HERO MOTHER

CONTEMPORARY ART BY POST-COMMUNIST WOMEN RETHINKING HEROISM
Published on the occasion of the exhibition
Hero Mother, Contemporary Art by Post-Communist Women Rethinking Heroism

Studio 1 & MÖMENTUM Gallery at Kunstquartier Bethanien

13 May to 12 June 2016

Exhibition Organiser MÖMENTUM Berlin
Exhibition Curators Bojana Pejčić & Rachel Rits-Volloch
Production Olga Wiedemann
Production Assistants Karen Andersen, Maddy Martin, Emilio Rapanà, Laura Sanguineti, Elle Sinclair

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MÖMENTUM Team:
Dr. Rachel Rits-Volloch Founding Director
Emilio Rapanà Associate Director, Head of Design
Olga Wiedemann Curator & Residency Coordinator
Marina Belikova Web Design, Documentation
Karen Andersen Production Assistant
Maddy Martin Curatorial Assistant
Laura Sanguineti Production Assistant
Elle Sinclair Production Assistant

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IN THE BEGINNING....

HERO MOTHER: Contemporary Art By Post-Communist Women Rethinking Heroism is the youngest in a series of sister exhibitions, artist residencies, and events together entitled BEYOND BALAGAN!!!, which form a key part of MOMENTUM’s programming in 2015 and 2016, and perhaps beyond. The oldest of these sisters is BALAGAN!!! – Contemporary Art from the Former Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places, a major exhibition curated by David Elliott and produced by MOMENTUM, was shown across three venues in Berlin at the end of 2015 (at Stiftung Brandenburger Tor im Max Liebermann Haus, Külhaus, and MOMENTUM). The major international exhibition of contemporary art from the former USSR and Eastern Bloc, featured 150 artworks by 75 artists from 14 countries, together with a series of lectures, a symposium at the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum of Contemporary Art, and an extensive performance program.

With so much incredible content to take in within the short framework of six weeks, I knew there would be fertile ground for a closer look at particular issues addressed more broadly within BALAGAN!!!. MOMENTUM’s BEYOND BALAGAN!!! series began by inviting, Sasha Pirogova, one of the young artists featured in BALAGAN!!!, to undertake a Residency at MOMENTUM. The Residency was accompanied by her first retrospective solo exhibition at our gallery, and the work resulting from this Residency is a video performance specially commissioned for HERO MOTHER.

To delve more deeply into the issues raised in BALAGAN!!! by extraordinary women artists, I invited as my co-curator, the expert art and cultural historian Bojana Pejić, chief curator of the groundbreaking international exhibition and book Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe (2009-2010), and Good Girls, Memory, Desire, Power (2013). And so HERO MOTHER was born, sharing its intellectual genetics and 5 artists with its older sister: Marina Belikova, Katarzyna Kozyra, Almagul Menlibayeva, Sasha Pirogova, and Anastasia Vepreva.

This is not, alas, an encyclopaedic exhibition. We did not set out to include artists from every applicable country, and in fact, we ended up including several artists only indirectly linked to our Post-Communist framework. Yael Bartana, an Israeli, Berlin-based artist, was, in an unprecedented and highly political decision, chosen to represent Poland in the 54th Biennale of Venice (2011). We embrace her adoption by Poland to show one of the works upon which this controversial choice was made. Likewise, Nezaket Ekici, a Turkish, Berlin-based artist, in the absence of a Communist past, nevertheless bases her practice on the cultural cross-overs of nationhood, religions, and ideologies common to all women from a region where national borders have been redrawn throughout history. Furthermore, Ekici is a student of Marina Abramovic, also featured in this exhibition.

There are several teacher-student relationships embedded within this exhibition. Aneta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová studied with Ilona Németh. Danica Dakić is a professor at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, where Marina Belikova also studies. Indeed, between two Marinas – master and student – HERO MOTHER encompasses 3 generations of outstanding creative practice by extraordinary women.

To make this exceptional exhibition possible – and seemingly effortless – required a huge amount of effort by many wonderful individuals, artists, partners, supporters, all of whom deserve heartfelt thanks:

A HUGE THANK YOU TO...

All the artists who entrusted their work to us, and especially to those who supported the exhibition by producing and contributing their own works.

To the Haupstadtkulturfonds which generously funded the entirety of the HERO MOTHER exhibition. To EIDOTECH who’s support since the inception of MOMENTUM in Berlin has enabled us to turn beautiful ideas into spectacular exhibitions. Their technical expertise and cultural investment in this project, as a German and Polish company, has enabled us to realise a much bigger exhibition than originally imagined. To BARNBROOK, the award-winning design firm which envisioned the identity of BALAGAN!!! and of its younger sister. To the Sammlung Hoffmann for lending a work to the exhibition, and for the many years of wise counsel, and wonderful cooperations. To ikonTV for spreading this and so many of our exhibitions to audiences far and wide across the globe. To our tried and true media partners Berlin Art Link and Randian for spreading the word to art lovers in Berlin and beyond. To Vitra. Art+ for enabling our audiences to enjoy art in style. To the Goethe Institute for inspiring curatorial travel. To Gentle Gin for deliciously lubricating our appreciation of art. To the Kunstquartier Bethanien, MOMENTUM’s home in Berlin, and for the use of it’s extraordinary chapel to house HERO MOTHER.

To the exceptional team of photographers and videographers who have enabled this series of exhibitions and events to live on long beyond their opening dates; cinematographer Dian Zagorchinov, and photographers Marina Belikova, Camille Blake, and Petra Fantozzi. And to the heroic MOMENTUM Team who all worked far and beyond the call of duty to produce an extraordinary series of shows truly worth being proud of! For HERO MOTHER: Bojana Pejić, Rachel Rits-Volloch, Emilio Rapanà, David Elliott, and especially to Olga Wiedemann who brilliantly headed the production of the exhibition, and to our talented production assistants Madeleine Martin, Maria Laura Sanguineti, Ellen Sinclair, Karen Vestergaard Andersen. For BALAGAN!!!: David Elliott, Rachel Rits-Volloch, Emilio Rapanà, David Elliott, and especially to Olga Wiedemann who brilliantly headed the production of the exhibition, and to our talented production assistants Madeleine Martin, Maria Laura Sanguineti, Ellen Sinclair, Karen Vestergaard Andersen.

DR. RACHEL RITS-VOLLOCH

Berlin, May 2016
MOMENTUM is a non-profit platform for time-based art, with headquarters in Berlin at the thriving art center, Kunstquartier Bethanien. MOMENTUM operates as a Gallery, Project Lab, Collection, Archive, Residency, Public Art Initiative, Salon and Education Program. Originally founded in Sydney, Australia, in 2010 as a parallel event to the 17th Biennale of Sydney, MOMENTUM moved to Berlin and has been active worldwide since 2011. Since that time, MOMENTUM has presented over 55 Exhibitions showing the work of over 400 international artists, more than 40 Education Events filmed and archived on the website, in addition to collecting the works of over 60 artists in the Performance and Video Archive, and hosting an ongoing program of Artistic Research Residencies.

MOMENTUM’s mission is to address the growing diversity and relevance of time-based art and to support artistic innovation in Berlin and worldwide. As the world speeds up, and time itself seems to flow faster, contemporary artists inevitably express aesthetic, cultural and social changes wrought by accelerating processes of digitization. Through these new perspectives, MOMENTUM continually seeks innovative answers to the question: ‘What is time-based art?’ With an active program of research funneled into exhibitions, discussion, creation, collection, and exchange, MOMENTUM engages the notion of time-based art within the context of historical, technological and social development. As both a local and global platform, MOMENTUM is a bridge joining professional art communities, irrespective of institutional or national borders.

In 1999, Berlin and Germany’s Federal Government agreed to establish a Capital Cultural Fund in Berlin according to the terms of the Capital Cultural Pact in order to support individual projects and events with special significance for Berlin as the country’s capital.

By supporting contemporary cultural and artistic projects, the Fund aims to initiate and strengthen interregional and international cultural dialogue with Berlin as its starting point. The Capital Cultural Fund finances individual projects and events of special significance for Berlin in its role as the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, those which have a national and international impact or an especially innovative character. Financing is available for almost every area of cultural activity: architecture, design, exhibitions, visual arts, film series, literature, music, music theatre, performance art, dance, theatre and interdisciplinary projects which promote cultural exchange. These projects must be realised in Berlin.

Hauptstadt Kulturfonds
Hauptstadtkulturfonds
is the sole funder of HERO MOTHER

Exhibition and Symposium
ARTISTS

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ [SERBIA / USA]
MAJA BAJEVIĆ [BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA]
YÄEL BARTANA [ISRAEL / GERMANY]
MARINA BELIKOVA [RUSSIA / GERMANY]
TANIA BRUGUERA [CUBA]
ANETTA MONA CHIȘA & LUCIA TKÁČOVÁ [ROMANIA & CZECH REPUBLIC]
DANICA DAKIĆ [BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA / GERMANY]
NEZAKETEKICI [GERMANY / TURKEY]
FANG LU [CHINA]
ELSE (TWIN) GABRIEL [GERMANY]
GLUKLYA / NATALYA PERSHINA - YAKIMANSKAYA [RUSSIA]
STEFANIE GROMES & KATRIN HAFEMANN [GERMANY]
SANJA IVEKOVIĆ [CROATIA]
ELŻBIETA JABŁOŃSKA [POLAND]
ZUZANNA JANIN [POLAND]
ADELA JUŠIĆ [BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA]
ELENA KOVYLINA [RUSSIA]
KATARZYNA KOZYRA [POLAND]
ALMAGUL MENLIBAYEVA [KAZAKHSTAN]
TANJA MURAVSKAJA [ESTONIA]
HAJNAL NÉMETH [HUNGARY]
ILONA NÉMETH [SLOVAKIA]
NGUYEN TRINH THI [VIETNAM]
SASHA PIROGOVA [RUSSIA]
SELMA SELMAN [BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA]
MILICATOMIC [SERBIA]
ANNA-STINATREUMUND [ESTONIA]
MARIANA VASSILEVA [BULGARIA]
ANASTASIA VEPREVA [RUSSIA]
INTRODUCTION

1. Gluklya (Natalia Porschina-Yakimanskaya), Clothes for Demonstration Against False Election of Vladimir Putin (cat. 17)
2. Gluklya (Natalia Porschina-Yakimanskaya), Clothes for Demonstration Against False Election of Vladimir Putin (cat. 17)
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7. Hajnal Németh, False Testimony (cat. 32)
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9. From the left: Tanja Muravskaja, They, Who Sang Together; Maja Bajević, Women of Work — Washing Up (cat. 27)
10. In the front: Marianna Vassileva, Flying and Other Daily Necessities (cat. 44)
    Behind from the left: Zuzanna Janin, Lost Butterfly (cat. 23) Stefanie Grümès & Katrin Hafemann, 7 Tage...FEMEN (cat. 16) Anetta Mona Chișa & Lucia Tkáčová, Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better (cat. 8) Maja Bajević, How Do You Want To Be Governed? (cat. 3) Zuzanna Janin, The End. Chapter I. A Trip to Fear (cat. 22)
    On the first floor: Anetta Mona Chișa & Lucia Tkáčová, Manifesto of Futurist Woman (Let’s Conclude) (cat. 7)
11. In the front from the left: Zuzanna Janin, Lost Butterfly (cat. 23) Stefanie Grümès & Katrin Hafemann, 7 Tage...FEMEN (cat. 16) Anetta Mona Chișa & Lucia Tkáčová, Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better (cat. 8) Behind from the left: Sanja Ivetković, ŠDAN XX (cat. 20) Gluklya (Natalia Porschina-Yakimanskaya), Clothes for Demonstration Against False Election of Vladimir Putin (cat. 17)
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15. Overview from the first floor, center balcony.
16. Overview from the first floor, right balcony.
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18. Sanja Ivetković, Invisible Women of Solidarity (6 out of 5 million) (cat. 19)
19. Anna-Stina Treumund, Mothers (cat. 40) Marina Belikova, The Lines (cat. 5) Elena Kovyolina, New Woman (cat. 27)
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Views courtesy of Marina Belikova.
HERO MOTHER: AN INTRODUCTION

HERO MOTHER: Contemporary Art By Post-Communist Women Rethinking Heroism presents 44 works by 31 women artists from 20 countries, curated by two women from the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union who now make their homes in Berlin.

The title refers to the honorary nomenclature “Hero Mother”, and the medal bestowed with it, established in the Stalinist era on 8 July 1944 by Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, to be awarded to Soviet women who raised at least ten living children. By the time it was abolished in 1991, when the Soviet Union was dissolved, more than 430,000 women had received this state honour.

In 2008, the Russian Federation exhumed this award as the “Order of Parental Glory”, but it was downscaled to celebrate the accomplishment of only seven children. The same contemporary glow of fecund achievement was also bestowed on mothers in other post-communist (and post-Soviet) countries, such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. But what was originally conceived as an incentive to repopulate a country ravaged by war by encouraging women to fulfil their patriotic duty to their motherland by prolifically breeding successive generations, in its resurrection today sounds like the punch-line of an absurd Soviet joke. Or perhaps not?

What has really changed for women since the communist era? Have those who under state socialism used to be “working mothers” become today something “else”? Are they now really women-citizens? And how then should heroism be defined in a transformed democratic setting? Could it be, in fact, social disobedience and resistance? Taking into account the “new” family-based ideologies, with the necessity of stay-at-home mothers, that have been promoted by post-communist governments since the early 1990s, and that are today aggressively endorsed by nationalist parties all over Eastern Europe (as well as in other rampantly neo-liberal regimes), the figure of the Mother as the Mother of the Nation is again occupying a central role.

As soon as democratic parliaments were established in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, the first impulse of most of them was to try to control women’s bodies by banning abortion – a right which had been freely granted under Communism. This “nationalization of women’s bodies”, however, succeeded only in Poland where abortion was made illegal in 1992. Yet the different conservative agendas that manipulate ‘family values’ at the cost of personal freedoms did not disappear and are part of a general assault on the hard-won victories of feminism, gay rights and basic human freedoms that are presently under attack, not only in Europe but globally.

HERO MOTHER focuses on the present predicaments of gender, citizenship, nationalism, migration and personal freedom, as well as on the relationship between artists and state power. Some of the artists shown here, taking the role of “unruly” citizens, address social issues through the feminist strategy of using the Bakhtinian “power of laughter” to popularise civil disobedience. Others treat such grave topics with seriousness and even with melancholy. Some of the works shown here refer to personal, familial and collective women’s memories and to a female heritage that has been submerged by the ‘grand narratives’ of national history. Other artists choose to consider their own motherhood and, within a broader context, question the ways in which their own maternity is manipulated by threatening nationalist ideologies that, by linking their own maternality to nation, harken back to the darkest years of the 1930s and ‘40s in Europe.

HERO MOTHER also considers the ramifications of nationalist political forces as they are unleashed not only upon women but also on the queer community and other minorities. The limitless possibilities of contemporary art, with its capacity to turn the world on its head through parody and laughter, have invested it again with a sharp socio-political edge that has become part of a growing worldwide movement for non-violent action. This exhibition and symposium looks beyond feminist and queer critiques to address how contemporary art can expose cruel, manipulative power by reflecting it back at itself and, specifically, how humour, farce, and parody can become the strongest advocates for social engagement and change.

The artists in HERO MOTHER are all contemporary women either born, or based, in countries, including Germany, that used to, or still practice state socialism. While focusing on Central and Eastern Europe, this exhibition also features artists from Cuba, Vietnam, and China. Their work confronts and defies, through a variety of media, the regressive political agendas of many “Eastern” countries today that, in spite of their ostensible insularity, still echo unsettling developments worldwide.

HERO MOTHER is a key element within MOMENTUM’s BEYOND BALAGAN!! programme of events, residencies and exhibitions that examine contemporary art and its relation to politics, culture and life in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. The first of these, BALAGAN!!! – Contemporary Art from the Former Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places, a major exhibition curated by David Elliott and produced by MOMENTUM, was shown across three venues in Berlin at the end of 2015 (at Stiftung Brandenburger Tor am Max Liebermann Haus, Külhaus, and MOMENTUM). Its title expresses a popular concept, and much used exclamation, in contemporary Russia — balagan! — that describes, with celebratory gusto, a farce, a mess, the most unholy of cock-ups, that may be, at the same time, the most joyful or unruly of carnivals. This term
Prior to the October Revolution, Bakhtin's in Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance that the carnival was a social safety valve that depended on the abuse of human rights. But there is a great difference between bolagan as a critical framework and as a chronic state of reality. Unchecked, political, social or economic chaos — bolagan in life — quickly becomes a vehicle of cruelty or oppression. BALAGAN!!! the exhibition puts this under a microscope, as artists make evident not only its potential for creativity but also its absurd exploitative, nasty nature. BALAGAN!!! is about how some artists choose to depict the chaos of our times critically, challenging its power through humour, parody and the power of art itself.

The story of BALAGAN!!! is strongly embedded within all the arts, particularly in the commedia dell’arte that underwent a revival in Russia immediately before and after the October Revolution. Derived from Turkic and Farsi words meaning ‘wooden platform’, the original Russian sense of bolagan was a fairground, or the lightly constructed booths that characterised them. By the 18th century it had become associated with the activities of the people who worked there: clowns and jesters who made fun of and satirised the established order. From the beginning, artists have realised the potential of bolagan as an effective framework for revealing the truth.

BALAGAN!!! expresses the uncontrollable, therapeutic, liberating force of laughter and art — a way to confront the absurd in both the everyday and in crisis; how we carry on smiling, creating, living, despite the madness unleashed by political forces. Building upon this, BEYOND BALAGAN!!! – HERO MOTHER looks at the ramifications of those political forces as they are unleashed upon women, the gay community and other minorities at a time of increasingly resurgent conservative values. Staging this exhibition in Berlin, within the Kunstquartier Bethanien Art Center, situated mere meters from the path of the Berlin Wall, lends an added relevance through its historic tradition as the site of cultural and political rebellion.

Historically, Berlin has been a capital in two empires: the German Reich and more recently, as Hauptstadt der DDR and Western enclave, the friction point between ‘East’ and ‘West’ during the Cold War. The different battles of ideology that have undergone a revival in Russia immediately after the October Revolution. Derived from Turkic and Farsi words meaning ‘wooden platform’, the original Russian sense of bolagan was a fairground, or the lightly constructed booths that characterised them. By the 18th century it had become associated with the activities of the people who worked there: clowns and jesters who made fun of and satirised the established order. From the beginning, artists have realised the potential of bolagan as an effective framework for revealing the truth.

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In 1906, writer and poet Aleksandr Blok (1880 – 1921) premiered his play Balaganshchik directed by the avant-garde dramaturge Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 – 1940), who also played Pierrot, the lead role. The riotous events of the opening night proved to be the first salvo in a continuing volley of theatrical coups de force that lasted until the cultural repression of the early 1930s. The tradition of the dysfunctional masquerade was taken up during World War II by literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1895 – 1975) in his critical masterwork Rabelais and the Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in which he suggested that the carnival was a social safety valve that depended on the subversive effect of exhibiting publicly the private functions of the human body. Cultural dichotomies such as ‘high’ and ‘low’, youth and age, rich and poor, were revealed as methods of social control, the disruption of which in Rabelais’ writings took the form of grotesque realism.

In this laughter was an uncontrollable, therapeutic, liberating force. It would be not until 1965 that Bakhtin’s influential masterpiece, with its oblique criticism of the cruel repression of the Stalin-era, was published.

[David Elliott, excerpt from BALAGAN!!! Catalogue]
BERTOLT BRECHT
DIE ERZIEHUNG DER HIRSE, 1951

[EXTRACT]

30 / 34 / 35
Träume! Goldenes Wenn!
Sieh die schöne Flut der Ähren steigen!
Säer, nenn,
Was du morgen schaffst,
schon heut dein Eigen!

20
Joseph Stalin sprach von Hirse
Zu Mitschurins Schülern, sprach von Dung und Dürrwind.
Und des Sowjetvolkes großer Ernstleiter
Nann' die Hirse ein verwildert Kind.

21
Nicht die Hirse war die Angeklagte,
als die launische Steppentochter ward verhört.
In Lyssenkos Treibhaus, fern in Moskau, sagte
Aus sie, was ihr hilft, und was sie stört.

6 / 7 / 8 / 9
Alt ist die Steppe am Uil.
Neu ist die Zeit.
Das Feuer von gestern
Braucht ein neues Scheit.

42 / 43 / 44 / 45
"Wo ist Hirsebrei?", fragen die Soldaten.
"Hier ist Hirse, sie ist gut geraten".
Sagen die Kolchosbrigaden.
"Jeder kämpfe jetzt für zwei!"

*Basis for the work Kind als Pinsel by else (Twin) Gabriel, referred to page 90 of this catalogue.
MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

Mothers and daughters, fathers and sons: traditionally their roles have been regarded as separate — except that history is scattered with myths, tales and ballads not only about men, like Bonnie Prince Charlie, who dressed as women (in this case to save himself), but also about women who chose to act and fight as men — as soldiers, sailors, pirates or workers — only to be unmasked in the tragic intimacy of their deathbeds. But these brave souls were written off as surrogate or quasi men. Both history and heroism have been cruel towomen, myth, tale and ballad.

But the traditional Hero Mother, with her endlessly destructive embrace of death, feeds on the blood of others. Like Mother Courage, Brecht’s anti-hero, she rises above, yet remains mired by, the swamp of male generated carnage. Wise to this mindless masochism and pseudo self-sacrifice, the new ‘Hero Mothers’, shown here, suggest models of bravery for all sexes by exposing and refusing to partake in the aggressive futility of nationalist, fundamentalist, sexist endgames.

Admittedly, the work of these artists is, at times, melancholic with the possibility of untrammeled violence never far away. Yet, in their criticism of the present, and the profound desire for change that this implies, there is a valiant and implacable humanity. Unquestioned ‘male’ way of seeing and doing things.

In 1920, after the carnage of World War I, the French government instituted the first of many medals to reward ‘heroic’ motherhood. The Médaille de la Famille française (Medal of the French Family) came in three grades — bronze, silver and gold — that paid tribute to wed-locked super-mothers so that more women would be encouraged to procreate prolifically and patriotically in order to recharge the war-depleted gene pool. In further expression of its intensifying paranoia and hubris, the German Fatherland followed a similar path awarding, from 1939 until 1945, the Ehrenkreuz der Deutschen Mutter (the Cross of Honour of the German Mother), also in three classes, to acknowledge and reward those women who generated more children in the Nazi home-front battle to provide conquering warriors to clear space for and propagate the German race.

From the same year, a similar award was also created in Italy — the Medaggia d’Onore per Le Madri di Famiglie Numerose (Medal of Honour for Mothers of Prolific Families) — that, by mashing together Catholicism with nationalism in its image of a Madonna, glorified mothers of at least seven living children, each one signified by a decorative bow attached to its ribbon.

The Russian Empire, and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics that succeeded it, had no compunction in co-opting the folkloric power of a nurturing universal mother goddess as an encompassing hero of the nation. Instinctively a motherland, the pervasive idea of Mother Russia — Rossiyà-Matshushka or Rodina-Mat’ — was echoed in Tsarist times by icons of the Virgin Mary and, from the 1940s, by many Stalinist sculptural female behemoths. Both, however, were rooted in the old Slavic goddess Mokosh — the Great Mother, protector of women’s work and destiny, to whom, as late as the 10th century just before the dawn of Christianity in Rus, Vladimir the Great had paid tribute in his sanctuary in Kiev.

But the honorary title Hero Mother, Mat’-geroinya, did not appear in Russia until 1944, an ironic footnote to the fearful human toll of war and purges. As in France and Germany, the order was calibrated according to the fecundity and productivity of the woman in question. It perished, along with with the Soviet Union, in 1991 but in 2008 the Russian Federation animated its rouged corpse as the Orden Roditel’skaya Slava (Order of Parental Glory). In spite of the novel ‘non-sexism’ of this award, women still gave birth and looked after their children, while men continued to behave as they always have done.

Starting out from the kitsch, but still widely accepted, concept of this and related orders, this exhibition examines what female or ‘maternal’ heroism could mean today when expressed in art and, in so doing, explores different ideas about what a specifically humanitarian (as opposed to dominantly male) sensibility and politics could be.

But there are many possibilities in the works shown here, as well as a number of not so straight-faced ‘solutions’ but, in spite of any impulse to the contrary, these new mother heroes and their daughters realise that they are unable to remain separate from the fathers and sons on whom they reciprocally depend and to whom they refer, obliquely or otherwise, in their works. They are both part of the same unit, the one deriving meaning, comfort, identity and, perhaps, pain from the other. However, when mothers mirror fathers, or daughters their sons, in art, genetics are set aside in implied criticism of unquestioned mystique and unchallenged power. Exaggerated clichés of gender, or strategies of minstrelsy are enlisted here to both ridicule and undermine the continuing colonisation of women and the world by a self-serving, inbred and unquestioned ‘male’ way of seeing and doing things.

David Elliott
Curatorial Advisor for Hero Mother
Curator of BALAGAN!!! Contemporary Art from the Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places, Berlin, 2015
1. Mother Heroine, USSR
2. Order of Parental Glory, Russia.
3. Order of Maternal Glory, USSR.
4. Médaille de la Famille française (Medal of the French Family), France.
5. Ehrenkreuz der Deutschen Mutter (the Cross of Honour of the German Mother), Germany.
6. Altyn Alka (Golden pendant), Kazakhstan.
7. Order of Mother, Belarus.
8. Medaglia d’Oro per le Madri di Famiglie Numerose (Medal of Honour for Mothers of Prolific Families), Italy.
RESISTING THE LIMITS OF NOW

We must begin to think of artists and intellectuals as not only engaged in the public, but as producing a public through the mode of address and the establishment of platforms or counterpublics, something that has already existed in both the east and west, clandestinely and underground respectively, but in opposition to the reigning cultural and political hegemony of the specific society.

Simon Sheikh, “Representation, Contestation and Power: The Artist as Public Intellectual”, 2004

The artists participating in the Hero Mother exhibition are women who work as artists and live as citizens in an age which is known as the democratic condition. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent removal of the Communist administrations, which had been, with the exception of Romania, dismantled via a number of “peaceful revolutions” of the 1990s, Eastern European countries embarked on becoming parliamentary democracies. Under the given democratic order, we are advised, the forms of social rebellion needed to be changed: “We should stop trying to storm the Bastille; it is time to walk around it.” Borrowing the phrase by Samuel Beckett for the title of the work, Try again. Fail again. Fail better (2011), Anetta Mona Chișa and Lucia Tkáčová work with an iconic sign — a raised clenched fist — which had historically been used as the symbol standing for social revolt. This sign had / has prime visibility in the Communist countries where it had one sole meaning: it meant Revolution, and it was associated with the rebellion of the working classes; now the sign acquired a different meaning. The artists write: “A raised fist is a universal symbol of protest, used by various (even contradictory) groups throughout history, emblematic for struggle, resistance, anger and the yearning for change. [...] Reminding one of an object made for mass amusement, it reveals the unfortunate fate of revolutions and their potential to entertain, to sell well, to become an attraction, a free-time activity, a hobby”. (www.chitka.info)

The majority of the pieces gathered in the Hero Mother show belong to the contextual art practices to which the artist turned in order to “work with” the given cultural, historical and political context of their particular society, inquiring into the hegemonic functioning of the public spheres in their countries, which as often as not, disregard the voices constituting counterpublics. If I am to use the metaphor of the Bastille, then, I dare claim that the artists taking part in our show decided not to “walk around” the sites of power, discovering instead numerous “other Bastilles” that do not always represent the Central Power, but are instead scattered around the social tissue and became comfortably enmeshed in the democratic scenery; there, the functioning of power does not always appear in the form of solid objects, but as a set of ideas, which circulate in the public sphere where they are acknowledged as “normal”, and even “natural”. Certainly, the public discourse may (as it often does) induce actual violence against “others”, be they Roma, ethnic minorities, or these days, (war) refugees. These immaterial Bastilles function through a number of cultural phobias: on the one hand, these could be xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and hate speech addressing cultural minorities, and last but not least, homophobia; on the other hand, the public discourse of today generally distrusts any kind of “speculative leftism” (Alain Badiou), often manifesting its tolerance as regards everyday fascism and the galloping “browning of Europe”. Even though these immaterial “Bastilles” do surface in many (if not all) countries of today’s global world, storming them occurs within a particular cartography. At the time of writing, the European states, those located in Central / Eastern Europe in particular, (re-)discovered their hostile Eurocentric nature. Thus, while we are “experiencing an influx of new immigrant cultures, national majority culture were insisting more stringently on their uniqueness, their purity, and all too often, their superiority”. Despite the long history of globalisation, “public spheres have always been conceptualized within the frameworks of nation state.” 1

The Eighth of March or Mother’s Day: Must We Choose?

The nation state, as is known, exercises its power on many levels that are both real and symbolic. Celebrating public / state holidays is a symbolic act enabling the social cohesion of a respective community or state. The Eighth of March (International Women’s Day) and Mother’s Day are such traditional annual events meant to convey honour to and respect for women. The younger women artists taking part in our exhibition, who are born in the countries that used to practice State Socialism, may know – as their older colleagues certainly do – that the Eighth of March used to be a state holiday. Sometimes the posters displayed on the street represented a woman with her fist clenched. This was also true for Titoist Yugoslavia (1945-1991), where several artists showing in this exhibition — Marina Abramović, Maja Bajević, [34] [35]
Danica Dakić, Sanja Iveković, Milica Tomić — and myself — were born. On that day, Socialist women and men were not obliged to work, and on that occasion, I remember, public institutions organised festivities with food and drink — usually prepared by the female employees. Having a day off, women, particularly mothers, usually used it at home, cooking, washing and checking the children’s homework, without the stress they experienced at the offices or in the factories. And whereas we, the female subjects living with Communist regulations, were offered red carnations, the “flowers of the proletariat”, in the West, the “Capitalist” women organised rallies, marching in the streets (often with the clenched fist), staging public events pointing to the rights (such as equal pay, longer and paid maternity leave or abortion, for example) they lacked in their democratic states. Alas, such a form of public activism had been unimaginable for us inhabiting the Communist hemisphere, given that any form of public gathering had been prohibited — unless it was choreographed by the State, like for the Day of the Republic or the First of May (Labour Day). In addition, in the Communist countries, the Eighth of March was usually a proper occasion to organise exhibitions of women artists; though this privilege women artists benefited from, some officials assumed, was not really necessary, given that according to the official Socialist ideology of gender egalitarianism, men and women (artists included) enjoyed equal rights in public life, and this was somehow valid for exhibition practice, as well.

The Eighth of March and Mother’s Day are the festivities emerging in the early twentieth century, and both could be aligned to the conventions termed by Eric Hobsbawm the “invented traditions”. What do these two fashions of “honouring women” have in common, and what differentiates them? These two “women’s days” carry on two different “suitable pasts”. International Women’s Day, just as the First of May, became “invented” by the labour movements in North America, where the Socialist Party observed IWD first in 1909. In Europe, at the Socialist International meeting held in Copenhagen in 1910, on the initiative of Klara Zetkin, this day (with no fixed date) was established in order to build support for women to get suffrage rights and for their larger participation in the labour force. The following year it was marked in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland with rallies in which both men and women took part. In the wake of the First World War, IWD became a tool for protesting against militarization and the war. In the USSR, Alexandra Kollontai and Lenin promoted IWD as a state holiday, which only in 1965 became there a non-working day. In 1977, the United Nations adopted the resolution proclaiming IWD as the UN Day for Women’s Rights.

Post-Communist “new” democracies born in the early 1990s comfortably nested within the recently established or re-established sovereign nation states; they went on reproducing their “invented traditions”, their official holidays, which without exception honour and commemorate their national pasts and national histories which preceded the Communist period. Thus, most of the post-Communist states ceased to observe International Women’s Day as a public holiday; nonetheless, this day remained marked in many of them.6 Instead, during the 1990s, a number of post-Communist states instituted Mother’s Day as a festive event that should, it seems, mirror “democratic” changes in Eastern Europe. In contrast, during the events constituting the Arab Spring, however, the Eighth of March was a day to celebrate (the birth of) democracy. Alas, in 2011, the Egyptian women who had marched to Cairo’s Tahrir Square — some in headscarves and flowing robes, others in jeans — who came out to stand up for their rights, social justice and against sexual harassment, were watched by the police and military, while crowds of men who attended the event soon outnumbered them and chased them out.3

Working On and Off the Market

Throughout the 1990s, the Eastern European post-Communist states had experienced a traumatic political “transition” to “democracy”, which implied the shift from the state-run to a market economy: this, of course, has occasioned austerity measures, leading to massive unemployment, which hit the female populace in particular, so that one spoke of the “feminization of poverty”. At the crossroads of Perestroika, many Soviet women could not get any medal for being “Heroine Mothers”, given that in the situation of economic crises it became unimaginable to raise families with many children; at that time they became engaged in “heroin shopping” (Nancy Ries), standing in long queues in front of Soviet half-empty shops. Some other Russian women took over a new profession: foreign-currency prostitution. In the early 1990s, a Russian authoress honours this oldest profession for two reasons: “This was the emancipation from the de-sexualization of life under communism, the recognition of one’s bodily self as an inseparable part of one’s identity… If Western prostitutes belong to ‘the underworld,’ then the Moscow prostitutes form instead a ‘counter culture; – so much has their professional activity been idealogized.” Without a touch of irony, she concludes: “The prostitute, the lone entrepreneur breaking taboos, is the pioneer of the market economy…”

The officially produced amnesia regarding the Eighth of March – initially called International Working Women’s Day – could be simply explained: even though this holiday is observed internationally, the nationalist and / or post-Communist ideologies believe that it revives the “spectre of Communism”. This holiday is just one entry appearing on a long list of “Communist spectres”, which are haunting our post-Communist condition: prominent on the list is “Communist” gender equality, women’s emancipation, the right to decide about their pregnancies, or a woman’s option to have two identities: to be a mother and to practice her profession. A romanticised projection of the
New (Post-Communist) Woman expressed in 2007 reads: “For the women of Eastern Europe, being at home with their families was not only a practical goal but also a political statement – opposing the regimentation of women into cadres of the Heroes of Socialist Labour.” Such a melodramatic imagination completely neglects at least three aspects. First, the fact is that during the economic transition, it was mainly post-Socialist New Women who lost their jobs. Second, those who managed to keep them, but wanted also to become mothers, had now to follow the new economic measures proposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which called for a radical “restructuring” of state entitlement policies, and this included, e.g., the length of maternal / paternal leave. Third: could a single mother or a divorcee make a “political statement” by staying at home in order to become a full-time mother? Hardly. Those women who want to stay at home, and / or want to be stay-at-home mothers could be either those whose (male) partners are wealthy, or those who had now to follow the new economic measures proposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which called for a radical “restructuring” of state entitlement policies, and this included, e.g., the length of maternal / paternal leave. It thus comes as no surprise that instead of the Eighth of March, which, I think, preserves the memories of women’s past social rebellion and reminds us of those “unruly women” who demand their rights and protested against the hegemony of patriarchy, we, in the post-Socialist cultures are now to pay tribute only to those women who are mothers. Mother’s Day, it seems to me, reflects these kinds of current social needs. The “suitable past” to be recalled on Mother’s Day appears to be less revolutionary than that of the Eighth of March. This special day is to be situated in the context of Christianity, with its tradition of Marianism, the veneration of the Virgin Mary. This custom was carried out to the secularised age, in which the chaste woman, disguised as la Marianne, became the female icon of the French Revolution; a bit later, in the mid-nineteenth century, with the birth of nation-states, the female figures (usually topping national monuments) surfaced all over Europe: they were imagined or visualised as the Mother of the Nation, or as the Motherland (as in the work by Danica Dakik and Selma Selman), which always remind me of a phrase by Virginia Woolf: “For we think back through our mothers if we are women.” These works, based on intimate experiences and love, are representations of motherhood, an art historical genre having a long history, which, in passing, was not interrupted during Communist times. Our artists who chose to become mothers made their individual decisions. When these personal women’s decisions and desires are treated as state matters and / or issues promoted by the pro-natalist and conservative political parties sitting in their national parliaments that may be working in Albania or Australia, Poland or Peru, then we are dealing with motherhood as a cultural construct, according to which women are “natural” caregivers whose “duty” is to reproduce the national populace, soothing thus the widespread anxiety about the “dying-out nation.”

The reasons why we are now “forgetting” the Eighth of March and remembering Mother’s Day lie in the fact that while formally encouraging ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy,’ in its pursuit of the ‘free market’ goal but also a political statement – opposing the World Bank, which called for a radical “restructuring” of state entitlement policies, and this included, e.g., the length of maternal / paternal leave.

Jabłońska, as well as several other artists in our exhibition, like else (Twin) Gabriel, Mariana Vassileva and Anna-Stina Treumund, thematise maternity in their pieces that relay the tenderness and warmth between the mother and child. Similar emotions are expressed in the works dealing with the relationship between mothers and their daughters (as in the works by Danica Dakik and Selma Selman), which always remind me of a phrase by Virginia Woolf: “For we think back through our mothers if we are women.” These works, based on intimate experiences and love, are representations of motherhood, an art historical genre having a long history, which, in passing, was not interrupted during Communist times. Our artists who chose to become mothers made their individual decisions. When these personal women’s decisions and desires are treated as state matters and / or issues promoted by the pro-natalist and conservative political parties sitting in their national parliaments that may be working in Albania or Australia, Poland or Peru, then we are dealing with motherhood as a cultural construct, according to which women are “natural” caregivers whose “duty” is to reproduce the national populace, soothing thus the widespread anxiety about the “dying-out nation.”
changes to the abortion law became a nearly five-year-long negotiation: according to the notorious article 218 (dating back to nineteenth-century criminal code), abortion in the former FRG was illegal. During the Wende, German press and media created a national scandal, reporting about the alleged “birth strike”: it was uncovered that a “great number” of East German women had decided for sterilization. A team of German women sociologists conducted interviews with some of these women, many of whom already had children, who named different reasons for such a radical act. The team concluded: “The profound social transformation since unification has jeopardized or completely undermined many of the things these women previously took for granted, including the ability to raise a family and have a career, develop professionally, maintain a certain standard of living, and protect the welfare of their children and families. It was a gesture of control, exercised to ameliorate power relations practiced “at home” as often as not implied women’s subjugation and sometimes even domestic violence against both women and children. None of the Socialist states passed laws against these acts, since they were considered to belong to the citizens’ “private” sphere. These days, in democratic countries, the discourse about domestic violence is legally regulated, but nevertheless, it is often suppressed in the public sphere (as in the video spot, Sanja Ivekovic).”

If motherhood is central to any nation-state, does this mean that all female citizens of this state have the “duty” to reproduce the Nation? The “quality of the nation”, though, relies on exclusions: “The call for women, however, to have more or fewer children is hardly ever uniform to all women, from all class, ability and ethnic groups.” The request is directed to the women having the “‘right’ ethnic origin […] while as much as possible preventing poor, disabled and ethnic minority women from having children.” This observation is extremely valid given that nations hardly ever fit to the borders of nation-states, and consequently, a number of ethnic / cultural minorities – locally known as “others” – inhabit the same space, which they must share with the – often hegemonic – Main Nation. According to such a nationalist’s logic, the Turkish women in Bulgaria, the Roma women in Hungary, the Hungarian women constituting the minority in Romania and Slovakia, Russian women in Estonia or in Latvia, Turkish women in Germany, or Kurdish women in Turkey are generally not encouraged to give birth to more children. And this is not specific to the post-Communist context only. Moreover, the reproduction of the Nation has become more complicated since same-sex domestic arrangements appear to cause a “demographic” problem, despite the fact that gay and lesbian families may already have children or may, in some countries, adopt them. Regardless, both politicians and particularly members of the Church like to lament about the “demographic catastrophe”.

Revisiting the Collective Memory Bank

With the “acceleration of history” that followed 1989, we are at present witnessing a worldwide “upsurge in memory”. (Pierre Nora) This drift of “memorialism” also hit the post-Communist world in general, but the procedures of collective remembering in Eastern Europe comprise a rather complicated endeavour, as historian Tony Judt points out: “Here there is too much memory, too many pasts on which people can draw, usually as a weapon against the past of someone else”. Regardless of the country we look at, the re-writing of national histories appears to have one constant feature: the notion of “suffering together” was and still is built into the foundations of any national narrative. The victimhood is taken to indicate the sense of belonging to a nation or rather nation-state. This is a belief that Our Nation had always been subjugated to “evil history” imposed by the Great Powers, in which “Sovietisation” was just one instance. During the Cold War, the self-perception of victimhood and the things done to “us” by the Third Reich, remained the dominant memory until about 1989. Tony Judt observes: “In this circumstance, the uncomfortably confusing recollection of things done by us to others during the war [i.e., under German auspices] got conveniently lost”. After the Cold War, it seems that this conviction did not change. Now is the time for a fresh, “de-ideologised” look at the history of World War II, which was now rewritten as a clash of nations, one in which, such as the Estonian President claims: “Our people were not murdered by Communists and Nazis, but by Germans and Russians”. Discussing the critical notions of memory and identity, historian John R. Gillis holds that “we are constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities”. This remark is useful as a means to understand why the statues of Lenin and other Great Communist Men disappeared from the public view in post-Communist countries, which since the 1990s try to confirm their new – national – identities. Gillis writes: “We need to be reminded that memories and identities are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena. […] ‘memory work’ is, like any other kind of physical labor, embedded in complex class, gender and power relations that determine what is remembered (or forgotten), by whom, and for what end”. Let us now imagine that each post-
Communist sovereign state has instituted a sort of “collective memory bank”, where it treasures names, images and ideas relating to its national past — either real or imaginary — which, of course, include both memories of “heroic” battles fought for sovereignty (as a rule with the neighbouring nations), and “heroic suffering” under a foreign yoke. This national “bank” tends to establish, or rather impose, “sovereignty over memory” (Timothy Snyder). As usual, sovereignty implies exclusions.

Over the past twenty or so years, we could learn that the democratic public sphere is not (and never was) a monolith, nor a unified memory space, but is instead fragmented into many conflicting memospheres (Miheea Mirn). The women artists in our exhibition who decided to perform their “memory work”, or their devoir de mémoire (duty to remember), revisit many events and practices that are absent in the “collective memory banks” destabilising thus the institutionalised — truly hegemonic — views of the national past. Several works deal with collective amnesia, such as deep-seated anti-Semitism in the Hungarian past, as well as present (Hajnal Németh; with her Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland, Yael Bartana invokes the past, but challenges the present; the absence of any memory about the Yugoslav World War II anti-Fascism and Partisans in the post-Yugoslav nation-states (Marina Abramović and Milica Tomić), and they even refer to a particular country (which does not anymore exist), and express a contemporary relation to anti-Fascism, which we have many reasons to rethink today. Sanja Jveković, as a feminist, is usually concerned with the under-representation of women in history, where their heroism, like those of women active in the Solidarność Movement, is commonly obscured. The Estonian “Singing Revolution” is certainly a collective endeavour stored in the national “memory bank”, but in her portraits, Tanja Muravskaia now provides the participants with their due individuality. Memory is also re-enacted in the pieces that treat the trauma and loss caused by the war in Bosnia (Maja Bajević and Adela Žulić), and these works also specify that the memories of women, even when they are soldiers, differ from those of men.

Personal memory is located in works that “write” family histories, which form constitutive parts of our individual identity (Zuzanna Janin and Almagul Menlibayeva). Finally, here are also works that are engaged in re-writing women’s histories, which establish women’s genealogies concerning real (Zuzanna Janin) or “elective” mothers, as Ilona Németh does in her interview with Hungarian philosopher Ágnes Heller, who lived in exile until recently; on her return to her Heimat, she, being a Marxist (and a Jew) was publicly exposed to hysterical nationalist critique.

Concerning the artworks focused on memories, it seems appropriate to turn to Kaja Silverman, who points out an important aspect of memory-labour: “The function of recollection […] is to transform, not to reproduce. […] To remember perfectly would be forever to inhabit the same cultural order. However, to remember imperfectly is to bring images from the past into an ever new and dynamic relation to those through which we experience the present, and in the process ceaselessly to shift the contours and significance not only of the past, but also of the present”. The Democratic Project and the Limits of Now

Some ten years ago, artists were quite engaged in the critique of nationalism as the ideology dominating public life in both Western and Eastern European countries. At the present moment, when “Fortress Europe” constructs fences on the borders between EU and non-EU states, the radical populist, or rather pro-Fascist parties active, particularly in the post-Communist 25-year-old “new” democracies, such as Hungary or Poland, but also in older democracies, like France, Greece, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, respond in a quite similar manner. The “new normality” operating across different European contexts looks rather similar: “The radical parties respond to contemporary conditions and challenges such as increased migration, a changing ethno-cultural landscape, economic crisis and international terrorism, through a politics of polarization and fear that seeds cultural racism and intolerance. Figures such as the migrant, the Muslim, the gypsy or the Jew are portrayed as the defining Other”. The logic of globalisation is central to Immigration Movement International, Tania Bruguera, and a group of public intellectuals launched in 2011, which calls for the politics of mobility and people’s — human — rights to move freely across national borders in order to find work in foreign countries. The first sentence in their Manifesto reads: “We have been called many names. Illegals. Aliens. Guest Workers. Border crossers. Undesirables. Exiles. Criminals. Non-citizens. Terrorists. Thieves. Foreigners. Invaders. Undocumented”. The last sentence is clear, but utopian: “Dignity has no nationality”. In the contest of the current “refugee crisis” in Europe, and particularly in light of the attitude post-Communist
nation-states have chosen to take as regards “the Islamisation” of Europe, I am left wondering who is ‘bulwark of Christendom’ against the East, but also Islamicisation” of Europe, I am left wondering who is a political party of their preference, and they can also according to the hetero-normative canon, and as acts of dissent.

As citizens of post-Communist states, our artists can practice their basic civil rights, have the right to vote in their countries of origin, and are free to opt for a political party of their preference, and they can also take part in public rallies protesting against many social injustices, which otherwise characterise the functioning of any democratic setting. This setting, however, is pregnant with paradoxes: whereas the citizens could practice their basic democratic rights regardless of their heterosexual or LGBT sexual identity, democratic legislation functions according to the hetero-normative canon, and therefore excludes same-sex marriages. The right of non-heterosexual citizens and actions against discrimination are part of the public sphere of many countries, but these actions are still understood as acts of dissent. Moreover, they are interpreted as an “import” imposed by the “West”. The first Eastern European state to acknowledge same-sex partnership was Hungary, but this regulation, introduced in 2009, was soon prohibited by the new Hungarian Constitution passed in 2011. As far as public demonstrations are concerned, they are of course allowed in our “democracies”, unless they manifest revolt against the post-Communist heads of State (as in the installation by Gluklya), whose attitudes reminds many of us of the rulers we used to know in the bygone Communist times. The other, this time women's fashion of disobedience is the international activity of FEMEN, a group originating in Ukraine, with fluid and transnational membership, whose provocative gestures performed in public space, could be perhaps best described in this way: “We want to begin as women seriously addressing ourselves, not solely in relation to men, but in relation to an entire structure of domination of which patriarchy is one part.”

Well, the list of the “Bastilles” to be stormed seems to be endless. Women artists taking part in the Hero Mother exhibition manifest their dissent and dissatisfaction and sometimes even anger, as Maja Bajević does in her video, How Do You Want To Be Governed? They are resisting and challenging the “limits of now”. Referring to these limits, Peter Bürger, German philosopher and public intellectual, wrote in 1996: “In the shadow of a society which is on the verge of putting the neoliberal market economy into effect without any ifs, ands, or buts, it is not a small accomplishment to preserve at least the thought of the possibility of a different life.”

Bojana Pejić
Berlin, May 2016
Copy editor: Adele Eisenstein

4. Hobsbawm writes: “Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with past. In fact, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable past”. Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Invented Traditions”, in The Invention of Tradition, eds. E. Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [1983] 2012), p. 1. Hobsbawm uses this term for the official (visual) repertoire “invented” by the new European nation-states, first established in the mid-19th century, which included new public holidays, national ceremonies and commemorations, monuments, flags and state symbols. Even though he does not mention the Eleventh of March, he writes about another type of “invented tradition”, and this is the First of May, the International Workers’ Day, which became promoted by the labour movements and emerged as a public event/ rally in the early 1890s.
5. IWD is an official holiday in Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China (for women only), Cuba, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Macedonia (for women only), Madagascar (for women only), Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal (for women only), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Zambia. In some countries, such as Cameroon, Croatia, Romania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria and Chile, the day is not a public holiday, but is nevertheless widely observed.
9. In a 1992 report on Hungarian social policy reform, the World Bank evaluated: “Maternity and child care benefits [...] represent a significant and costly item in the State budget. In view of the present budgetary difficulties, this alone provides sufficient reason for an appraisal of the present system. The change to a market economy provides a second reason; the present arrangements are unlikely to be compatible with the development of a large private sector”. Joanna Gove: “New Parliament, Old Divisions! The Parental Leave Debate in Hungary”, in Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics and Everyday Life After Socialism, eds. Susan Gal and Gail Kilman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 291.
14. Virginia Woolf, “A Room of One’s Own” (1929), in Selected Works by Virginia Woolf (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2005), p.610. In the following sentence, she writes: “It is useless to go to the great men writers for help, however much one may go to them for pleasure”.
16. Armenia celebrates the Eighth of March, but has also established “Maternity and Beauty Day” (7 April), the Belarus government introduced Mother’s Day in 1996, in China, Mother’s Day is an unofficial festival for poor mothers, in the interwar Czechoslovakia, Mother’s Day existed since 1923, and was resumed in 1993 (IWD stopped in 1989), Estonia marks Mother’s Day, but is not a public holiday; Hungary has a Mother’s Day since 1925 and resumed it in the 1990s; Latvia observed Mother’s Day for the first time in 1925 and returned to it in 1992; in Romania, Mother’s Day was incepted in 2010 and is a public holiday, and is also matched by Father’s Day; Slovakia has Mother’s Day and kept the Eighth of March, but neither are state holidays, Ukraine introduced Mother’s Day in 1999.
In December 2010, Vladimir Putin said, on CNN’s Larry King program: “As for same-sex marriages, they do not produce offspring, as you know... We are fairly tolerant toward sexual minorities, however, we think that the state should promote reproduction, support mothers and children.” Amen.


In his precious text of 1882, “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?”, Ernest Renan proffers several crucial remarks about the nation, and claims that nations feel united not so much by their glorious heritage, shared joys and hopes for common future, but rather by “having suffered together and, indeed, suffering in common unifies more than joy does where national memories are concerned, defeats are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort.” Renan, “What is a Nation?” reprinted in Nation and Nationhood A Sociopolitical Analyses, Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 2015, vol. 40, no.2, p. 348.

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ELEVEN SONS

I have eleven sons.

The first is outwardly very plain, but serious and clever; yet, although I love him as I love all my children, I do not rate him very highly. His mental processes seem to me to be too simple. He looks neither to right nor to left, nor into the far distance; he runs around all the time, or rather revolves, within his own little circle of thoughts.

The second is handsome, slim, well made; one draws one’s breath with delight to watch him with a fencing foil. He has the good looks of a singer: the curving lips; the dreaming eyes; the kind of head that asks for drapery of a singer: the curving lips; the dreaming ears; but almost at once its breath gives out. He has the good looks of a singer: the curving lips; the dreaming eyes; the kind of head that asks for drapery of a singer: the curving lips; the dreaming ears; but almost at once its breath gives out.

My third son is handsome too, but not in a way that I appreciate. He has the good looks of a singer: the curving lips; the dreaming eye; the kind of head that asks for drapery behind it to make it effective; the too-deeply arched chest; hands that are quick to fly up and much too quick to fall limp; legs that move delicately because they cannot support a weight. And besides: the tone of his voice is not round and full; it takes you in for a moment; the connoisseur pricks up his ears; but almost at once its breath gives out. Although, in general, everything tempts me to bring this son of mine into the limelight, I prefer to keep him in the background; he himself is not insistant, yet not because he is aware of his shortcomings but out of innocence. Moreover, he does not feel at home in our age; as if he admitted belonging to our family, yet knew that he belonged also to another which he has lost forever, he is often melancholy and nothing can cheer him.

My fourth son is perhaps the most companionable of all. A true child of his age, he is understood by everyone, he stands on what is common ground to all men, and everyone feels inclined to give him a nod. Perhaps this universal appreciation is what makes his nature rather facile, his movements rather free, his judgments rather unconcerned. Many of his remarks are worth quoting over and over again, but by no means all of them, for by and large his extreme facility becomes irritating. He is like a man who makes a wonderful take-off from the ground, cleaves the air like a swallow, and after all comes down helplessly in a desert waste, a nothing. Such reflections grieve me when I look at him.

My fifth son is kind and good; promised less than he performed; used to be so insignificant that one literally felt alone in his presence; but has achieved a certain reputation. If I were asked how this came about, I could hardly tell you. Perhaps innocence makes its way easiest through the elemental chaos of this world, and innocent he certainly is. Perhaps too innocent. Friendly to everyone. Perhaps too friendly. I confess: I don’t feel comfortable when I hear him praised. It seems to make praise rather too cheap to bestow it on anyone so obviously praiseworthy as this son of mine.

My sixth son seems, at first glance anyhow, the most thoughtful of all. He is given to hanging his head, and yet he is a great talker. So he is not easy to get at. If he is on the down grade, he falls into impenetrable melancholy; if he is in the ascendant, he maintains his advantage by sheer talk. Yet I grant him a certain self-forgetful passionate absorption; in the full light of day he often fights his way through a tangle of thoughts as if in a dream. Without being ill — his health on the contrary is very good — he sometimes staggers, especially in the twilight, but he needs no help, he never falls. Perhaps his physical growth is the cause of this phenomenon, he is much too tall for his age. That makes him look ugly in general, although he has remarkable beauty in detail, in hands and feet, for instance. His forehead, too, is ugly; both its skin and its bone formation are somehow arrested in their development.

My seventh son belongs to me perhaps more than all the others. The world would not know how to appreciate him; it does not understand his peculiar brand of wit. I do not overvalue him; I know he is of little enough importance; if the world had no other fault than that of not appreciating him, it would still be blameless. But within the family circle I should not care to be without this son of mine.
He contributes a certain restlessness as well as a reverence for tradition, and combines them both, at least that is how I feel it, into an incontestable whole. True, he knows less than anyone what to do with this achievement; the wheel of the future will never be started rolling by him; but his disposition is so stimulating, so rich in hope; I wish that he had children and children's children. Unfortunately he does not seem inclined to fulfill my wish. With a self-satisfaction that I understand as much as I deplore, and which stands in magnificent contrast to the verdict of the world, he goes everywhere alone, pays no attention to girls, and yet will never lose his good humor.

**My eighth son is my child of sorrow, and I do not really know why.** He keeps me at a distance and yet I feel a close paternal tie binding me to him. Time has done much to lessen the pain; but once I used often to tremble at the mere thought of him. He goes his own way; he has broken off all communication with me; and certainly with his hard head, his small athletic body — only his legs were rather frail when he was a boy, but perhaps that has meanwhile righted itself — he will make a success of anything he chooses. Many a time I used to want to call him back, to ask him how things are; and certainly with him I hear that he is the only one of my sons to think: what an utter hypocrite. But then, just as a reverence for tradition, and combines them both, at least that is how I feel it, into an incontestable whole. True, he knows less than anyone what to do with this achievement; the wheel of the future will never be started rolling by him; but his disposition is so stimulating, so rich in hope; I wish that he had children and children's children. Unfortunately he does not seem inclined to fulfill my wish. With a self-satisfaction that I understand as much as I deplore, and which stands in magnificent contrast to the verdict of the world, he goes everywhere alone, pays no attention to girls, and yet will never lose his good humor.

**My ninth son is very elegant and has what women consider a definitely melting eye.** So melting that there are occasions when he can cajole even me, although I know that a wet sponge is literally enough to wipe away all that unearthly brilliance. But the curious thing about the boy is that he makes no attempt to be seductive; he would be content to spend his life lying on the sofa and wasting his glances on the ceiling, or still better, keeping them to himself under his eyelids. When he is lying in this favorite position, he enjoys talking and talks quite well; concisely and pitifully; but still only within narrow limits; once he oversteps these, which he cannot avoid doing since they are so narrow, what he says is quite empty. One would sign him to stop, if one had any hope that such slumbrous eyes were even aware of the gesture.

**My tenth son is supposed to be an insincere character.** I shall not entirely deny or confirm this supposition. Certainly anyone who sees him approaching with the pomposity of a man twice his age, in a frock coat always tightly buttoned, an old but meticulously brushed black hat, with an expressionless face, slightly jutting chin, protruding eyelids that mask the light behind them, two fingers very often at his lips — anyone seeing him thus is bound to think: what an utter hypocrite. But then, just listen to him talking! With understanding; thoughtfully; brusquely; cutting across questions with satirical vivacity; in complete accord with the universe, an accord that is surprising, natural and gay; an accord that of necessity straightens the neck and makes the body proud. Many who think themselves very clever and for this reason, as they fancied, felt a dislike for his outward appearance, have become strongly attached to him because of his conversation. There are other people, again, who are unaffected by his appearance but who find his conversation hypocritical. I, being his father, will not pronounce a verdict, but I must admit that the latter critics are at least to be taken more seriously than the former.

**My eleventh son is delicate, probably the frailest of my sons; but deceptive in his weakness; for at times he can be strong and resolute, though even then there is somehow always an underlying weakness.** Yet it is not a weakness to be ashamed of, merely something that appears as weakness only on this solid earth of ours. For instance, is not a readiness for flight a kind of weakness too, since it consists in a wavering, an unsteadiness, a fluttering? Something of that nature characterizes my son. These are not, of course, the characteristics to rejoice a father; they tend obviously to destroy a family. Sometimes he looks at me as if he would say: ‘I shall take you with me, Father.’ Then I think: ‘You are the last person I would trust myself to.’ And again his look seems to say: ‘Then let me be at least the last.’

**These are my eleven sons.**

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

Born 1964 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
Lives and works in New York.

Since the beginning of her career in Belgrade during the early 1970s, Marina Abramović has pioneered performance as a visual art form, creating some of the most historic early performance pieces and continues to make important durational works. The body has always been both her subject and medium. Exploring her physical and mental limits in works that ritualize the simple actions of everyday life, she has withstood pain, exhaustion and danger in her quest for emotional and spiritual transformation. From 1975–88, Abramović and the German artist Ulay performed together, dealing with relations of duality. Abramović returned to solo performances in 1989. ¶ She has presented her work at major institutions in the USA and Europe, including the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1985; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1990; Neue National Galerie, Berlin, 1993, and the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 1995. She has also participated in many large-scale international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale (1976 and 1997) and Documenta VI, VII and IX, Kassel (1977, 1982 and 1992). Recent performances include “The House With The Ocean View” at Sean Kelly Gallery, New York in 2002, and the Performance “7 Easy Pieces” at Guggenheim Museum, New York in 2005. In 2010, Abramović had her first major U.S. retrospective and simultaneously performed for over 700 hours in “The Artist is Present” at Museum of Modern Art, New York. Using herself and the public as medium, Abramović performed for three months at the Serpentine Gallery in London, 2014; the piece was titled after the duration of the work, “512 Hours”. ¶ She was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the 1997 Venice Biennale for the video installation and performance “Balkan Baroque.” In 2008 she was decorated with the Austrian Commander Cross for her contribution to Art History. In 2013, the French Minister of Culture accepted her as an Officer to the Order of Arts and Letters. In addition to these and other awards, Abramović also holds multiple honorary doctorates from institutions around the world. ¶ Abramović founded the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI), a platform for immaterial and long durational work to create new possibilities for collaboration among thinkers of all fields. The institute inhabited its most complete form to date in 2016 in collaboration with NEON in “As One”, Benaki Museum, Athens.


The Hero

2001, Single Channel Video Installation, 14’ 22”

As Abramović’s art in general, this work, performed and filmed in Spain, is based on stillness and endurance. Abramović dedicated it to her father, who personally appeared in her earlier installations, such as Balkan Baroque (1996), but who died the same year of this performance. In the artist’s personal recollection, he refused to surrender throughout his life: he refused to surrender as an antifascist, communist and soldier in the Yugoslav partisans’ army; and he rejected to submit during the 1990s when the Serbian nationalists publically denied the role of antifascist resistance in WWII, officially exposing it to oblivion. The song heard in the video is the national anthem of the Socialist or Titoist Yugoslavia – “Hey Sloveni” (Hi, Slaves), beautifully sung by Marica Gojević, a former Abramović’s student. The Hero is an homage the daughter pays to her deceased father, and the white flag may stand for his death as his only act of surrender. In that sense it is also a work of mourning: not only over the father’s absence, but also the absence of Yugoslavia, his and her country of origin, which vanished through a series of nationalist wars.
MAJA BAJEVIĆ

Born 1967 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lives and works in Paris and Sarajevo.

Maja Bajević is an artist who takes a critical and witty approach to art in order to pinpoint dualities in human behaviour, in particular those involving power. The power of history is opposed to the power of choice and interpretation: in this view Bajević particularly considers political power and patriarchy in relation to the exclusion of women from cultural record. Collective memory to collective amnesia, objective accounts to subjective storytelling and imagination – as a construction in progress, fluid and unstable (the presence of scaffolding in her work is not fortuitous), whose shifts and derivations react to contradictory stimuli, are all important threads in her work. Her work is about opening questions rather than giving answers, where every answered question opens a new territory with new brackets that give place to the unforeseen or the yet unspoken, in an never-ending continuum. Bajević's work, ranges from video, installation, performance and sound to text, crafts, drawing, printmaking, machinery and photography. Bajević was the holder of the Collegium Helveticum residency in Zurich (2001); DAAD residency, Berlin (2007) and IASPIS residency, Stockholm (2009). She has been teaching at the MA studies of l’Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (2001); Università luav di Venezia, BA and MA (2004 – 2008); MA studies, Bauhaus university, Weimar, Germany (2010). Her work is part of the collections of the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Fonds National d’Art Contemporain (FNAC), France; MACBA, Barcelona, Spain; 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Erste Foundation, Vienna, Austria; Sammlung Essl, Vienna, Austria; Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo, Norway amongst others.


SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2014 We Are the Last Ones of Yesterday, But the First Ones of Tomorrow, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France • 2012 / 2013: To Be Continued, The James Gallery, CUNY, New York, USA • 2012 To Be Continued, DAAD Gallery, Berlin, Germany • 2011 Continuara / To Be Continued, Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofia, Crystal Palace, Madrid, Spain • 2008 Maja Bajević, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, Italy • 2005 The Ist at Moderna, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden • 2004 Step by Step, P.S.1 MoMA, Long Island City, New York, USA.
Women at Work — Washing Up

2001, Five-day Performance / Video, 18’ 09”
Originally performed at the Cemberlitas bathhouse, 7th Istanbul Biennale

This work belongs to the series of three performances entitled Women at Work, which the artist carried out together with a group of women-refugees who had been displaced from Srebrenica after the massacre in July 1995. The first was held in Sarajevo (1999) and the second in Chateau Voltaire in France (2000). The work started in Sarajevo, where Bajević together with Muslim women, embroidered on very fragile fabric three famous sentences by former Yugoslav president Tito, such as, “A country that has youth like ours should not worry for its future.” The meaning of these political slogans, embroidered here in Bosnian, Turkish and English, has been washed out through military interventions in the former Yugoslavia, and has become rather ironic. The performance, lasting five consecutive days, took place in a women’s hamam (public bath) in Istanbul and was held during the opening of the 7th Istanbul Biennial. There, Zlatija Efendić, Fazila Efendić and the artist washed the fabric with political slogans over and over again, until it fell to pieces. The event could be attended only by women, and presumed an active participation of the visitors who could access it by passing through a cleansing rite of bathing. The process of washing has a sacred connotation in many cultures. Psychologically, cleaning is known as a traditional female reaction to pain, loss, death or stress.
How Do You Want To Be Governed?

2009, Video, 10’ 39”
After Rasa Todosijević, Was ist Kunst?, 1976

The performance is a reenactment of the video work, Was ist Kunst?, which conceptual artist Raša Todosijević from Belgrade made in 1976. Occupying the position of power (of the artist) he endlessly repeats the question, addressing a silent young woman. In her video, Bajević makes a twist: this time it is the artist who is being torturously questioned and not the one asking the question: how she wants to be governed and be positioned in a democratic society. Adding to the estrangement of the setting is a voice-over that repeats the same question not as the interrogator but in a disinterested speaker-like voice, as if the bureaucratic character of the question is being accepted in the question itself and presumes that there will not be any answer. The question thus becomes a pure execution of power for power’s sake.
YAEL BARTANA


Yael Bartana’s films, installations and photographs explore the imagery of identity and the politics of memory. Her starting point is the national consciousness propagated by her native country, Israel. Central to the work are meanings implied by terms like “homeland”, “return” and “belonging”. Bartana investigates these through the ceremonies, public rituals and social diversions that are intended to reaffirm the collective identity of the nation state.

In her Israeli projects, Bartana dealt with the impact of war, military rituals and a sense of threat on every-day life. Between 2006 and 2011, she has been working in Poland, creating the trilogy And Europe Will Be Stunned, a project on the history of Polish-Jewish relations and its influence on the contemporary Polish identity. The trilogy represented Poland in the 54th International Art Exhibition in Venice (2011).

In recent years Bartana has been experimenting and expanding her work within the cinematic world, presenting projects such as Inferno (2013), a “pre-enactment” of the destruction of the Third Temple, True Finn (2014), that came into being within the framework of the IHME Festival in Finland, and Pardes (2015) which was shot during a spiritual journey in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Her latest work, Simone The Hermetic, is a site-based sound installation that takes place in future Jerusalem.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 Petzel Gallery, New York, USA • 2015 Capitain Petzel, Berlin, Germany • 2015 Galeria Raffaella Cortese, Milano, Italy • 2014 Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland • 2013 Inferno, Pérez Art Museum, Miami, USA • 2012 Wenn Ihr wollet, ist es kein Traum, Secession, Vienna, Austria • 2009 Mary Koszmary, Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco, USA • 2008 Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel.

The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP) was initiated by Israeli-born artist Yael Bartana in 2007 and since then has acquired international recognition and support. The founding wish of the JRMiP is to write new pages into a history that never quite took the course we wanted. We call for the return of 3,300,000 Jews to Poland to symbolize the possibility of our collective imagination – to right the wrongs history has imposed and to reclaim the promise of a utopian future that all citizens deserve. Neither mono-ethnic nor mono-religious, it is internationalist and open to all refugees and outcasts. Horizontally interconnected like a network, it needs no central leader. It is a political experiment. [From www.jrmip.org]

The First International Congress of the JRMiP was held in Berlin (11 till 13 May, 2012) within the framework of the 7th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art. This work is integrally linked to the series of work presented in the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011 – the trilogy of video works And Europe Will Be Stunned (Nightmares, 2007; Wall and Tower, 2009; Assasination, 2011) – when in an unprecedented and highly political decision for a national pavilion, Israeli artist Yael Bartana was chosen to represent Poland.
BEGUNN FÜR EINE JÜDISCHE RENAISSANCE IN POLEN:

EIN MANIFEST

Wir wollen zurückkehren!
Nein, unserer Sehnen gilt Polen, mein Land unserer Väter und Vorfahren.
Ob wir sich oder träumen, stecken unsere Gedanken an Polen.
Wir wollen unser gemeinsames Trauma ein für allemal überwinden.
Wir sind überzeugt davon, dass von Schweigen dazu beizutragen sind, hier zu leben, Familien zu gründen, zu sterben und unsere Taten zu begraben.


Polnische Brüder und Schwestern! Wir planen eine Invasion. Vielmehr wird unsere Ankunft eine ganze Prozession der Geister jener, die einerzeit den Nachtmarren erschreckt, die Euch in Euren Traum verfolgen und die Ihr nie kennen lernen könntest. Lasst uns aber wieder das Büste ansehen, das zwischen uns vorgefallen ist.
Wir sehen uns danach, einer Geschichte, die nur so verlaufen ist, wie wir sie uns vorgestellt haben. Neue Seiten hinzuzufügen. Wir verlassen uns darauf, dass wir mit Euch gemeinsam und in Frieden unsere Städte verwalteten, das Land bauen und unsere Kinder aufziehen können. Nehmt uns mit offenen Armen, wie wir Euch mit offenen Armen willkommen heißen!
Mit nur einer Religion können wir nicht hören.
Mit nur einer Farbe können wir nicht sehen.
Mit nur einer Kultur können wir nicht fahren.
Ohne Euch können wir nicht einmal erinnern.
Schließt Euch uns an und Europa wird überwältigt sein!

Bewegung für eine jüdische Renaissance in Polen
Ruch Żydowskiego Odrodzenia w Polsce

THE JEWISH RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT IN POLAND:

A MANIFESTO

We want to return!
Not to Uganda, not to Argentina or to Madagascar, nor even to Palestine.
It is Poland that we long for, the land of our fathers and forefathers.
In real life and in our dreams we continue to have Poland on our minds.
We want to see the squares in Warsaw, Lodz and Krakow filled with new settlements. Next to the cemeteries we will build schools and clinics. We will plant trees and build new roads and bridges.
We wish to heal our mutual trauma once and for all. We believe that we are faced with the fact. We wish to see a future, even if it means to turn the remains of our dead here.

We are revitalizing the early Zionist utopianism. We reach back to the past - to the imagined world of migration, political and geographical displacement to the disintegration of history, as we know it - in order to shape a new future.

This is the reason for our struggle. We stand for peace, for the right of faith to be exhausted and our hopes have failed. Ozymandias is dying. The promised paradise has been poisoned. The hubris and watermelons are no longer as ripe.

We welcome new settlers whose presence will be the embodiment of our desire and of others. We shall face many adversities as we leave behind our safe, familiar, and one-dimensional world.

We direct our appeal not only to Jews. We accept into our ranks all those for whom there is no place in their homelands - the displaced and the persecuted. There will be no discrimination in our movement. We shall not ask about your life before. We shall take your words, your life stories, your births or question your refugee status. We shall be strong in our weakness.

Our Polish brothers and sisters! We want no invasion. Rather we shall arrive like a procession to the ghosts of your old neighbours, the ones haunting you in your dreams, the neighbours you have never had a chance to meet. And we shall speak about all the evil things that have happened between us.

We long to write new pages into a history that never quite took the course we wanted. We count on being able to govern our cities, walk the land, and bring up our children in peace and together with you.
Welcome as with open arms, as we will welcome you!

With one religion, we cannot listen.
With one color, we cannot see.
With one culture, we cannot feel.
Without you we cannot ever remember.
Join us, and Europe will be stunned!

Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland
Marina Belikova

Born 1988 in Moscow, USSR.
Lives and works in Weimar and Moscow.

Marina Belikova is an artist, born in Moscow, Russia. Between 2005-2011 she studied Graphical web-design & E-commerce in the National Research University Higher School of Economics, and then in 2011 moved to the Moscow Institute of Electronics and Mathematics (Technical University) and graduated with an honours degree. In 2012-2013 she did an MA in Communication Design: Graphic Design in Kingston University London. In 2013 she started her degree at Bauhaus University Weimar, where she is currently doing an MFA in Media Art and Design.

Selected Exhibitions

- 2015 Entschuldigen Sie, wo finde ich denn hier das Bauhaus?, OMA, Weimar, Germany
- 2015 Works on Paper III, MOMENTUM Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2013 Fringe Arts Bath Art Festival, Bath, UK
- 2012 Photo Drying, Gorkij Park, Moscow, Russia
- 2006 The Park of Design, Moscow Central House of Artists, Moscow, Russia.

The Lines

2013 – 2015, Photographs and Text, 44 x 28 cm

The human body can be a great storyteller. It carries all sort of marks — birthmarks, vaccination marks, scars from childhood or sport accidents, surgeries, burns from cooking or inattentive smokers, and so on. Some of those have dramatic or funny stories behind them, some are from long forgotten insignificant accidents, but all of them are traces of life — history as told by the body. And some marks happen to be self-inflicted. This topic is rarely discussed, neither by the ones involved, nor by the people around them. Unlike the common view, associating self-harm almost exclusively with depression or anxiety, the reasons behind it are very diverse, as are the backgrounds of the people featured in this series: UK, Russia, Estonia, Iran and Australia. [Marina Belikova, 2016]
TANIA BRUGUERA


One of the leading political and performance artists of her generation, Bruguera researches ways in which Art can be applied to the everyday political life; focusing on the transformation of social affect into political effectiveness. Her long-term projects have been intensive interventions on the institutional structure of collective memory, education and politics. Recognized as one of the 100 Leading Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy magazine, shortlisted for the #Index100 Freedom Inkers by Foreign Policy and the Internet #YoTambienExijo Campaign. Plaza de la Revolución and the Internet, Havana, Cuba. (cur. Platform #YoTambienExijo). 2012 Tania Bruguera: Immigrant Movement International. The Tanks at Tate Modern, part of the series The Tanks: Art in Action, Tate Museum, London, UK (cur. Catherine Wood and Kathy Noble) • 2011 Immigrant Movement International, presented by Queens Museum of Art and Creative Time, New York, USA • 2010 IP Détournement. VOIR / REVDIR, Centre d’Art Pompidou, Paris, France (cur. Etienne Sandrine) • 2010 Plusvalía, Project Rooms, 29 Feria Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo, ARCO, Madrid, Spain (cur. Maria Inés Rodríguez) • 2009 Tati Tin’s Whisper #6 (version for Havana) - Integración y resistencia en la era global, Décima Bienal de la Habana, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2015


Migrant Manifesto
Immigrant Movement International

2011, Text Piece

With her concept of “useful art” (Arte Útil), Tania Bruguera seeks “to imagine, create, develop and implement something that, produced in artistic practice, offers the people a clearly beneficial result.”

“Today, after working on the Arte Útil concept, I see myself as an initiator (rather than a performer or even an artist). By that I mean that what I’m doing is setting up the conditions for things to happen, where the audience has as much responsibility as I do for where the work goes. It is a way to acknowledge that with social and political public work we do not own all the work and that the ways by which these works can be sustained are by the intervention, care and enthusiasm of others. […] There are many people that think that because I have proposed things like Arte Útil and what I call ‘political-timing-specific art’ I’m renouncing art; it is actually the contrary, it is claiming the right that art has to be redefined as an active part of other things, it is the rights artists have to be more than producers.” [Tania Bruguera, in an interview with Tom Eccles, December 2015]

Our voices converge on these principles:

1. We know that international connectivity is the reality that migrants have helped create. It is the place where we all reside. We understand that the quality of life of a person in a country is contingent on migrants’ work. We identify as part of the engine of change.

2. We are all tied to more than one country. The multilaterally shaped phenomenon of migration cannot be solved unilaterally, or else it generates a vulnerable reality for migrants. Implementing universal rights is essential. The right to be included belongs to everyone.

3. We have the right to move and the right to not be forced to move. We demand the same privileges as corporations and the international elite, as they have the freedom to travel and to establish themselves wherever they choose. We are all worthy of opportunity and the chance to progress. We all have the right to a better life.

4. We believe that the only law deserving of our respect is an unprejudiced law, one that protects everyone, everywhere. No exclusions. No exceptions. We condemn the criminalisation of migrant lives.

5. We affirm that being a migrant does not mean belonging to a specific social class or carrying a particular legal status. To be a migrant means to be an explorer; it means movement, this is our shared condition. Solidarity is our wealth.

6. We acknowledge that individual people with inalienable rights are the true barometer of civilization. We identify with the victories of the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, the advancement of women’s rights, and the achievements of the LGBTQ community. It is our urgent responsibility and historical duty to make the rights of migrants the next triumph in the quest for human dignity. It is inevitable that the poor treatment of migrants today will be our dishonor tomorrow.

7. We assert the value of the human experience and the intellectual capacity that migrants bring with them as greatly as any labor they provide. We call for the respect of the cultural, social, technical, and political knowledge that migrants command.

8. We are convinced that the functionality of international borders should be re-imagined in the service of humanity.

9. We understand the need to revive the concept of the commons, of the earth as a space that everyone has the right to access and enjoy.

10. We witness how fear creates boundaries, how boundaries create hate and how hate only serves the oppressors. We understand that migrants and non-migrants are interconnected. When the rights of migrants are threatened the rights of citizens are at risk.

Dignity has no nationality.

Immigrant Movement International
November 2011
ANETTA MONA CHIŞA & LUCIA TKÁČOVÁ

Both live and work in Berlin and Prague.

Anetta Mona Chişă and Lucia Tkáčová have been working in collaboration since 2000. Born in Romania and Slovakia, they both graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and currently live and work in Prague and Berlin. Their works highlight issues surrounding Eastern European History, gender relations, the individual vs. the masses, as well as satirizing their identity as female artists working in an Art world predominantly populated by Western men. Through their more performative works, Chişă and Tkáčová use the idea of the ‘female duo’ to subvert and question artistic/social traditions. The use of two strong bodies, collaborating and working together, transform the female body into a site of strength, rather than a site of male fantasies and enforced gender stereotypes. Encompassing installation, video, text, drawing and performance, Chişă and Tkáčová’s work re-configures and unsettles established social and political power structures allowing a notion of alternative world orders. Bringing together ideas from disparate sources, the duo expose cracks in our habitual formulations of power, value, gender or political desire. The artists’ collaboration itself is a constant mixing of the individual selves to create a new temporary entity.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2016 I look at a sun, I am a catch, a cave ant, Rotwand gallery, Zurich, Switzerland • 2015 Ah, soul in a coma, act naïve, attack, GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen, Germany • 2013 Clash!, Art in General, New York, USA • 2011 Material Culture / Things in our Hands, Christine Koenig Gallery, Vienna, Austria • 2011 Representing Romania in the 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 All We Are, Gdansk City Gallery, Gdansk, Poland • 2014 Afterimage. Rappresentazioni del conflitto, Galleria Civica, Trento, Italy • 2014 Unlooped-KINo, Manifesta 10, St. Petersburg, Russia • 2013 Good Girls, Memory, Desire, Power, National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest, Romania • 2012 What Does a Drawing Want?, Beirut, Lebanon, Cairo, Egypt • 2012 3rd Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow, Russia • 2011 The Global Contemporary, ZKM Museum fuer Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe, Germany • 2010 Rearview Mirror, The Power Plant, Contemporary Art gallery, Toronto, Canada • 2010 While Bodies Get Mirrored, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland • 2009 Gender Check, MuMoK, Vienna, Austria • 2009 The Making of Art, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany.
**Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better.**

2011, Video, 7’ 57’’

The clenched fist pointing to the sky is an archetypal image of human disobedience, an image of the power of the weak, of courage and vanity. We re-created this symbol as an ephemeral inflatable sculpture, a huge “harmless” toy. The performance is conceived like a puppet show, a play in which the object is controlled by strings. The action turns into a reversed play, in which the “marionette” is at the same time the hand that moves the strings, whereas we become like living puppets. The interplay of idolatry and iconoclasm emphasizes the slippery area between control and subversion, hopes and resignation, creating a paradoxical relation between the followers and the transcending power of the idea. [A.M. Chisa & L. Tkáčová]

This work was produced for the Romanian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale, 2011, where the artists represented Romania together with Ion Grigorescu.
Manifesto of Futurist Woman (Let’s Conclude)

2008, Video, 11’ 13”

Manifesto of Futurist Woman (Let’s Conclude) depicts a group of majorettes marching across an urban space, apparently performing a generic choreography. However, the majorettes, instead of following the usual dance routine, actually broadcast a message coded in Semaphore, an outdated naval signal language. The message performed by the majorettes is the concluding part of Manifesto della donna futurista, written in 1912 by the French poet, playwright and performance artist Valentine de Saint-Point (1875-1953); it was her response to Marinetti’s infamous call, in the 1909 Manifesto del Futurismo, for the “scorn of woman.” De Saint Point’s manifesto anticipated a strong woman as a role model who would re-appropriate her instincts and vital strength in spite of a society which condemned her to weakness. Instead, she advocated the concepts of the woman-warrior and “female virility.”
DANICA DAKIĆ

Born 1962 in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. Lives and works in Düsseldorf and Weimar.

Danica Dakić’s scope of work extends from video and film to photography and installation. Her works hark back to traditional art historical compositions, staging scenes with members from socially and economically marginalised backgrounds to act out their own narratives, giving her work a politically charged subject matter and theatrical aesthetic that explores issues surrounding identity and existence amongst the socially disadvantaged. ¶ Her works deal with cultural displacement, role-playing, and alienation and are based on performative and collaborative processes exploring concepts of cultural memory, history and identity as well as their ongoing changes. These could be changes in the meaning of the terms “home,” “nationality,” and “identity” provoked and imposed by wars, religious conflicts, societal changes, and globalisation processes. She finds her themes and actors from all over the world. Cultural interfaces become the point of departure for experiments with forceful images and superimposed sounds. ¶ Dakić studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo, the Faculty of Fine Arts, Belgrade, and the Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf. Since 2011 she has been a professor at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, where she heads the international MFA-program “Public Art und New Artistic Strategies”. ¶ Her work is in public collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris, the Generali Foundation, Vienna, the Museum d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, the Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, the Landtag of the state NRW in Düsseldorf, and the National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo. Dakić currently lives in Düsseldorf and Weimar, Germany.


Jelica Dakić by Danica Dakić

2012, Photography / Text, 68 x 49.5 cm

The sentence in Serbo-Croat quotes a Marxist definition of labour, which was often told by the mother Jelica to her daughter. Through this statement, the mother is advising the daughter on how to adjust her energy input in relation to its outcome. In this work the artist merges a personal reminiscence with a collective memory. A photograph, taken in Opatija (Croatia) in 2010, belonging to the artist’s private archive, portrays Jelica Dakić, the mother of the artist (who lives in Bosnia), in a hotel room, on a vacation taken together with her daughter who has long lived abroad.
Nezaket Ekici's video, installations and performances are often process-based and ask viewers to derive their own emotional and intellectual interpretations. Activated by the audience, the use of her body as a means of expression becomes a vital material in her work, where complex, often controversial topics are countered by their aestheticizing presentation. Ekici frequently uses her own Turkish origins and education as a subject of tension, pitting her background against her living environment in present-day Germany. Cultural, geographic and individual boundaries, transgressions, gender, cross-border connections and authorial bodies are central to Ekici’s works. By highlighting these themes in everyday life and placing them in a new context, she aims to interconnect every element to form a total work of art — a Gesamtkunstwerk.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

> 2015 Alles, was man besitzt, besitzt auch uns, Haus am Waldsee – Der Ort internationaler Gegenwartskunst, Berlin, Germany • 2014 Zwei Welten, Kunstverein Ausburg e.V., Ausburg, Germany • 2013 (After) Love at Last Sight, Pi Artworks, London, UK • 2013 Islamic Chapel, Städtische Galerie, Ostfildern, Germany • 2011 Dream and Reality, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey • 2011 Gravity, Städtische Galerie Bremen im Buntentor, Bremen, Germany • 2010 Zitate, DNA, Berlin, Germany • 2009 Origin of Inspiration, Geethe Institute Ankara, Ankara, Turkey.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

> 2016 Memory and Continuity: A selection from Humba Kabak Collection, Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey • 2016 Mother Tongue, Buskerud Kunstcenter, Drammen, Norway • 2016 DeFlages, Galerie 100Titres, Brussels, Belgium • 2015 Ich bin ein Pflanze – Naturprozesse in der Kunst, Kunstmuseum Ravensburg, Ravensburg, Germany • 2015 Imag Mundi, Luciano Benetton Collection, Mappa dell’artenuova, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy • 2015 Fossils, The Petach Tikva Museuem of Art, Petach Tikva, Israel • 2014 Neighbours – Contemporary Narratives from Turkey and Beyond, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey • 2013 Il Abierto de Accion, Internation Performance Art Festival, Malaga, Spain • 2013 Thresholds, CHB Collegium Hungaricum Berlin, Berlin, Germany and TRAFO Center for Contemporary Art, Szczecin, Poland • 2012 FACELESS part I, freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL // MuseumsQuartier, Vienna, Austria • 2012 Re-orientation, Mediterranean Biennale, Sakhnin, Israel.
Disguise

2013, Video / Performance, 9' 56''

Nezaket Ekici developed the idea for this work from her earlier performance Permanent Words (2009), in which she also hangs upside down reciting newspapers, quotations from the Quran and personal statements concerning the condition of women in the Islamic world with all its benefits and disadvantages. In her new video performance Disguise she takes a step further, showing a woman that not only hangs up-side down, but who is hindered to act and to talk because of black plaster that covers her head, face and mouth. The artist becomes less and less comfortable in her situation, when she is forced to shut up by plaster covering her mouth and a man's hands holding her head. And even if this work clearly deals with women's place in Islamic societies, it also point out that women's rights are restricted nowadays in many places, despite the Western view that equality exists.

On the Way, Safety and Luck

2011 / 2016, Live Performance at opening of HERO MOTHER, 1 h 10' & Performance Installation, 34' 18''

In the performance On the Way, Safety and Luck, Ekici, a constant traveler, evokes her childhood memories concerning a farewell ritual she witnessed during her early childhood in Turkey and later also in Germany. Each time a Turkish family had to travel and leave home, either to go back to their old home in Turkey or to the new home in Germany, the members of the family or neighbors who are left behind used to come out in the street with buckets of water, throwing water behind the cars of those who are departing. This custom is also known in many other Balkan cultures. It used to be (and sometimes still is) observed in Bulgaria and Serbia. The use of water in this leave-taking ritual has the meaning of good luck and safe journey, which should come to pass as easily and smoothly as 'running water'. The meaning of water here is also as a means of spiritual purification and change. In re-enacting this custom in a rather radical manner, Ekici may imply that travel and leaving home nowadays is not always motivated by personal decisions but by other forces such as poverty and war.
ELSE (TWIN) GABRIEL


Else Gabriel came to prominence within circles of the GDR art scene during her time at the Dresden Art Academy in the mid 1980s. After becoming a member of the notorious group Autoperforationsartisten, Gabriel began collaborating with artists such as Michael Brendel, Volker (Via) Lewandowsky and Rainer Görß. Their performative works became synonymous with challenging GDR ideology, using shocking techniques such as self-mutilation to question the repressive teaching methods used within schools and universities. After meeting Ulf Wrede (now her partner and father to their two children) in the late 1980s, they began their long term collaborative project under the name else Twin Gabriel in 1991. Their work spans across digital and performative mediums, with themes ranging from social / political repression, late capitalism, the family system and reconfiguring German identity (post-Wall), whilst introducing humour and the absurd into everyday situations. Else Gabriel has been a professor at the Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weißensee since 2009.


**Billett Parnass**

1999 / 2000, Video, 22’59”

The focus is on the construction of a figure with faults – husband and mother, intoxicated Russian and upright Central German, once in front of the Christmas tree, once in the production, mute, brilliant, serious, mindless and somehow from another time. Else Gabriel and Ulf Wrede drove to the Harz Mountains to collect keepsakes, clichés and fairytale images and to produce a pseudo-portrait of the East German-style, Protestant rigidity of tolerance. In the video Else Gabriel plays the father, her son Linus plays his daughter and everyone else plays everyone else.

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**Kind als Pinsel**

2007, Video / Performance, 6’14”

The camera performance “Die Erziehung der Hirse” is a moral poem, which, without a touch of irony, Berthold Brecht wrote praising the “great harvester” Joseph Stalin. Paul Dessau composed the music for the poem in 1952-54. I selected parts from this choral piece and sung these parts of it myself. The music forms the background for the images remaining in my memory or the memories I “felt” or dreamed about during my childhood in the GDR, which are filmed with a Super-8 camera. “Kooperatorke” was a Soviet name for a special type of corn. [else (Twin) Gabriel]
Jogging Muslina

2004 / 2005, Photo- / Video Performance
7 Photographs out of a series of 14, 120 x 98 cm (1), 48.5 x 60 cm (6)

The photographic series is based on our observations in Berlin / Neukölln, which is our working and living neighborhood. The majority of Berlin’s Muslims live here. Here is also erected Berlin’s largest mosque, and nearby is “Hasenheide”, Berlin’s great park. These days it is mainly joggers who make their rounds there. But there are more Muslim women in their long coats, headscarves and their expensively labeled sneakers. Our family undertook a sort of experimental anthropology. We acquired the coats and headscarves for the entire family, and the new expensive sneakers for everybody. [else (Twin) Gabriel]
FANG LU


Fang Lu’s primary medium is video, seeing the camera as a tool to transform the everyday into an alternative reality, as well as an important instrument in activating her role as performer in her work. Her work considers the reality of being a female artist in China as well as her identity as a Chinese artist studying in the USA. Fang Lu received her BFA from Graphic Design department at School of Visual Art in New York in 2005, and MFA from the New Genres department at the San Francisco Arts Institute in 2007. She is co-founder of Video Bureau, an independent video archive resource in Beijing and Guangzhou. She lives and works in Beijing.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2013 Lost Seconds, Boers-li Gallery, Beijing, China • 2013 Lover and Artist, Pekin Fine Art Gallery, Hong Kong, China • 2012 Amorous Acts, Arrow Factory, Beijing, China • 2011 Eclipse, Borges Libreria Contemporary Art Institute, Guangzhou, China (cur. Chen Tong).

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 China 8, Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl, Marl, Germany • 2014 Pierre Huber Prize, OCAT, Shanghai, China • 2014 My Generation: Young Chinese Artists, Tampa Museum, Tampa, USA • On/Off, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China • 2014 28 Chinese, Rubell Family Collection Museum, Miami, USA • 2012 Accidental Message: Art is Not a System, Not a World, The 7th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen, China.
Sea of Silence

2015, Video, 29’

The work is centered on the idea of speaking about love as a form of action. Three woman protagonists, as three distinctive individuals, talk to the camera about specific events and experiences when they encounter love. They are situated in a remote desert. This untamed environment is a new habitat for them to pursue a new form of living. [Fang Lu]

This work was made during the artist’s stay at the Artport residency program in Israel. Sea of Silence is the first in a series of works about women’s experiences of love. The second work in this series, Secret of the Supermoon, was produced by MOMENTUM in 2015 as the result of Fang Lu’s artist residency at MOMENTUM. This series of works addresses heroism in a private rather than political context. Chinese artist Fang Lu transcends questions of culture and nationhood in reminding us that women’s battles are fought on many fronts, and that personal acts of strength can be as heroic as public acts of resistance.
GLUKLYA (NATALIA PERSHINA-YAKIMANSKAYA)
Born 1969 in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Russia. Lives and works in St. Petersburg and Amsterdam.

Gluklya is a Russian artist working internationally, exploring the field of research based art, as well as participatory and multidisciplinary projects where she experiments with video, performance and installations. Her work is continually shifting between different disciplines: One of her main preoccupations in her work currently is challenging social hierarchy, uniting people within her projects from different corners of society – Migrants and dancers, pensioners and students, the marginalised and professors, minors and elderly ladies. Through this dialogue, Gluklya creates a new language of expression, giving her works a multi-layered and challenging dimension. ¶ Together with her colleague Tsaplya, she founded the FFC / Factory of Found Clothes project, (1996-2012), which became one of the most recognizable feminist projects internationally. Gluklya and Tsaplya are considered as pioneers of Russian performance. In 2002 she also became a member of the Chto Delat group, a multidisciplinary platform uniting artists, philosophers and activists.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2013 Utopian Unions, Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 All the World’s Futures, 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy • 2015 Akinci Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland • 2014 Manifesta 10, St. Petersburg, Russia • 2014 Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem, Holland • 2013 10th Krasnoyarsk Museum Biennale, Krasnoyarsk, Russia • 2012 MUMOK, Vienna, Austria • 2011 Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden, Baden, Germany • 2011 Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland • 2011 SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, Holland • 2011 Kunsthalle, Vienna, Austria • 2010 ICA, London, UK.
Clothes for Demonstration Against False Election of Vladimir Putin

2011 – 2015, Installation (Textiles, Handwriting, Wood)

The idea for this work appeared during the time of the first big protests in Russia, beginning in December 2011, against Putin's false elections. It was unpredictable for everybody; because of the complete a-politicization of our society, none of us could have imagined, even the day before, that it might happen. Later, in 2012, I decided to incorporate the spirit of protest and political uprising at different demonstrations into my long-term project Utopian Clothes. Clothes hanging on sticks represent a new type of demonstration banner that makes the voices of protesting people visible and gives a voice to people who cannot speak. Each item of clothing has its own story and aura and represents a certain voice, a precise position in society. Gradually the number of clothes with protest expressions grew into its own series with the project title Clothes for Demonstrations. Insofar as the language of protest in Russia has only started to take shape, any diversity among protests, any artistic expression, might be valuable in developing a shared spirit of resistance.

The installation Clothes for Demonstration against the False Election of Vladimir Putin (2011 - 2015) represents the memory of the first outburst of free will of the Russian people, who have awakened from a long, long sleep. (Gluklya / Natalia Pershina-Yakimanskaya)

The installation Clothes for Demonstration Against the False Election of Vladimir Putin was shown at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.
STEFANIE GROMES

Stefanie Gromes: born 1981 in Berlin (East), GDR.

Katrin Hafemann: born 1981 in Hamburg, Germany.

Stefanie Gromes is working as a freelance film writer for the public service broadcasting company (NDR / ARD Television) in Hamburg, in the current affairs department, since 2012. She also works for the department “Die BOX / lab for creative storytelling in documentaries”.

Katrin Hafemann is working as a freelance film writer for the public service broadcasting company (NDR / ARD Television) in Hamburg, in the department of current affairs, since 2002. She also works for the department of “Die BOX / lab for creative storytelling in documentaries”.

EDUCATION / JOB

**STEFANIE GROMES**

- 2011-2012 Traineeship at NDR television in Hamburg, Germany
- 2009-2011 Freelance film author in Berlin, Germany
- 2006-2009 Additional Master in Middle East History at Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2000-2006 Student at Munich Academy of Television and Film (HFF/ München), department: Documentary and TV-Journalism, Munich, Germany

**KATRIN HAFEMANN**

- 2011 – 2012 Traineeship at NDR Television in Hamburg, Germany
- 2001 – 2008 Student of German Language and Literature, Journalism and French Literature at University of Hamburg (Master of Arts), Hamburg, Germany
- 2004 – 2005 Semester abroad - Student of German Language and Literature and French Literature at Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux, France.
7 Tage…FEMEN

2015, NDR, Documentary, 30’

After long research, Stefanie Gromes and Katrin Hafemann managed to realize this documentary as film together with the members of the FEMEN activist group in Germany. It is film based on mutual trust. The FEMEN activist feminist movement originated in Ukraine around 2007, and soon spread worldwide. Klara and Zana launched the German branch together in 2012. Since then, they, like their co-fighters acting internationally, protest against pornography, prostitution and animosity towards women in Islamism. In doing so, they expose their own nudity: “Society can get our tits, but only with the message,” says Zana. What motivated German women to such radical rebellion and what is the price they pay for it? Through a number of interviews, this film offers personal answers, proving that today the slogan “personal is political” has preserved its old meaning while acquiring new forms.
SANJA IVEKOVIĆ

Born 1949 in Zagreb, Croatia. Lives and works in Zagreb.

A feminist, activist and video pioneer and early performance artist, Iveković was part of the generation known in Socialist Yugoslavia as New Art Practice, which in the early 1970s started to critique the modernist paradigm that was accepted as “official” Yugoslav art. At that time in her conceptual photomontages she elaborated on the public / private opposition, questioning the persuasive qualities of mass media and its identity-forging potential, particularly focusing on the representation of women. In the 1990s — following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the birth of a new Croatian nation state — she focused on the transformation of reality from socialist to post-socialist political conditions. The analysis of identity constructions in media as well as political engagement, solidarity and activism belong to her artistic strategies. One of the major issues she addresses in her project is domestic violence against women (seen in Women’s House, an ongoing project since 1998).

Iveković offers a fascinating view into the official politics of power, gender roles, and the paradoxes inherent in the ways contemporary societies construct collective memory and collective amnesia, in particular regarding women’s role in history. “In all my work since the beginning of the seventies,” Iveković once stated, “three major themes have preoccupied me the most: gender, identity, and memory. For me, as a visual artist, the starting point of my research is the visual representation of woman in our everyday life transmitted to us by mass media. As a feminist, I have tried to make art that reflects my political consciousness of what it means to be a woman in a patriarchal culture.”


Our Beautiful

1998, Video, 25''

This video was commissioned in 1998 as a clip by the coalition of Croatian women's NGOs as a part of the campaign opposing violence against women. It consists of a single shot, showing a face of a beautiful woman, who slowly turns, exposing the other part of her face, which is battered. The Croatian national anthem, Our Beautiful ("Lijepa naša"), is heard at the beginning of the video along with the first chord of the anthem: “Our beautiful homeland, oh, our hero land...”

An attempt to broadcast this clip on Croatian national TV has, alas, failed.

GEN XX

1997 – 2001, 6 Photographic Prints, 100 x 70 cm

Project GEN XX is a series of photo works designed in the form of magazine advertisements, published between 1997-1998 in Croatian independent periodicals and women's journals such as Arkzin, Zaposlenja, Frakcija, Kruh i ruže and Kontura. The women on the photographs are fashion models whose faces are familiar to the general public. The names and short bios collaged on the photographs belong to those Croatian women who had been captured and/or died as antifascists during WW II. Ljubica Gerovac, sisters Baković, Nada Dimić, Dragica Končar, Anca Butorac, who had been proclaimed “National Heroes” in socialist Yugoslavia, were well known to the generations who matured during the socialist period. The artist’s mother, Nera Šafarić, is represented by an original photograph of herself, two years before she was deported to Auschwitz, where she remained till the liberation. In the post-communist age, those women are either unknown or have been erased from the collective memory.
Invisible Women of Solidarity (6 out of 5 million)

2009, Screen Prints, 72 x 51.8 cm

This series depicts six women who were influential in establishing the Polish liberation movement of Solidarity, yet whose roles were marginalized, if not entirely erased in the official narrative of the movement. The work stands as a “monument to invisible women” and as many other of Iveković’s projects, it questions the constructions of collective memory and historical amnesia. Here, Iveković seemingly reverses the historical cannon, shedding light on six key women in the movement by presenting their portraits and next to them their full biographies. In presenting the portraits white on white, the artist refers to the official historical narratives which enact various forms of silencing women as historical actors.
ELŻBIETA JABŁOŃSKA

Born 1970 in Olsztyn, Poland.
Lives and works in Bydgoszcz.

The art of Elżbieta Jabłońska offers an amiably ironic commentary on the status and role of women in a patriarchal society, interweaving women’s everyday activities into art in a good-natured way. In her works, the artist uses and transforms cultural stereotypes and clichés associated with the notion of woman and femininity, playing an intelligent game with them, but full of humor and warmth. ¶ The issue of domesticity runs through Jabłońska’s entire opus. After giving birth to her son in 1997, she introduced into her art activities that can be described as the typical duties of mother and housewife. Since 1999 she has been organizing actions in the presence of a gallery audience, where during the openings the artist prepares elegant treats, sometimes real feasts, to which she then invites the guests to indulge in. In her performances, Jabłonska often takes on the role culturally imposed on women, which obliges them to feed and serve others. ¶ Elżbieta Jabłońska received her MA degree in 1995 from the Fine Arts Department, Nicholas Copernicus University in Torun, where she has been teaching since 1996. She lives and works in Bydgoszcz. She works in different media, often through space-and-time-related activities.

In 2003 Jabłońska received the Spojrzenia (Views) 2003 Award of the Cultural Foundation of the Deutsche Bank.


**Supermother**

2002, 3 Photographs, 100 x 130 cm

Jabłońska is an artist whose prime artistic concern is questioning the concept of domesticity that is historically associated with the “woman’s sphere.” In her series *Supermatka* (Supermother) she, on the one hand, challenges the myth of the Polish Mother (Matka Polka) embedded in Polish national imagination for centuries, insisting on a mother’s endurance and self-sacrifice. In this series Jabłońska addresses a new set of archetypal demands. Clad in the costumes of cartoon superheroes, the artist poses with her son as the defender of home and family, referring to her role as both natural caregiver and entertainer. These works, on the other hand, point out contradictory cultural paradigms that pit tradition and Catholicism against the rising tide of consumerism, technology, and Western values, denounced by the right-wing Catholic women’s organizations in Poland. As many other Polish women artists, Jabłońska destabilizes this mythology via a self-ironizing game.
ZUZANNA JANIN

Born 1961 in Warsaw, Poland. Lives and works in Warsaw.

Zuzanna Janin is a visual artist and former teen actor. Having at one time starred in the Polish series Szalenstwo Majki Skowron (Madness of Majka Skowron), Janin now uses her theatrical background to create sculpture, video, installation, photography and performances. Janin’s work is particularly interested in the human condition, examining past memories and personal history in an attempt to establish a material relationship with them. Her work has been shown in a variety of spaces, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, the Foundation Miro, Barcelona, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, National Gallery Zacheta, Warsaw, Center for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Jeu de Pomme, Paris, Ludwig Museum, Aachen, Kunstmuseum Bern, Kunsthalle, Bern, Hoffmann Sammlung, Berlin, and TT The THING, NY. Janin has also taken part in the Sydney Biennale, Istanbul Biennial, Liverpool Biennale, and the 54th Venice Biennale.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >>
2016 White She-Raven, lokal_30 Warsaw, Poland
2016 Seven Fathers, Muzeum Warmii I Mazur, Olsztyn, Poland
2015 Beyond Victory and Defeat, Zuzanna Janin in dialog with Lin Yu, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China
2014 Uvia. A Tripto Fear, Cinematoteque, MAM Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
2014 Last Sentence. The Time of Cruel Miracles is not Over, National Museum, Krakow, Poland
2012 The Way. Majka From The Movie, Momentum Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2011 All That Music!, Galeria 2.0, ASP / Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, Poland
2011 Swinging Poland in the 1970’s (Madness of Majka Skowron), THING, New York
2010 Majka from the Movie, Kunsthalle Wien, Project Space, Vienna, Austria
2008 The Time of Cruel Miracles Is Not Over, Federico Bianchi Gallery, Gorgonzola / Milan, Italy

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >>
2016 Uncomfortables, Galerie Im Saalbau, Berlin, Germany
2016 Straty, Looses, Alternativa, Fundation Alternativa National Museum Gdańsk, Poland
2015 What in me is Feminine?, Visual Culture Research Center, Kiev, Ukraine
2015 Vertical Reach: Political Protest and the Militant Aesthetic Now, ArtSPACE, New Heaven, USA
2013 What are you working on?, Husby Konsthall, Stockholm
2013 Kinomuzeum / Majka from the Movie (multi-screening and panel), Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
2012 Awakening – the City of Świecie – New Perspectives, (screening at the lecture) at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 7th Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany
2009 CAMEO, Center For Contemporary Art, Warszawa
2000 After the Wall, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany
1999 TRACE, The Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, UK
1992 The Boundary Rider, The 9th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia[under the name Zuzanna Baranowska].
The End. Chapter 1. A Trip to Fear.

2013, Video, 25' 10"

The first part of the video project “THE END” is based on the artist’s journey from Poland to Russia, where Janin travelled in a gesture of solidarity with the imprisoned members of the Russian feminist punk rock group Pussy Riot. Focusing on a single geographic location to illustrate two parallel stories, the artist documents her journey to a country town on the banks of the Kama River where Masha from Pussy Riot was then imprisoned, and where, generations before, Janin’s own great grandfather had also been imprisoned, sent into a slavery in exile in a gulag. Sharing the fate of many other orphaned children from Warsaw. A Trip to Fear is also a personal trip into the depths of personal and collective memory, which revolves around empathizing with those people who risk their freedom and comfort to struggle for a better tomorrow, as well as denouncing evil and oppression. It is an act of solidarity with those who suffer shame, fear, humiliation, degradation and exclusion. It is also a call for artistic freedom.

Lost Butterfly

2016, Video, 40' 56"

Lost Butterfly narrates a story of lost and found memory. Zuzanna Janin, the artist and the daughter, is reconstructing here the memory about her mother, the painter Maria Anto, whose painting, entitled Zuzanna Goes to the Ball (1961), was dedicated to her still unborn daughter. This work had been exhibited at the Sao Paolo Biennial in 1963, but since that time it has been lost. This painting never returned to its home country, Poland, and in the archives of the painter, who died in 2006, there was only a black and white photograph of a later version of the lost image. The journey to Brasil, which the daughter decided to take, was a detective-like investigation about the lost object of desire; at the same time the journey was a way of re-enacting a family memory, which, being a memory about a Polish woman painter, belongs as well to the (Polish) cultural memory.
Majka Skowron. My Heroine for Today

2016, Project on Facebook / print posts from Facebook, dimension variable (ca. 200 pieces), project in progress

Situated on the Facebook page of the artists’ fictional alterego Majka Skowron, this work takes the form of daily posts by the artist about women – both extraordinary and ordinary – who inspire her. Majka Skowron is the name of the hero of a Polish television program of the 1970’s, The Madness of Majka Skowron (1975), still viewed today as a cult classic. As a child actress, Zuzanna Janin played Majka throughout the run of the program.

In 2009 – 2012 she made a series of 9 video works entitled Majka from the Movie, where she mingles excerpts of the original footage with re-staged scenes played by her own daughter, documentary news footage of world events, and found footage from Eastern and Hollywood movies and music, thus merging investigations into the history of art and film with a focus on rebellion. Maintaining the fictional character of Majka Skowron as her alterego on Facebook, Janin yet again reveals herself through the lens of a social media. Majka Skowron, now grown up, returns to her role of provocateur, using the media of Facebook to highlight the true stories of women who have been wronged or forgotten by society.
ADELA JUŠIĆ


Born in Sarajevo and growing up during the Bosnian War (1992-1995), Adela Jušić’s rhetoric is predominantly entwined with issues surrounding memory, personal tragedy and the reality of conflict. Through processing her experiences mainly through the medium of video (The Sniper, 2007), Jušić’s work is at once cathartic and objective, looking at events from a distance in order to critique and reconsider the nature of war. Her preoccupation with war also examines patriarchal conditions and enforced gender stereotypes in Bosnia. As a young woman working and living in Bosnia, and as someone who “does not fit Bosnia’s stereotypical idea of what a woman should be” (Jušić, 2015), the artist has been branded a social outsider and condemned for her untraditional view of gender. In response to this, Jušić founded the Association for Art and Culture, CRVENA (Engl. RED) an organisation working on a number of cultural and feminist projects in Sarajevo. In 2013, Jušić also completed an MA degree in Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe at the Sarajevo and Bologna University.

Adela Jušić has won the Young Visual Artist Award for the best young Bosnian artist in 2011, Henkel Young Artist Price CEE in 2011 and award of Belgrade October Salon in 2013.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2016 Here Come the Women, solo exhibition and artist talk, Gallery Praktika, Split, Croatia • 2016 I Did Nothing Wrong, Galleri Gro, Jakobstad, Finland • 2015 Labor of Love in collaboration with Andreja Dugandžić, Loft Project Etagi, public space exhibition at the international conference “Domestic Workers in the Countries of Central Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union: Postsocialist Migrations and Inequalities”, St. Petersburg, Russia • 2013 Ride the Recoil – Triple Canopy Online Project, New York, USA • 2011 When I Die, You Can Do What You Want, Zvon Young Visual Artist Award exhibition, Duplex gallery, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.


The Sniper

2007, Video, 4’09”

The aggressor’s sniper campaign against the population of the besieged Sarajevo during the last war was an inhuman violation of the rules and customs of war, directed principally towards civilians. My father had been a member of the Bosnian Army from the outset of the war through 3 December 1992 when, as a sniper, he got killed by a sniper bullet which hit him in the eye. Right before his death I found his notebook into which he continuously, over several months, listed how many soldiers he had killed during his combat assignments. [Adela Jušić]

Revealing how wartime memories are intertwined with family and childhood memories, Jušić reminds us of the power of autobiographical work in questioning history and conflict. What is called into question in The Sniper is the reality of war itself, in an attempt to go beyond nationalist, ethnic or religious issues, which have been the main point of discussion throughout the post-war period.
ELENA KOVYLINA

Born 1971 in Moscow, USSR.
Lives and works in Moscow.

Kovylina spent thirteen years receiving a classical Soviet art education until she was accepted to the Art and Media School, Zurich, in 1996. Since then, Kovylina’s period of experimentation eventually led her to her preferred medium: performance. Her pieces are shocking, disturbing and hypnotising, using her body as a site of danger (where she often inflicts potential physical harm onto her and others) in order to question the conventions, traditions and dogmas of society.  ¶  In 1991 Kovylina graduated from Moscow State Academic Art School, “Memory of 1905” for Visual Arts. From 1993 to 1995 she studied at the Surikov Art Institute. From 1996 to 1998 she studied at the Art and Media School in Zurich (installation, performance, video). In 1999 she graduated from the course “New Artistic Strategies” at the Georges Soros Centre of Contemporary Art in Moscow. In 2003 she received a diploma from the Faculty of Media Art at the University of Arts Berlin (UdK Berlin), where she studied under professor Rebecca Horn.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 125 Grammi, Videoinsight Foundation, Turin, Italy • 2015 Eternal Time, Galery Ekaterina Iraqui, Moscow, Russia • 2014 Rituals, Moscow Fine Art Gallery, Moscow, Russia • 2009 Elena Kovylina ou Le Malentendu - Analix Forever, Geneva, Switzerland • 2008 Equality, Contemporary City Foundation, Moscow, Russia • 2007 Elena Kovylina, Pari Nadimi Gallery, Toronto, Canada • 2005 XL-Projects, Moscow, Russia • 2000 Heroines from the East, Guelman Gallery, Moscow, Russia.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 Memory & Oblivion, Station Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon • 2015 We Only Exist When We Create, Analix Forever Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey • 2015 La Biennale d’Art Contemporain “Hybride 3”, Douai, France • 2014 Vienna International Art Fair, Vienna, Austria • 2014 Manifesta 10, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia • 2013 Bolshe Sveta / More Light, 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Manege Central Exhibition Hall, Moscow, Russia • 2012 Art Paris, Analix Forever Gallery, Paris, France • 2011 Merkabah, Solgalery, Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia.
Carriage

2009, Video, 4’ 43”, Odessa

Appropriating a sequence from Sergei Eisenstein’s iconic film, Battleship Potemkin (1925), Kovilyna uses her feminist gaze to produce yet another iconic image: The Carriage. Eisenstein produced his dramatized version of the mutiny that occurred in Odessa, when the crew of the battleship Potemkin rebelled in 1905 against their officers. He was concerned with staging of heroic events as a great collective (male) tragedy, which naturally required (male) sacrifice. Kovilyna, in contrast, is focusing on one single moment of the rebellion: the baby’s pram running down the Odessa steps. This sequence may suggest that mothers must be ready for sacrificing their children for the sake of revolutionary change; but at the same time The Carriage is about women’s helplessness to control and protect their lives and the lives of their offspring, not only during social rebellions but in general.

New Woman

2012, Video, 5’ 56”, Moscow

This specific new woman, with no resemblance to anyone else, has always existed amongst — or even within — millions of women of the past; women who, perhaps, could only dream such a self during the night when baby care, housekeeping and other feminine obligations were over for a little time — until the next day’s obligations came. The innovative potential of women was long supressed from finding its application in society due to prescribed traditional roles. A woman with education for centuries remained a rare phenomenon, too. A woman wearing the academic mantle of a Master is a clear sign of her good education. This is, however, a figure of the Newest Times. One like her would have been burned centuries ago. [Elena Kovilyna]
KATARZyna KOZyRA

Born 1963 in Warsaw, Poland.
Lives and works in Warsaw, Trento and Berlin.

For years Kozyra’s art has been moving the public opinion, often sparking polemics. As a sculptor, photographer, performance artist and filmmaker, the artist consistently questions stereotypes and socio-political discourses to critical revision. Her works raise the most fundamental issues of human existence: identity and transience, life and death, religion and sex. She explores the area of cultural taboos and clichéd behaviours embedded in our everyday life. Although Kozyra is classified as a new media artist, her use of multiple techniques makes an attempt to label her art difficult.

Kozyra is a leading figure of contemporary art whose work has been widely recognized and awarded as one of the finest examples of Polish art on the international arena. Kozyra’s activities became crucial for the development of the new artistic movement known as Critical Art and heavily influenced the shape of contemporary culture, often constituting a starting point for a broader discussion. She received, among others, the Award of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (Warsaw 2011) and the Paszport Polityki award (Warsaw 1997). She was granted the DAAD scholarship (Berlin 2003) and the Kościuszko Foundation scholarship (New York 2000). In 1999, she received an honourable mention at the 48th Venice Biennale for the video installation Men’s Bathhouse in the Polish Pavilion. In 2011 she obtained her Doctor’s Degree at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. A year later, she established the Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation, which focuses on supporting women’s activities in the area of culture and art. In 2013 the Huffington Post named Kozyra one of ten most important female artists of the new millennium. Since 2010 she has been working on her autobiographical film. In 2014 she won the Polish Film Institute / Museum of Modern Art award at the 39th Film Festival in Gdynia for her idea for an experimental movie Project X.


Punishment and Crime

2002, 7 Channel Video Installation (Colour)
1st channel (trailer) - 2’ 32"
2nd channel - 1 h 59’ 34"
3rd channel - 1 h 57’ 06"
4th channel - 1 h 51’ 29"
5th channel - 1 h 56’ 45"
6th channel - 1 h 45’ 52"
7th channel - 4’ 14"

The title of the work, Punishment and Crime, is borrowed from the Dostoyevsky’s novel. In Kozyra’s work the act of destruction is in and of itself a punishment. In this multi-channel installation she explores one side of male behaviour and fascinations, showing a group of men and boys engaged in paramilitary activities. For them, the weapons and explosives are not simply a hobby but a deep passion. Free of any ideals or ideological goals, their obsession appears primal and atavistic.

The artist documents the actions and activities of this group. On one level, these resemble innocent childhood war games, while on another, due to the genuine danger and violent force of real weapons, bullets and explosives, they are closer to actual military operations. The faces of the participants are camouflaged with masks representing faces of pin-up girls or Playboy models. This transposition of gender softens the effect of danger and fear without depleting the authenticity and documentary character of the footage.
ALMAGUL MENLIBAYEVA


Menlibayeva graduated from the Academy of Art and Theatre in Almaty in 1992. A video, photographic and performance artist, her works are usually shot in the dramatic landscapes of Kazakhstan and its surrounding region and frame the political present and past within the diverse mythologies that still haunt the land. She has been awarded a number of prizes: The Main Award, Kino der Kunst, International Film Competition, Munich (2013), KFW Audience Award, Videonale 13, Kunstmuseum Bonn (2011) and the Art and Culture Network Program Grant, Open Society Institute Budapest (2011). She has also exhibited in the Azerbaijan pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) and in the 1st International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Kyiv, (2012).


Milk for Lambs

2010, Video, 11’

In the Steppes of her native Kazakhstan, Menlibayeva stages and films complex mythological narratives, with reference to her own nomadic heritage and the Tengriism traditions of the cultures of Central Asia. Milk for Lambs explores the emotional and spiritual residues of an ancient belief system as well as a historic conflict, still resonating among the peoples of Central Asia today, between the Zoroastrian ideology of former Persia, spreading widely across Eurasia and influencing Western politicians and philosophers and the mysterious Tengriism (sky religion) reaching as far as the Pacific Ocean. The nurturing earth goddess Umai and favorite wife of Tengri, the god of the sky, much like Gaia in the Greek mythology, created life on earth out of herself. This figure of the ‘Earth Mother’ symbolizes the close relationship of the people to the land and its given riches, through symbolic rituals of animals and humans feeding off of her body and drinking her milk. Often described as “punk-shamanism,” Menlibayeva’s videos are embedded in theatricality that leads them through a complex set of references—from tribal symbolism to images of the communist industrial past. Milk for Lambs begins as the story of the artist’s grandfather, merging documentation of an annual ritual of the formerly nomadic peoples with a stylised fantasy of their myths and legends.
Headcharge

2007, Video, 12' 35"

In the video Headcharge, the story, which casually begins in a restaurant in the city of Almaty, gradually slips into a disturbing ritual performed by the female protagonists. We see several urban young women eating a sheep's head and, to increase the shock value of the scene, feeding each other. The grotesque juxtaposition of archaic beliefs with today's "urban attitude" of the protagonists derails the reality of the story. Step by step, through increasingly unruly takes of the camera, the film gives way to a parallel reality, referring to shamanistic travels between worlds. As often occurs in Menlibayeva's films, the female protagonists allude to the Persian mythological image of "peri"—female creatures ranking on a spectrum between angels and evil spirits. Accentuating the ambiguity of peri, whose image is very popular in Central Asia, the artist refers to the current shifts of the feminine condition, which occurs with the progressing Islamization of the countries in the region.
TANJA MURAVSKAJA

Born 1978 in Pärnu, Estonia.
Lives and works in Tallinn.

Tanja Muravskaja is a visual artist whose work probes issues surrounding the construction and definition of identity and nationality. Her photographic works and installations critique and interrogate the meaning of nationalism in present-day Estonia and how – through complex cultural and political processes – neo-nationalism has become part of the national identity. Many of Muravskaja’s works look at conflicts driven to a significant degree by nationalistic animosity and overkill situations fuelled by an inflated sense of patriotic pride in the recent history of the ‘new’ Estonia. The artist strives to analyse and understand the new Estonian identity in a country with a heterogeneous ethnic make-up. She also explores these issues from her personal standpoint as an Estonian-born Russian speaker of Ukrainian descent. She studied photography at the Estonian Academy of Arts (MA 2010) and the University of Westminster and currently lives and works in Tallinn.


**They, Who Sang Together**

2008, Photographs, 8 Portraits out of a series of 12, 110 x 87 cm

On 23 August 1989, together with their Latvian and Lithuanian neighbors, Estonians linked hands to form a human chain, composed of over 2 million people, stretching 600 kilometers from Tallinn to Vilnius via Riga. And they sang. The Singing Revolution was a political process that took place in the four years from 1987 to 1991, which led to the Independence of the three Baltic states. Almost two decades after the historic events they engineered, Muravskaja presents emotionally charged large-scale portraits of the leaders of Estonia’s “Singing Revolution.” Here are the key figures engaged in the process of regaining independence in Estonia: Jüri Adams, Ignar Fjuk, Liia Hänni, Tunne Kelam, Mart Laar, Marju Lauristin, Ülo Nugis, Mart Nutt, Lagle Parek, Edgar Savisaar, Enn Tarto and Heinz Valk. The enormous size and dark tones of the photos emphasize the historical significance of the event. The series comes across as a monument to something that has been accomplished and a moment that has passed. By the time the portraits were created, a number of those portrayed had left politics; their involvement refers to a wider presence: to the fact that the state of affairs in 2007 had not come overnight, and that the people portrayed had all contributed to this development.

On the previous page from the top left clockwise:
Enn Tarto, Edgar Savisaar, Mart Laar, Ignar Fjuk.

On the next page from the top left clockwise:
Lagle Parek, Liia Hänni, Marju Lauristin.
HAJNAL NÉMETH

Lives and works in Berlin.

Hajnal Németh works in video, photography, concert performance and installation, often using different layers of sensory experiences, in particular sound and music. Her main point of reference in her work is her native Hungary, as well as her fascination with memory, chance and human experience. ¶

The artist has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions at prestigious art institutions in Europe, America and Asia, including MUMOK, Vienna; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; The Kitchen, New York; Renaissance Society, Chicago; Tate Modern, London; Art Museum, Singapore; Ludwig-Museum, Budapest; TENT, Rotterdam; Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; Kunsthalle, Budapest; Zamek Ujazdowski, Warsaw; Comunidad de Madrid; 2nd Berlin Biennale, KW Berlin; Casino Luxembourg; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Musée d’Art moderne de Saint-Etienne; Picasso Museum, Barcelona; Palais de Tokyo, Paris. She was representing Hungary at the Venice Biennale 2011.


False Testimony

2013, an installation consisting of:

**False Testimony (Version 3)**
2013, Operatic Short Film, Full HD, Stereo, 17’

**Reduction**
2012, Sheet Music Installation, 11 transcriptions of the original testimony of Móric Scharf given before the court in 1883.

**Loud Place**
2012, Photo Series, 40 x 80 cm

The subject of *False Testimony* is the Tiszaeszlár Trial of 1883. Following the disappearance of a 14-year-old girl, Eszter Solymosi, on April 1, 1882, in the Hungarian village of Tiszaeszlár, local rumors and suspicions of Jewish ritual murder led to a high-profile murder case in the summer of 1883. Relying heavily on forensic medicine, the prosecution’s case was not proved against the 14 male Jewish defendants, who were proclaimed not guilty on August 3. The trial was closely interwoven with the birth of modern anti-Semitism in Hungary; shortly after the verdict and a spite of anti-Semitic riots around the country, Hungary’s first National Antisemitic Party (1883–1892) was formed. “Tiszaeszlár” later became an important element in the radical Right’s historical narrative and subsequent constructions of national martyrology. The series of photographs entitled *Loud Place* documents the contemporary right-wing cult of Eszter Solymosi and the grave erected in her honor in 1994.

The video *False Testimony (version 3)*, works with the transcript of Miklós Erdély’s classic 1981 film *Verzió*. The film by Erdély refers to the Tiszaeszlár case, especially the inculcation of the testimony upon the 14-year-old crown witness Móric Scharf. The boy stated that the Jews killed the girl in order to use her blood at the approaching Passover. The lyrics for the songs in the choral performance are based on rephrased fragments of the film’s dialogues, the structure follows the method of secret inculcation and forced learning: mastering the false testimony, the validation of a lie on the level of testimony, the course of the fictitious conception through the psyche, its registration by external and internal forces, its development into conviction and its ultimate and fatal proclamation.
ILONA NÉMETH

Born 1963 in Dunajská Streda.
Lives and works in Bratislava.

Ilona Németh is an artist, organiser and curator based in Slovakia and Hungary. She is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, part of the leading Studio IN and the International education programme Open Studio at the Department of Intermedia. ¶ While in the nineties her installations concentrated mostly on body politics, women’s condition and collective memory, by the early 2000s her work began to shift towards public art and socially engaged work. The question of identity, the relationship between private history, politics and ideology, issues of the public sphere within a contextual approach are the main characteristics of her art. ¶ In 2001 Ilona Németh exhibited Invitation for a Visit in the Pavilion of the Czech and Slovak Republic at the Venice Biennial (with Jiří Surůvka) and she participated in editions of Prague Biennale (2005, 2007, 2011).


Ilona Németh’s interview with the Marxist philosopher Ágnes Heller (b. 1929) is a documentary video named after Heller’s grandmother, Zsófia Meller, who at the end of the nineteenth century had enrolled as the very first female student at the University in Vienna.

Heller tells: “I’ve chosen women from my family, who grew out of the limitations of the so called ‘female role.’ My mother did not grow beyond women’s roles, only women who became intellectuals achieved this.” A moment later, surprisingly for a serious thinker of her generation, she issues this personal statement “I never wanted to be beautiful. But I always wanted to be smart.” Commenting on the achievements of the women intellectuals in her Jewish family with whom she shares a passion for knowledge, she states: “Simply said this is not about education, this is about freedom. I think that a prerequisite for a truly significant cultural achievement is personal freedom.”

This work should have been a key piece in the Németh retrospective to be held in a major museum in Budapest in 2011. However, at that time, Heller, a Marxist and a Jew, was compromised as she found herself in the focus of politically motivated campaign of discrediting in Hungary. In such a hysterical cultural climate, Ilona Németh decided to cancel her retrospective exhibition. Her reasons for such a decision are explained in her video interview, “Endnote (2011),” also shown in this exhibition.

*Endnote

2011, Video, 30’
In cooperation with Endre Koronczi

*Endnote is a fine piece of institutional critique presented in a form of an interview. This conversation between the artist and Endre Koronczi belongs to her larger project from 2011 entitled Dilemma. The boiling point was reached when the artist had to face a dilemma of either accepting to have her retrospective in a state-run museum without reflecting on the ongoing external issues (such as the public lynching Ágnes Heller was exposed to at that time); or reacting to them in some way, decisively changing the exhibition itself. The answer to this dilemma was putting a completely new strategy in place – instead of the exhibition, instead of the vernissage, the artist confined the visitors to the museum’s lobby: there, she presented two videos, one of which was “Endnote,” in which she reflects on the situation and talks about the professional and personal dilemma concerning the canceling of her exhibition (which was later shown in Slovakia and the Czech Republic).

Zsófia Meller

2012, Video, 10’ 30’’

Ilona Németh’s interview with the Marxist philosopher Ágnes Heller (b. 1929) is a documentary video named after Heller’s grandmother, Zsófia Meller, who at the end of the nineteenth century had enrolled as the very first female student at the University in Vienna. Heller tells: “I’ve chosen women from my family, who grew out of the limitations of the so called ‘female role.’ My mother did not grow beyond women’s roles, only women who became intellectuals achieved this.” A moment later, surprisingly for a serious thinker of her generation, she issues this personal statement “I never wanted to be beautiful. But I always wanted to be smart.” Commenting on the achievements of the women intellectuals in her Jewish family with whom she shares a passion for knowledge, she states: “Simply said this is not about education, this is about freedom. I think that a prerequisite for a truly significant cultural achievement is personal freedom.”

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NGUYEN TRINH THI


Nguyen Trinh Thi is a Hanoi-based independent filmmaker and video/media artist. Her diverse practice has consistently investigated the role of memory in the necessary unveiling of hidden, displaced or misinterpreted histories and examined the position of artists in the Vietnamese society. Nguyen studied journalism, photography, international relations and ethnographic film in the United States. Her films and video art works have been shown at festivals and art exhibitions including Jeu de Paume, Paris; CAPC musée d’art contemporain de Bordeaux; the Lyon Biennale 2015; Asian Art Biennial 2015, Taiwan; Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale 2014; and Singapore Biennale 2013. Nguyen is founder and director of Hanoi DOCLAB, an independent centre for documentary film and the moving image art in Hanoi since 2009. She’s also a member of NhaSan Collective, the longest-running alternative art space in Hanoi.

**SELECTED EXHIBITIONS**

**Eleven Men**

2016, Single Channel Installation, 28’

*Eleven Men* is composed of scenes collaged from a range of Vietnamese classic narrative films featuring the same central actress, Nhu Quynh. Spanning three decades of her legendary acting career, most of the appropriated movies — from 1966 to 2000 — were produced by the state-owned Vietnam Feature Film Studio. The film’s text was adapted from “Eleven Sons”, a short story by Franz Kafka, first published in 1919, which begins with a father’s declaration: “I have eleven sons”, then describes each one of them in acute and ironic detail. Transposing the father’s voice of Kafka’s story, the film begins with a woman stating: “I have eleven men”.

**Song to the Front**

2011, Video (b / w), 5’ 23”

*Song to the Front* abstracts a feature-length 1970s Vietnamese war propaganda film and its aesthetic and political elements into a 5-minute vignette. Set to Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, which represented a sacred pagan ritual in pre-Christian Russia where a young girl dances herself to death to propitiate the god of Spring, *Song to the Front* deconstructs the melodramatic and romanticized elements of the original social-realist drama. Playing with the original plot line in an ambiguous manner, the artist creates an imaginative space for the viewer to reinterpret what were intended to be very literal epics that enforced an ideological view, transforming a gritty war film to a romanticized drama of love.
SASHA PIROGOVA

Born 1986 in Moscow, USSR.
Lives and works in Moscow.

Pirogova is a performance and video artist, for her the two disciplines are inter-connected. The people in Pirogova’s work adapt automatically to the mechanics of their physical environments, relinquishing their autonomy to the rhythm and structure of the work. Her video-performance BIBLIMLEN (2013) is a behind-the-scenes look at Moscow’s Russian State Library (the former Lenin Library), in which the interior architecture of the building becomes an active co-author of the piece. An earlier video-performance, QUEUE (2011), based on Vladimir Sorokin’s novel of the same name (1983), is a nervous but ‘bizarrely funny saga of a quintessential Russian institution, the interminably long line’ (NYT, 2011). Creating an absurdist choreography of hysterics, dependence and clanship, Pirogova takes pains to replay the text through dance to identify the queue as not a physical but a psycho-social contemporary condition.

After graduating from the Physics Department at Moscow State University in 2010, she received a degree in 2014 from the Rodchenko Art School in Video and New Media in Moscow. She has been awarded prizes at the Extra Short Film Festival, ESF (2012) as well as the Innovation Prize in the ‘New Generation’ category (2014). She has participated in various exhibitions, such as Burning News, Hayward Gallery, London (2014), I saw lightning, Udarnik, Moscow (2014) and in the Manifesta 10, parallel program, St. Petersburg (2014). Working with performance, she has also participated in different festivals, including: the 6th International Festival of Video, Performance and Technology, Lisbon (2014), VIII Andrei Tarkovsky International Film Festival, Ivanovo (2014), Cinedans Dance on Screen Festival, Amsterdam (2014) and Now & After International Video Art Festival, The State Museum of GULAG, Moscow (2014).

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 Balagan!!!, Kühhaus, Berlin, Germany • 2015 Something’s Brewing, Brewhouse Project, Moscow, Russia • 2015 Everyday Life Psychedelia, ISSMAG / NIIDAR, Moscow, Russia • 2014 Burning News, Hayward Gallery, London, UK • 2014 Quest for Silence, Povarskaya str. 20-17, Moscow, Russia • 2014 Inventing Everyday Life, Manifesta 10 parallel program, St. Petersburg, Russia • 2014 I Saw Lightening, Udarnik, Moscow, Russia • 2014 Landscapes, Electrozavod Gallery, Moscow, Russia • 2014 Innovation Prize Exhibition, TSUM Art Foundation, Moscow, Russia • 2014 Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia • 2013 Indoor Temperature (within the frameworks of Boris Mikhailov’s retrospective Unrespectable), Kharkov Municipal Gallery, Kharkov, Ukraine • 2013 Kandinsky Prize Exhibition, Udarnik, Moscow, Russia • 2013 Russian-Netherlandish One Minute Film Programme 24 RU / NL, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia • 2012 LaboratorWork, Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia, Moscow, Russia • 2012 Transition, Moscow Subway, Russia • 2012 ProSVET, Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia, Moscow, Russia • 2011 Insight&Forsight, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia.

Motherland

2016, Video / Performance, 9’

“Being a hero often refers to the past and is usually condensed in the granite memory of statues — but it’s also the most important quality for the present, the present of Motherland. In the video performance Motherland, the performer tries to adopt the details, poses, gestures, and materiality of the monument — trying through physical appropriation to learn heroism, strength or how to weep the future with honor. The looped video refers to an infinite number of such attempts.” [Sasha Pirogova]

In this video-performance, Pirogova works in a very special location: the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin’s Treptow Park, which was completed in 1949. Designed by the Soviet sculptor Yevgeny Viktorovich Vuchetich, the sculptural ensembles and friezes arrayed throughout the memorial park strictly follow the conventions of Socialist Realism. Pirogova works with the statue of the Motherland, which is here represented as a mourning woman, weeping over her (Soviet) sons fallen in WWII. As in memorial statuary in general, this representation of nationalized motherhood remind us of female – mother’s – sacrifice: indeed after any war, women were usually compelled to mourning and melancholy.
SELMA SELMAN

Born 1991 in Bihać, Bosnia & Herzegovina. Lives and works in the USA and Europe.

Selma Selman is an artist of Romani origins. Her work is representative of her life struggles and the struggles of her community. Selman utilizes a multiplicity of art mediums, ranging from performance, painting, and photography to video installations, in order to express herself as an individual, a woman, and an artist. Her work, though personal, is also political. Selman defines herself as an artist of Roma origins, and not a Romani artist. The difference is subtle, but critical: through her work, Selman seeks to speak to the universal human condition, utilizing her background as a lens through which she can understand the entirety of the human experience. In her work, she wishes to break down prejudices that stereotype her community as a collective, robbing members of their right to individual expression. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2014 from Banja Luka University’s Department of Painting, where she studied under the supervision of Veso Sovilj, and worked with renowned Bosnian performance artist Mladen Miljanović, who represented Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 55th Venice Biennial in 2013. Selman participated in Tania Brugera’s International Summer Academy in Salzburg, Arte Utile (Useful Arts) in 2013. She was a fellow for the Roma Graduate Preparation Program at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary the following year. That year, Selman was also the recipient of the prestigious “Zvono Award”, given to the best young artist in Bosnia and Herzegovina, winning her a residency in New York City. Her work has been shown at numerous international festivals and exhibitions, including the Luxembourg City Film Festival, Sarajevo’s PichWise Festival, Slam Fest in Osijek, the Summer Academy is Salzburg, BL-art festival in Banja Luka, and the Perforation Festival: A Week of Live Art in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Thus far, she has had several solo exhibitions, with Me postojisarav – Postojim – I exist being her first solo show in the United States, exhibited at Dreamland Gallery. She is currently pursuing her MFA at Syracuse University, where she also works as a teaching assistant.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2016 I Exist, Gallery Dreamland, Buffalo, New York, USA • 2015 You Have No Idea, Gallery Epeka, Maribor, Slovenia • 2013 Poetics of the Soul, Gallery Udas, Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzegovina • 2013 Love is the Most Beautiful When You Are Waiting for It, Gallery San Fedele, Milan, Italy • 2009 First Solo Exhibition, Gallery Una, Bihac, Bosnia & Herzegovina.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2016 Conquer the Beauty, New Children Gallery, New Orleans, USA • 2016 Bakro, Fullersta Gård, Stockholm, Sweden • 2015 Biennial of Contemporary Art D-O ARK, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina • 2015 ZVONO Exhibition of the finalists and winner at gallery Duplex, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina • 2014 Apartman, Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzegovina • 2014 Calling Cards, Gallery 8, Budapest, Hungary • 2014 We Want You, The 10th Berlin International Directors Lounge, Berlin, Germany • 2014 Minimum / Maximum 3, International group exhibition of miniatures, Banja Luka, BiH • 2013 Asymmetrical Me, group exhibition of intermedia arts, Trebinje, BiH; Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia.
Saltwater (at 47)
2015, Video, 5’ 45”

The video Salt Water (at 47) is about my mother and her first contact with the sea. Her big wish was always to see for herself if it is really salty, like she heard it was. In this video, I captured that first moment and her reaction. The phrase ‘at 47’ refers to her lack of documents when she came from Kosovo to Bosnia. Culturally, the act of a woman leaving her paternal home to live with her ‘husband’ is perceived as a marriage, whether or not it is officially recognized by the state or religious authorities. At that time in particular, there was no concept of simply ‘living together’. Hence, at thirteen, she was unofficially married to my then seventeen-year-old father, but the marriage was not state-certified. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, she was left stateless. In 2014, after many discussions with authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, she managed to obtain Bosnian citizenship. After 47 years, she received her first passport. I decided to make her wish come true. I took her on a vacation to the sea. [Selma Selman]

You Have No Idea / Vi Nemate Pojma
2016, Live Performance at HERO MOTHER Finissage, Duration Variable

“You Have No Idea / Vi Nemate Pojma” is a live piece that is to be performed, where I continually repeat the phrase, “you have no idea”. This performance is a very intimate one. It is my frustration brought to life. You have no idea – you have no idea about my life as a whole. You do not who I am, nor do you know my happiness or sadness. You do not know about the presence or absence of pain in my life, nor how I feel at the moment that I perform this piece to a live audience. You have no idea. Though this piece refers to the specific circumstances of my life, I believe that it carries a universal message. We have no idea about the struggles that others are facing. We have no idea, but we think that we do.

Do Not Look into Gypsy Eyes
2014, Video, 5’ 04”

“Do not look into Gypsy eyes” is a mantra of the hyper-sexualized “Roma” woman. A Roma woman is exotic, erotic and exciting. On the same token she is a bit too dangerous, a bit too ‘dirty’, a bit too desirable – a woman whose eyes will seduce you, put a spell on you, and curse you. This work is based on the stereotypes and prejudices about the Romani woman. As a member of this community, as a woman and artist, I want to provoke the audience to attention against discrimination and the commodification of the female body. [Selma Selman]
MILICA TOMIĆ

Born 1960 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
Lives and works Belgrade.

Milica Tomić is a conceptual artist, researching, unearthing and bringing to the public sphere the issues related to the economy, political violence, war, trauma and social amnesia - with particular attention to the 'short circuit' between intimacy and politics. As a response to the commitment to social change and the new forms of collectivity it engenders, Milica Tomić has made a radical shift from individual to collective artistic practice. She is a founding member of the new Yugoslav art / theory group, Grupa Spomenik [Monument Group] (2002), and founder of the project Four Faces of Omarska (2010). As a response to the commitment to social change and the new forms of collectivity it engenders, Milica Tomić has made a radical shift from individual to collective artistic practice. She is a founding member of the new Yugoslav art / theory group, Grupa Spomenik [Monument Group] (2002), and founder of the project Four Faces of Omarska (2010). ¶ Milica Tomić is professor and head of the Institute of Contemporary Art at the TU Graz and professor at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art / NTNU in Norway (2014 / 15).

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2010 Milica Tomić, Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, Serbia • 2010 Safety on the Road, Charim Gallery, Vienna, Austria • 2007 Politics of Memory, Stacion – Center for Contemporary Art, Prishtina, Kosovo • 2007 Reading Capital, Gallery FAFA, Helsinki, Finland • 2006 Alone / Reading Capital, Artspace, Sydney, Australia • 2005 Reading Capital, Charim Galerie, Wien, Austria • 2005 Milica Tomić, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, Australia • 2005 Reading Capital, Galerie Fortlaan 17, Gent, Belgium • 2004 Reading Capital, ArtPace, San Antonio, USA • 2003 Yugoslavia, Charim Galerie, Wien, Österreich, Austria.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 Kiev Biennial, Kiev, Ukraine • 2014 After Year Zero / Forensis, HKW Berlin, Germany • 2013 Odessa Biennal, Odessa, Ukraine • 201110th Sharjah Biennal, United Arab Emirates • 2010 Manufacturing Today, Trondheim Biennale, Trondheim, Norway • 2006 15th Sydney Biennale, Sydney, Australia • 2005 Populism, National Museum of Art, Oslo, Norway; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany • 2003 8th Istanbul Biennal, Istanbul, Turkey • 2003 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy • 2001 49th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy • 1998 24th Sao Paulo Biennale, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
One Day, Instead of One Night, a Burst of Machine-Gun Fire Will Flash, If Light Cannot Come Otherwise (Oskar Daviço – Fragment of a Poem)

2009, Video, 10’

The video documents actions Tomić carried out in her hometown, Belgrade, between September and October 2009. Walking around the city carrying a plastic shopping bag in her left hand, and a Kalashnikov in the right one, she revisited forgotten sites in Belgrade where successful antifascist actions took place during World War II. Not once was she approached, or stopped, by the passersby. (Would it be different if the Kalashnikov were not carried by a tall blond woman, but carried by, let’s say, a bearded man with a dark complexion?)

The passion and civic dedication of those still living protagonists of WWI actions are expressed in the audio interviews playing in the background of the video. They are denied and forgotten today but they form a striking contrast to the general lethargy and disinterest of the present. The title of this work is borrowed from a poem by Serbian and Yugoslav novelist and poet of Jewish origin, Oskar Daviço (1909-1989), who spent first two years of WWI in an Italian prison as an antifascist, and then joined the Yugoslav partisan army in 1943.
ANNA-STINA TREUMUND

Lives and works in Tallinn.

Anna-Stina Treumund is a queer and feminist artist from Estonia. Since 2006 her art has been focused on giving visibility to the local queer community that has been hidden and coated by homophobia and misogyny supported by the media and politicians, due to ignorance and the Soviet past. As one of the first self-identified lesbian artists in the country, Treumund has been committed to deconstructing stereotypes of lesbian women in contemporary Eastern European society.

Treumund started her PhD studies where she is deconstructing the heteronormative culture through remakes of art works. Recently she has been using the materials and language of the BDSM culture because of its gender, race, sexuality and class deconstructions.

Treumund started a feminist culture festival LadyFest Tallinn in 2011.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 / 12 Skin, a poster project in Tartu, Estonia • 2015 / 10 Dread, Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia • 2015 / 06 Well then, Jane, call to aid your fancy: suppose you were no longer a girl well reared and disciplined, but a wild boy indulged from childhood upwards,.., Måndagsklubben, Helsinki, Finland • 2013 / 09 Well then, Jane, call to aid your fancy: suppose you were no longer a girl well reared and disciplined, but a wild boy indulged from childhood upwards,.., Town Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia • 2012 / 10 Lilli, Reed, Frieda, Sabine, Eha, Malle, Alfred, Rein and Mari, Draakon, Tallinn & in Tartu Art House, Tartu, Estonia • 2010 / 10 You, Me and Everyone We Don’t Know, Y-Gallery, Tartu, Estonia • 2010 / 09 Woman In The Corner Of Mutsu’s Drawings, Artishok Biennial II, Tartu, Estonia • 2010 / 03 You, Me and Everyone We Don’t Know, Tallinn Art Hall Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia.


Mothers

2011, Video, 12’ 55”

Mothers is a documentary work and focuses on the legal and everyday problems of lesbian parents in Estonia. In recent years, several heated media debates have occurred in Estonia on the topic of sexual minorities, mostly centered on the drafting of the same-sex partnership law. The right of same-sex couples to family life became topical in 2009, when the Viimsi Rural Municipality Government changed the procedure for paying social benefits, in order to deprive the children of a lesbian couple of the travel and food benefits provided by the local government. In such fundamental disputes about the concept of family, people often forget that families different from hetero-normative social conventions exist, despite the pro and contra arguments that are presented in the media; that children often live in these families, who, along with their parents, are legally more vulnerable than traditional hetero families.
MARIANA VASSILEVA

Born 1964 in Bulgaria.
Lives and works in Berlin.

Vassileva’s work looks at how boundaries are tacitly implied. She is interested mainly in experiencing ‘the boundary’, the fine line between the known and unknown, the accepted and unaccepted, in a manner that is resonant with a sense of balance. It comes back to her own personal experiences and her movement between places, leaving the communist regime and her beloved family in Bulgaria behind. ¶ Vassileva’s home was and is always Bulgaria, in the northern part of the country where her mother still lives. From this perspective, her work has always reflected another world, a world outside or beyond where she is. This sense of otherness inspires Vassileva, introducing an autobiographical and biographical approach, between the self and the other, between personal and social needs, between needs and dreams, are recurrent themes spreading throughout her work. ¶ Marianna Vassileva moved to Berlin in 1989. She has studied pedagogy and psychology at Veliko Turnovo University. After this, she wanted to study art in the Academy of Art in Sofia, but instead worked as one of the artist-professors. She first went to Leipzig to study theatre and to prepare herself for art school, where two years later, she was accepted into the Universität der Künste in Berlin. After her studies, she worked for about three years in scenography for a film company, drawing large-format mountain and cityscapes for film backdrops. Then, by virtue of some sales of her early work, Vassileva was able to devote herself to being an artist full-time.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2015

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS >> 2015
Remember Lidice, Edition Block, Berlin, Germany • 2014 Busan Biennale 2014, Inhabiting the World, The Busan Biennale, Busan, South Korea • 2014 Human Landscape, Dominik Mersche Gallery, Sydney, Australia • 2013 I see you, Kunsthalle Detroit, Detroit, USA • 2013 Painting and Contemporary Media, Paco das Artes, Sao Paulo, Brazil • 2012 Hors-pistes 2012, un autre mouvement des images, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France • 2011 4th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (MNAC), Moscow, Russia • 2010 August in Art Biennial Varna 2010, Varna, Bulgaria • 2010 17th Biennale of Sydney; The Beauty of Distance. Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age, Sydney, Australia • 2007 BAC!07, Barcelona International Contemporary Art Festival, Barcelona, Spain
Flying and Other Daily Necessities

2016, Artificial Materials, 600 x 120 x 120 cm

The artist transforms still life and movement through visual representation into new energetic harmony. She is not interested in the physical act of the movement, but in the mental process behind it. In a minimal way, she transforms objects, situations and manners, and presents them in another reference on a lyrical level. The spectator begins to appreciate the work through the emotional movement into a strangely represented world. In this process, one is animated toward a heightened sensibility of daily variations. Flying and Other Daily Necessities presents the ambiguous condition of freedom and bondage, loneliness and connection.

The Gentle Brutality of Simultaneity

Photography (C print), 50 x 35 cm

Mariana Vassileva creates works that deal with different aspects of everyday life. She works across both sculpture and digital media to present subtle meditations on seemingly insignificant daily activities. Her art, based on observation, often reflects on idyllic and poetic imagery and yet, through the comparison of seemingly still and subtly moving elements, an uncanny tension is created. This pathological restlessness embodies Vassileva’s central themes – that is, the search for selfhood, interpersonal relationships, repression, freedom and escape. [David Elliott]

The Gentle Brutality of Simultaneity is an artwork made from a historical document of selfhood – a photograph of a young Vassileva, machine gun in hand, on a firing range. Membership in the Young Pioneers was mandatory for all good Communists, not only in the artist’s country of birth Bulgaria, but throughout the Eastern Bloc. The artist, smiling in the photograph as a champion marksman, now looks back ironically upon her participation in this socialist model on the Western Boy Scouts.
ANASTASIA VEPREVA

Born 1989 in Archangelsk, USSR.
Lives and works in St. Petersburg.

Anastasia Vepreva is an artist and curator. She has received a double MA from Smolny College, SPBU, St. Petersburg and Bard College, NY, USA. She later graduated from The School of Engaged Art as part of the group “Что Делать”. Vepreva is a historian by training, focusing on the analysis of discourse of historical memory i.e., Memory Studies. She works in a number of mediums: photography, performance, collage, drawing and text. Along with her fascination with memory, Vepreva’s work explores systems of oppression and the idea of death. In her earlier works Vepreva took a satirical approach to the institutional sexism within Russian media, coating her works with a layer of black humour. She has been published in the Art Leaks Gazette and is the co-curator of Lucy Lippard’s feminist workshop.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS >> 2015 She Was Lost / Lost machine. Special project START of Winzavod Contemporary Art Center. Moscow, Russia • 2014 Ioss själva, Konstmuseum. Skövde, Sweden • 2014 Wadded White, Bobby Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia.

She Has To

2013, Video, 4’49”

Many women in Russia believe that they already have enough rights and freedoms, so they don’t understand why and what feminists struggle against. They don’t realize that they are in the centre of a media storm, a huge chthonic monster that tries to enforce its cruel rules everywhere. But if you divert your attention away from it just for a second, you’ll realize its horrible absurdity, and you’ll never remain the same as before. And you’ll understand the main thing that you don’t have to do anything to anybody. [Anastasia Vepreva]

She Has To is a mirror held up to contemporary Russian culture – a video work made of found footage of a Russian talk show in which younger women ask their elders for advice about how to save their marriages.
MARINA ABRAMOVIC
1° The Home, 2001
Single Channel Installation, 14’ 22’’
Courtesy of the Marina Abramovic Archives and LIMA

MAJA BAZEVIĆ
2° Women at Work —
Washing Up, 2001
Five-day Performance / Video 18’ 09’’
Originally performed at the Cemertbath house, 7th
Istanbul Bienale, Istanbul, Turkey.
Photo Credit: Emmanuel Liché
—
3° How Do You Want To Be Governed? 2009 (After Rasa
Todasijevic 'Was Ist Kunst?', 1976)

YAELE BARTANA
4° Jewish Revivalism Movement in
Poland (JRMiP), 2010
Poster 84.1 x 59.4 cm
Video 1 h 46
Courtesy The Artist

MARINA BELIKOVA
5° The Lines, 2013 – 2015
Photographs and Text
44 x 28 cm
Courtesy The Artist

TANIA BRUGUERA
6° Migrant Manifesto
Immigrant Movement
International, 2011
Text Piece
Courtesy The Artist

ANETTA KONA CHIŠA & LUCIA TAKAČOVÁ
7° Manifesto of Futurist Woman
(Let’s Conclude), 2008
Video, 11’ 13’’
Produced by Neuer Berliner Kunstverein
Courtesy of Galerie Christine
König Vienna.
Photo credit: Anetta Mona Chuşa
—
8° Try Again. Fail Again.
Fall Better, 2011
Video, 7’ 57’’
Courtesy of the Artists and Galerie Cris-
time König Vienna.

DANICA DAKIĆ
9° Jelica Dakić by Danica Dakić, 2012
Photography / Text
68 x 49.5 cm
Copyright © VG Bild-Kunst Bonn

NEZAKET EKICI
10° Disguise, 2013
Video / Performance
9’ 56’’
Camera and Editing: Branka Pavlovic
—
11° On the Way Safety and Luck, 2016
Video / Performance, 34’ 18’’
Previously presented at: Festiva-
Künstlerinnenverband Bremen, 7. Bremer Kunst
mühs, Göttingen 21.5.2011. Thesi-
salonik Performance Festival, Parallel
Programme of the 3th Thesalonik Bien-
Photo Credit: Petra Fantozzi

ELSE (TWAIN) GABRIEL
12° Billiet Parnass, 1999 / 2000
Video, 22’ 59’’
—
13° Juggling Muslina, 2004 / 2005
Photo / Video Performance
Series of 7 photos
120 x 98 cm (1)
48.5 x 30 cm (6)
Camera Wiebke Loeper
—
14° Kind als Pinsel, 2007
Video / Performance, 6’ 14’’

FANG LU
15° Sea of Silence, 2015
Video, 29’
Courtesy The Artist

STEPHANIE GROMES & KATRIN HAFEMANN
16° 7 Tage...FEMEN, 2015
NDR, Documentaty, 30’
Author, Camera, Editing: Katrin Hafemann
Author, Presenter, Editing: Stephanie Gromes

GLUKLYA (NATALLIA PERSHINSKA –
YAKIMANKASVAY)
17° Clothes for Decoration Against False Election Of Vladimir
Putin, 2011 – 2015
Installation (Textiles, Handwriting, Wood)
Realised by the support of VAC Foundation
Moscow for Venice Bienale 2015.
Courtesy the artist & AKINCI, Amsterdam.

SANJA IVEKOVIC
18° Our Beautiful, 1998
Video, 25’
—
19° Invisible Women of Solidarity (6 out
5 million), 2009
Screen Prints, 72 x 51.8 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and the Museum of
Modern Art in Warsaw
—
20° GEN XX, 1997 – 2001
6 photographic prints
100 x 70 cm
Courtesy The Artist

ELŽIETA JABLONSKA
21° Supermother, 2002
3 Photographs, 100 x 130 cm
Courtesy The Artist
Copyright © Elzbieta Jablonska

ZUZANNA JANIN
22° The End. Chapter. I
A Trip To Fear, 2013
Video, 25’ 10’’
Courtesy The Artist
—
23° Lost Butterfly, 2016
Video, 40’ 56’’
Courtesy The Artist

ADILA JUŠIĆ
24° The Sniper, 2007
Video, 4’ 09’’
Camera: Ervin Babic
Editing: Adila Jusici
Courtesy The Artist

ADRIA JUŠIĆ
25° The Sniper, 2007
Video, 4’ 09’’
Camera: Ervin Babic
Editing: Adila Jusici
Courtesy The Artist

ALENA KOVYLINA
26° Carriage, 2009
Video, 4’ 43’’
Odessa
—
27° New Woman, 2012
Video, 5’ 56’’

KATARZYNA KOZRY
28° Punishment and Crime, 2002
7 Channel Video Installation
(Colour)
1st channel (tablet) - 2’ 32’’
2nd channel - 1 h 59’ 34’’
3rd channel - 1 h 57’ 06’’
4th channel - 1 h 51’ 29’’
5th channel - 1 h 56’ 45’’
6th channel - 1 h 45’ 52’’
7th channel - 4’ 14’’
Audio, Language: Polish
Courtesy Kateryna Kozyr Foundation
and Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlin

ELONA NEMETH
33° *Endnote, 2011
In cooperation with Endre Korzenci
Video, 30’
Courtesy The Artist
—
34° *Zalffer, 2012
Video, 10’ 30’’
Special thanks to Agnes Heller

SASHA PIROGOVA
35° Motherland, 2016
Video / Performance, 9
Special commission by
MOMENTUM for HERO MOTHER

MILICA TOMIC
39° One Day, Instead of One Night,
A Burst of Machine-Gun Fire Will
Flash, If Light Cannot Come Other-
wise (Doktor Davlago – Fragment of a Poem), 2009
Video, 10’
Audio: interview with partisans, partici-
pants of NOB (On Love Afterwards, Milica
Tomic) 2003.
Participating: Šime Krna, Jelena Kadi-
enić, Redosin Rajović, Dimitrije Bajčić.
Camera: Staša Tomić
Editing: Vladimir Janković
Photo Credit: Sladjan Velagić
Thanks to: Rasmus S. Olsen, Goran,
Branimir Stojanović.
Dedicated to the members of the Anar-
cho-Syndicalist Initiative – Belgrade, 3
September, 2009.
Courtesy The Artist

ANNA-STINA TREUMUND
40° Mothers, 2011
Video, 12’ 55’’

NGUYEN TRINH THI
41° Song to the Front, 2011
Video (B/v), 5’ 23’’
—
42° Eleven Men, 2016
Single Channel Installation, 28’
Audio: Vietnamese with
English Subtitles.

MARIANA VASSILEVA
43° The Gentle Brutality of Simulta-
neity, 1981-2016
Photograph - C Print
50 x 35 cm
—
44° Flying and Other Daily Neces-
sities, 2016
Artificial Materials
600 x 120 x 120 cm

ANASTASIA VEPREVA
45° She Has To, 2013
Video, 4’ 49’’
BOJANA PEJIĆ
Curator

Bojana Pejić (born 1948 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia) is an art historian and curator, living in Berlin since 1991. Having studied History of Art at the Faculty of Philosophy in the University of Belgrade, from 1977 to 1991 she was curator at the Student Cultural Center of Belgrade University and organized many exhibitions of Yugoslav and international art. She started to write art criticism in 1971 and was editor of art theory journal “Moment, Belgrade” (1984 – 1991). She organized an international symposium “The Body in Communism” at the Literaturhaus in Berlin in 1995. She was Chief Curator of the exhibition After the Wall - Art and Culture in post-Communist Europe organized by David Elliott at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, (1999), which was also presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art – Foundation Ludwig, Budapest (2000), and at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2000-2001). She was one of the co-curators of the exhibition Aspects / Positions held in the Museum of Contemporary Art – Foundation Ludwig, Vienna in 1999. Between 2002 and 2004, she was one of the international advisers of the Contemporary Art Museum in Kumamoto (Japan) where she also curated a retrospective of Marina Abramović (2003), which also toured to Morigage (Japan). In 2003, she had the Rudolf Arnheim guest professorship at the Humboldt University in Berlin (history of art). She was adviser of the project De/Construction of Monument organized by the Center for Contemporary Art in Sarajevo where she also held seminars at the Academy of Fine Arts dedicated to the “Communist Body.” (2004-2005) In May 2005 she has defended her Ph.D. The Communist Body – An Archeology of Images: Politics of Representation and Spatialization of Power the SFR Yugoslavia (1945 – 1991). She was a Maria Goeppert-Mayer guest professor for International Research at the Institute for Cultural Studies at the University in Oldenburg (2006-2007). She was artistic director of the 49. October Salon in Belgrade, where she curated the international exhibition Artist-Citizen in 2008. Bojana Pejić was the chief curator of Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe (2009-2010) at MUMOK, Vienna and the Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw. She is also the editor of the “Gender Check Reader”. In 2013, she curated the international exhibition Good Girls, Memory, Desire, Power at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC) in Bucharest. Bojana Pejić occasionally teaches at the Bauhaus University in Weimar and works as an independent curator and writer.

DR. RACHEL RITS-VOLLOCH
Curator

Rachel Rits-Volloch (born 1973 in Riga, USSR) is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in Literature and holds an M.Phil and PhD from the University of Cambridge in Film Studies. She wrote her dissertation on visceral spectatorship in contemporary cinema, focusing on the biological basis of embodiment. Having worked as a university lecturer in film studies and visual culture, her focus moved to contemporary art after she undertook a residency at A.R.T Tokyo. Rachel Rits-Volloch founded MOMENTUM in 2010 in Sydney, Australia, as a parallel event to the 17th Biennale of Sydney. Since that time, MOMENTUM has evolved into a non-profit global platform for time-based art, with headquarters in Berlin at the thriving art center, Kunsthquartier Bethanien. MOMENTUM’s mission is to continuously reassess the growing diversity and relevance of time-based practices, with an aim to support artists and artistic innovation in Berlin and worldwide.

DAVID ELLIOTT
Curatorial Advisor

Prof. David Elliott is an English born curator and writer. From 1976 to 1996 he was Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, England, Director of Moderna Museet [The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art] in Stockholm, Sweden (1996–2001), founding Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo (2001-2006), the first Director of the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art [Istanbul Modern] (2007), Artistic Director of The Beauty of Distance. Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age, the 17th Biennale of Sydney (2008–2010); Artistic Director of The Best of Times, The Worst of Times, Rebirth and Apocalypse in Contemporary Art, the 1st International Kyiv Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011-12); Artistic Director of A Time for Dreams, the IV International Moscow Biennale of Young Art (2013-14). David Elliott was the Rudolf Arnheim Guest Professor in Art History at the Humboldt University, Berlin (2008) and has been a Visiting Professor in Museum Studies at the Chinese University in Hong Kong since 2008.

A specialist in Soviet and Russian avant-garde, as well as in modern and contemporary Asian art, he has published widely in these fields as well as on many other aspects of contemporary art. In 1996 he was co-curator of Kunst und Macht im Europa der Diktaturen 1930 bis 1945 at the Hayward Gallery, London and the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin and in 2000-2001 was Artistic Director of the exhibition After the Wall: Kunst und Kultur im postkommunistischen Europa at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Ludwig Museum, Budapest and Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. In 2011 he curated Between Heaven and Earth. Contemporary Art from the Centre of Asia at Calvert 22, London. In 2014, David Elliott also curated Fragments of Empires at MOMENTUM. In 2015 he was the Chief Curator of BALAGAN!!! Contemporary Art from the Former Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places, organized by MOMENTUM. And in 2016 he will curate The Pleasures of Love - the 56th October Salon in Belgrade.

OLGA WIEDEMANN
Production Manager

Olga Wiedemann is a Curator and Residency Coordinator at MOMENTUM. She is also the Production Manager for HERO MOTHER. She earned her BA in Art History, and BSc in International Business Administration at the University of Vienna (2008-2013). Subsequently she moved to London, where she earned a Master of Arts with Honours in Museum & Gallery Studies at Kingston University, London (2014). Her Master Thesis reflected on the materiality of photography in the museum context. She is multilingual in English, French, and her mother tongue German. Olga Wiedemann has lived and worked in Germany, Austria, Italy, and the UK. She is currently based in Berlin.

EMILIO RAPANÀ
Graphic Designer

Emilio Rapanà holds undergraduate and Masters degrees in Architecture from the Politecnico di Milano. After one year in the Erasmus program at the Faculty of Architecture, Oporto University (FAUP), Rapanà moved to Rio de Janeiro to continue his studies at the Federal University, Faculty of Civil Engineering (UFRJ). In Brasil, Rapanà worked at MPU, Metrópolis Projectos Urbânos, one of the leading architecture and urban design offices focusing on complex and multi-disciplinary development projects in Rio’s favelas. Rapanà earned his Masters degree in Milan in 2010 with a thesis titled “Project for the growth of a favela. A flexible housing unit in Cidade de Deus, Rio de Janeiro.” Rapanà has worked at MOMENTUM since early 2013, building up his position to Head of Operations & Design, and now as Associate Director. In this capacity he has overseen many international contemporary art projects, working closely with renowned artists, curators, galleries, museums and foundations. Emilio Rapanà lives and works in Berlin.
CONCLUDIAMO:
La donna, che colle sue lagrime e il suo sentimentalismo ritiene l'uomo ai suoi piedi, è inferiore alla prostituta che spinge il suo maschio per vanagloria a conservare col revolver in pugno la sua spavalda dominazione sui bassifondi della città. Questa femmina coltiva almeno una energia che potrebbe servire migliori cause.

DONNE, PER TROPPO TEMPO SVIATE FRA LE MORALI E I PREGIUDIZI, RITORNATE AL VOSTRO ISTINTO SUBLIME: ALLA VIOLENZA E ALLA CRUDELTÀ.
Per la fatale decima del sangue, mentre gli uomini guerreggiano e lottano, fate dei figli, e, tra essi, in olocausto all'Eroismo, fate la parte del Destino.
Non li allevate per voi, cioè per la loro diminuzione, bensì in una larga libertà, per uno sviluppo completo. Invece di ridurre l'uomo alla servitù degli esecrabili bisogni sentimentalì, spingete i vostri figliuoli e i vostri uomini a superarsi. Siete voi che li fate. Voi avete su loro ogni potere.

VALENTINE DE SAINT-POINT
MANIFESTO DELLA DONNA FUTURISTA*
25 MARZO 1912
[EXTRACT]

*Base for the work Manifesto of Futurist Woman (Let’s Conclude) by Anetta Mona Chișa & Lucia Tkáčová, referred to page 80 of this catalogue.