, to what end?

*The Center of Cosmic Energy's* Communication with the Cosmos Building has been constructed on top of this former excavation site in Medford, Massachusetts in order to test a proposal offered by the Kabakovs as to whether and how cosmic energy might be harnessed. A realized conceptual experiment, this monumental art installation is driven by a mystical vision of a more harmonious, more creative future made possible by obtaining greater access to this *chi* the Kabakovs call "cosmic energy."

*The Center of Cosmic Energy* poses provocative questions about how individuals come to understand their role as global citizens, about the connection between spirituality and science, and about the nature of consciousness, or what the Kabakovs call "intuition."

We may no longer have to "emigrate to innovate" in a globalized world, as Tom Friedman proclaims in *The World Is Flat*. But we do need to be in the exact right place and in the right position (that is, of 60-degrees) to become more creative, and hence more innovative (an insight Friedman overlooks). *The Center of Cosmic Energy's* bold research agenda persuasively argues that enhanced creativity is indeed the solution to many of the world's problems and that potential that exists within each of us to contribute to a better future.

### Acknowledgments

As exhibition curator and Director of the Tufts University Art Gallery, it is my distinct privilege to have worked with Ilya and Emilia Kabakov over several years to develop and realize this installation for the first time. The curatorial, interpretive, and fabrication challenges were absolutely fascinating and unique for us.

We are deeply grateful to the artists for their support and involvement at every step of the way. I also wish to thank the Kabakovs' assistant, Igor Markovas, for his technical support, and to the Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, especially Boshko Boskovic, for assistance throughout.

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