

# FemRealism

YANKA SMETANINA



GRAPHIC

INSTALLATION

OBJECT

PERFORMANCE



We stand for everyone who are excluded.

We rehabilitate what was discriminated.

The old world has collapsed.

Critical Realism was discredited by his Socialist Brother, who is only concerned with the reproduction of utopian illusions.

And the Avant-garde, the father of Socialist Realism, provided him with the possibility of using any kind of language for his own purposes.

Neomodernism, in his attempt to catch up with the form, ended up with lack of ideas and became commercialized.

Their younger brother, Political Activism, abuses art as a media for political propaganda. He claims to be art but, in fact, he merely appropriates visual languages to push his own agenda. He is focused on efficiency and denies the potential of artistic expression.

Art became excluded (marginalized), alienated from shes own family. Painting is again in coma, and Graphics is forced to become a prostitute.

We are proclaiming a new era, an era of **Feminist Realism**, that replaces patriarchy and hierarchy. We turn to all kinds of issues that people prefer to be silent about. We stand for those forgotten, not accepted, hated, voiceless and marginal.

**FemRealism** is the only method that works directly with reality tracing the actuality in an individualist manner.

We stand for freedom of choice: every style is justified, as long as it corresponds with artistic tasks and feminist values.

Glory to feminist reality! Long live sister-Realism!

*Ilmira Bolotyan, Yana Smetanina, Berlin, 2015*



I work with social issues and adhere to the principle of maximum linkage to personal experience and involvement in the topic. I am interested in the idea of social responsibility of art. To me, the sincerity of the statement and the viewer's involvement are important. Therefore, my projects are often participative.

I think, that art should evoke emotions. Emotions make you think. The artist, who first of all tries to convey his feelings to his art, understands (surely he should), what will follow his statement, gesture, action and what the reaction will be. Will you make someone smile, or squeeze their fists or become angry? It is very important.

To me, feminism is the search for unreachable freedom, one of the ways. This is the ability of speech, dialogue and the rejection of the imposed muteness. My heroines are very often deprived of even this right.

In my works, I pay great attention to the texts. These are thoughts or words that I would like to say, but were not said, what was thought about at the moment or was experienced a long time ago, notes on napkins, sms. They may be associated with an image or not. In any case, this, as the fixation of a moment that cannot be denoted, is the starting point for the next stage of life.

My art is stories. My stories, the stories of people with whom I am familiar or unfamiliar, my son. Stories that can cause empathy, which make it possible to feel another person and his world, can turn the mind and make the world at least a little kinder.



**PERFORMANCE**



WE WON! 2017. Performance  
Reperformance Liz Magic Leaser **Stand Behind Me.** 2013

**Materials**

Speakers, projector, camera, computer

**Concept**

Putin served as president for two terms from 2000 to 2008, and in 2008-2012 he was a prime minister.

Currently V.V. Putin has been president since May 07, 2012, his term ends in 2018.

In anticipation of the new presidential elections, we held our breath hopelessly. I want to remind the president of the oath and his inaugural speeches for each presidential term, so that people can remember all these promises. One can trace how Putin's demeanor is changing from speech to speech.

**Act**

I stand with my back to the audience and repeat the mimicry and gestures of the president. There is a projection on the wall, where «we» is in the frame: the President and those who supported him. The text runs parallel on the wall next to the video preform.

**Duration**

30 minutes.



MOKSHA. 2017. Performance

**Materials**

Stand for mounting rubber bands

**Concept**

**Moksha** (Skt. «Liberation») in Hinduism and Jainism is the liberation from the cycle of birth and death and all suffering and limitations of material existence.

Last year was very difficult for me. My matured son moved out and it was very difficult to decide to let him go. And I got my travel documents for leaving the country. I did not want either one of these things. But it was a informed decision and, I believe, a way out of this situation.

I hesitated a lot. I heard condemnation. And I couldn't say 100% that I was sure that I was doing the right thing and I would not regret this. But the decision was made. I went to different places dear to my heart, to a few friends and took photos of them as a souvenir. I took pictures of my son and even took pictures of his childhood pictures.

I will try to break away from what is dear to me. To give freedom and get freedom.

**Act**

I go out and attach photos to the stand along with rubber bands. Then I try to break away from my attachments.

**Duration**

30 minutes



INTIMATE DIARY. 2017. Performance

**Materials**

Podium, light

**Concept**

I collected an archive of all my «flaws», all critical comments and wrote them on my body. Documented. I highlighted all the scars that I had previously only hidden. Acceptance of my body, my appearance, age changes do not allow me to break under countless criticism. Some parts of the body are named twice exactly the opposite, representing double standards.

**Act**

I stand on the podium illuminated. Viewers can walk around me and read all the inscriptions.

**Duration** 1-2 hours

**Inscriptions**

bags under eyes and wrinkles  
yellow colored skin and eyes  
unkempt eyebrows, to time and why  
frown lines terribly spoil the whole face  
farm nose  
thin lips  
loose saggy neck  
rough skin  
huge pores  
one lonely hair, my grandmother had the same one  
gray hair  
sectioned eyebrow  
fist scar  
scar and a little bald spot since childhood  
pale hair sponge  
scar almost like a tattoo  
what is it, unhappy love?  
did you want to die  
unshaved bushes  
vulgar tattoo  
like sandpaper (elbows)  
scar from hitting the door  
agnails  
sagging  
wrinkles  
scratches:  
terrible hairiness  
swollen veins  
varicose veins



шрам  
седина  
от удара — кулаком  
разбитая бровь

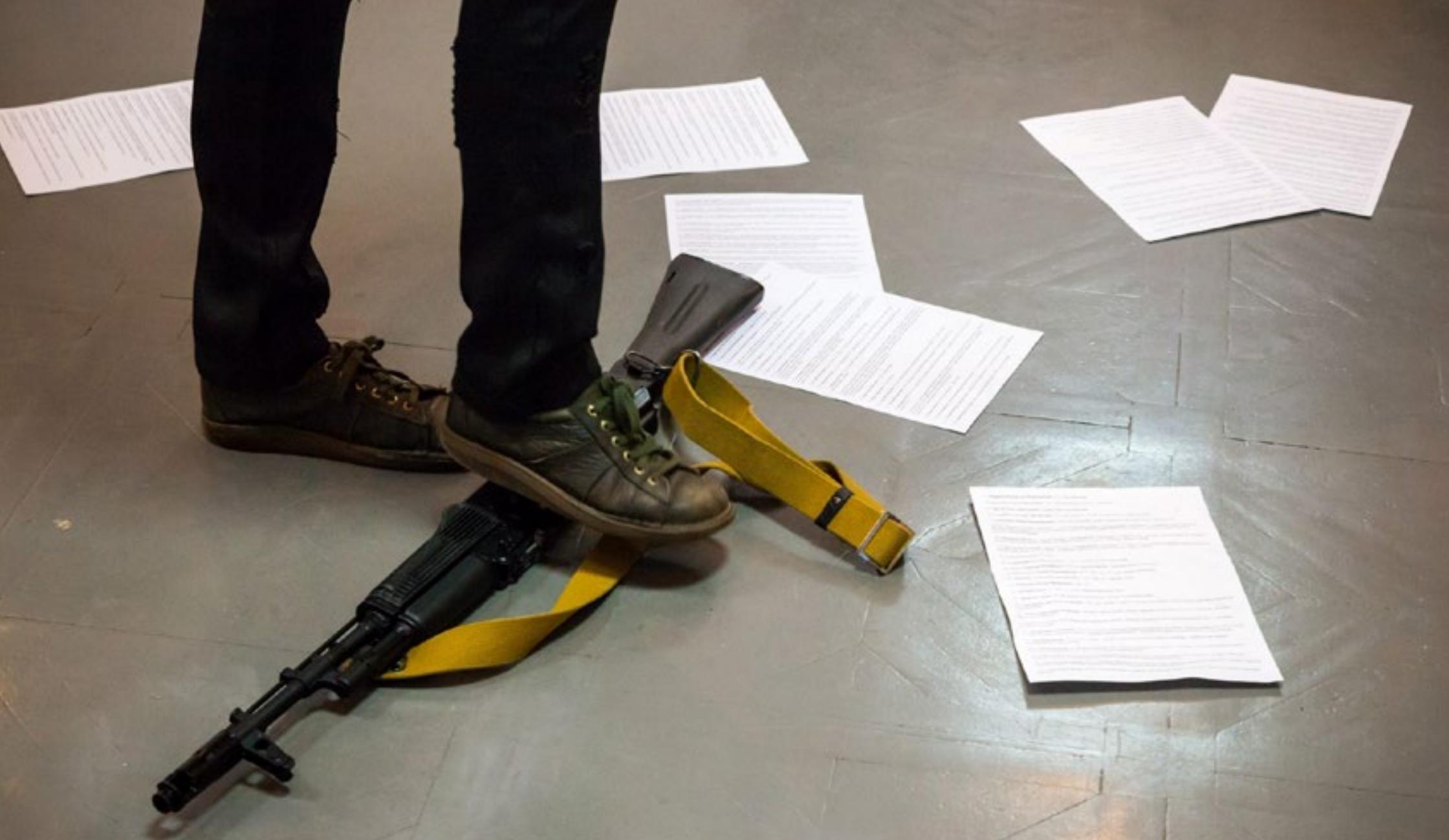
некогда да и незначит  
желтый мечный  
цвет

бровь  
СОС  
ОЗ  
отеки  
дырявые поры  
зубы за  
закрытые  
ротом не  
разно

ка  
молочка ужасно  
все лицо

одинокий  
бабушки  
малой

обвислая  
шея



THEY SAY THEY LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS. 2014. Performance

At the opening of the exhibition, during the buffet with the waitresses, lists of those killed during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict were read for 3 hours. Fallen from both sides.

## STAIRS. 2015. Performance

Artplay. Moscow

Probably, this is a performance about hopelessness in general. That hopelessness that arises when the dominant vertical of power is unable to change it to the horizontal and get some kind of equal structure. This is a performance about violence caused by people unwilling to give this power. And about the understanding of gender, as a form of dominant and submissive behavior.

Ascention, resembles a labor of Sisyphus And trying to go up, we adopt this model of hierarchy. But is it worth it to spend so much effort? Or is it worth changing the «leadership» relationship model to a «partnership»?

The performance was carried out at the Artplay platform within the framework of the next Media Impact.

Before the start of the performance, I said: «When we were little, we were told: you were born equal, you live in the most fair country and you have equal rights with everyone. Nevertheless, we had to be taller, smarter, stronger ... And

without thinking about this contradiction, we entered this life to become taller, smarter, bolder, stronger.»

And together with an assistant, we began to climb up the stairs together. When we reached the middle, the assistant suddenly turned around and pushed me down the stairs. No matter how hard I tried to go up, I was inevitably pushed down from the stairs.

When the power of the blow was so strong that I fall down or was lost my breath, I told something about the events of the country related to my personal history or just cases from life connected with violence of the authority or discrimination, ending with that we need to be taller, grow and strive upward.



The action lasted about an hour. The performance had an open end, it was designed to interact with the audience, or I had to fall and no longer get up from impotence. However, the reaction exceeded my expectations. At some point, one of the spectator could not stand it anymore and went up the other side of the stairs and pushed the assistant down.

There is no text in the video. For the genre of video performance, he was superfluous and too theatrical. If it had been a documentary it would have made sense to leave the text there. Only a few phrases and subtitles were left. And there was a slow motion to enhance the visual effect. The movement was starting to feel like such a strange dance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaGIY9E76ts>





ERASING. 2014. HD video

Actions person's are modeled not only by thoughts of the future, «look ahead», but also under the influence of events from the past. The inability to drive some thoughts and memories away makes unconsciously repeat seemingly meaningless actions. In rubbing the face, hands, as if performing a magical meditative ritual, there is some kind of healing, deliverance from obsessive phantoms of the past.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRKdEet1Mp4&list=PLHM3Q50NlyUIR51n05uCQLtkoaBK9spY-&t=0s&index=5>



# PROJECTS

## WAVE OF THE HAND. 2017.

2017 г. Fine Art, Moscow

Perhaps this is one of the first gestures that are taught in childhood. «Petya, wave your uncle good bye.» And the kid raises his hand over his head.

An atrophied attempt to grab, hold and not let go of the elusive object of farewell.

You can say, for example, «Sovok in us is eternal» or, on the contrary, «we have already said goodbye to the Soviet era» or, for example, «the war has never ended.» You can endlessly analyze history or just live, experience and move to a new stage. I get stuck in the Soviet past, because, probably, my childhood fell on its sunset, which left very vivid memories, that you can only get in childhood.

Jubilant crowds at demonstrations, pioneer lines, noisy family feasts.

People from the past are not at all the same as from the present. I find in old photographs, some fleeting flashes, particles of these childhood memories, whether they are idols of a bygone era or nameless oilmen.

To stop an instant or to release it?

Smiling faces, people waving his or saying goodbye. Sometimes unexpectedly freezing in statics with «seg heil» and causing a feeling of some kind of danger. The totalitarian spirit of the of communism's ghost imperceptibly, but subtly poisons everything around it. This feeling disappear, I remember, a little later, when there was some clarity that everzthing is a lie and there is a difference between what we were told in school, saw on TV and what was really happening.



PIONEER ZOE

«Wave of the hand»

oil, canvas, bituminous varnish, 120x180



OUR GREAT PRIDE  
«Wave of the hand»  
oil, canvas, bituminous varnish, 120x180



SQUAD, AT EASE  
«Wave of the hand»  
oil, canvas, bituminous varnish, 120x180



WE HAVE OIL  
«Wave of the hand»  
oil, canvas, bituminous varnish, 120x180



Susanna Aramovna  
«Cats, they are so cute. Cats make me happy»

Nadezhda  
Leonidovna  
«Here is my dog, Juliet.  
York I remember her all  
the time. So funny. That  
is she, who makes me  
happy.  
And see, there lies  
a robe. What is this color  
called? Moraine.  
It reminds me of the sea.  
When I look at it,  
I remember the sea».



## A LITTLE BIT OF HEAT.

«Pain and will»- 2017 r. Stella Art Foundation

The example and experience of other people have the greatest impact on us. In the stressful situation of a round patch, we can remember all those who feel worse than us at this moment, so as not to indulge in deconstructive self-pity and all those who found the strength to overcome the circumstances, to draw on these forces and be inspired.

I built my project on the real words of people who even in the face of death find the strength to smile. I asked to remember least one happy moment not of the «past» life before the illness, but this life, now. When all the forces go to survival, when the body is dried out with medicine, when a lot becomes no longer important. Anyway, there is at least one moment when something pleases you. Sun, a loved one, autumn leaves or a cat, that came to you. At exactly this moment, I asked them to concentrate.

And yes, the results of the survey struck me. Not because I heard some unusual words, but on the contrary, for some reason it struck me with predictable and expected consistency. Pets, loved ones, books, kind words are something that can give a little happiness and warm in difficult moments. It is so simple. And sometimes is not enough...

Dmitry  
Aleksandrovich  
«When relatives come.  
They came to me  
recently And see what  
they brought. Here is  
a great article about  
me. With a photo.  
You can read it».





THE WHOLE WORLD IS CREATED  
FOR YOU  
inscription in Braille

2016, canvas, acrylic, stones  
4 canvas 80x100

The work was done for the PROTEATR,  
Festival of Inclusive Theater



## TEXTS

«Silence is silver, the word is gold».

No, the word is not despicable metal, and not ore. The word is stone. Heavy, weighty, heavy, or light, porous. Warm, warmed by the sun, rough, rough. Or cold, sharp, faceted, sparkling. You can throw words. You can write a book. You can build a house from stones, or you can break a window in this house. For me, stones are words that form texts, they are almost like living beings. They are filled with meaning and have their own face. It is no coincidence that, probably, while I was preparing this installation, I discovered that there were almost no stones left in the city, sometimes you can find somewhere lie fragments of asphalt, pieces of road surface or bricks. Plain and devoid of history.

«Internal organs»  
2011  
Factory,  
4th Moscow  
biennale of  
modern  
arts







Work nominated for the Kandinsky Prize

Personal show  
2012 г.  
«2 STAGE»  
Zverev Center



Tina Smotantina  
2-nd phase

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_iuqi2CnHE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_iuqi2CnHE)

## 2 STAGE

As iknow in psychology Elisabeth Kubler-Ross identified five stages of grief, loss of a loved one. This principle applies to the acceptance of any other unexpected events. Stage 2 - aggression. 5th stage - acceptance. According to statistics, only 2% of people are going through 5th stage.

Loss... Sometimes we all lose something, someone ...

We tried to ignore the fact that leads us to the unpleasant thoughts ...

We throw away unnecessary things, get rid of unwanted habits.

In my life there is no more TV, and I do not know what a «nail-biting» is. The word «nail-biting» is stricken out from my vocabulary! I cross out «affection»... What else we've got unnecessary? That else is hard to think about? Ah, it's «respect», «freedom», i cross them out too.

We do not let into our life unwanted people.

Sometimes, while being closely together we may not exist for each other. If that is not enough, we cross out the people from our lives, especially if they do something wrong.

People are dye... We cross out the memory of them, so we do not hurt or, or cross out the love for life in memory of the departed.

It's the illusion of comfort. Emptiness, absence of stimulus. We minimize our pain possibly causing some to others. A vicious circle.

But (there is always a «but»), people do not disappear forever.

until you know, that you have lost something, you are happy



no one it hurts, until something not begin



nothing exists, there is only chemistry and mathematics



I exist



in order not to communicate, it is not necessary to part, break up or die



you are always alone here

to be embittered, that's what I would not want. If only not to be angry, if only



FAMILY DINNER. From the project «Common Sense Syndrome»  
2016. Raw / Boiled, MOMA, Moscow

## COMMON SENSE SYNDROME

The Flashmob «Island of the 90s», that recently swept through the network with great success and that was publicly denounced, showed how selectively memory works. How contagious mass memories are and how easy it is not only to manipulate human memory in a general wave of nostalgia, creating false ideas about an entire era, but also to rewrite entire pages of the story. As Svetlana Boim wrote, «Nostalgia is not just a buzzword, but also an important element of post-Soviet culture» «It can be a defensive reaction, a response to transactional periods of history. Nostalgia is looking for stability in the past that does not exist in present, it longs for lost adverbs and the slow passage of time».

The repression of traumatic events is common for human nature, as well as its defense mechanism, which is called «Stockholm syndrome» or «common sense syndrome», forcing people under great shock to identify themselves with invaders or rapists, to justify their actions or sympathize them. Superimposed on the romantic memories of youth, these ideas are enhanced.

From here we have so many, contrary to reason great a number of all kinds of Stalinists, fans of Brezhevsky stagnation and the same fans of the dashing 90s. Considering this phenomenon, I wanted to stop on particular the perception of some kind of historical landmarks, or not milestones, but just the life of that time, namely women, at that time, of course, former girls. On understanding of the position of traumatic feminism, due to power, society or private situation, the experience of this time.

In his article «The Work of Grief and Joy of Melancholy», Alexander Etkind generates three main approaches in understanding the trauma experience: psychoanalysis of humor, imagination and grief.

As you know, children's injuries are tightly eroded, into the conscience leaving a deep imprint on life. But... a strong psyche, a small dose of common sense and we happily indulge in bright nostalgic memories.



KLASSIKS. From the project «Common Sense Syndrome»  
2016. Raw / Boiled, MOMA, Moscow



BOUNCE. From the project «Common Sense Syndrome»  
2016. Raw / Boiled, MOMA, Moscow



TANJA. From the project «Common Sense Syndrome»  
2016. Raw / Boiled, MOMA, Moscow



CATCH UP. From the project «Common Sense Syndrome»  
2016. Raw / Boiled, MOMA, Moscow



Femiist Pencil-2  
2013, Artplay, Markers

## INHABITANTS OF THE 5TH PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL IN KHOTKOVO

As a child I was very afraid of the crazy. In our small town there were two of them. Huge mentally disabled slow Kolya and drooling Rim. When they buumbed into each other (after all, the town was small) Rim was laughed wildly hysterically and pointed at Kolya shouting: «A fool is coming, a fool!» To which Kolya only groaned in reply, he almost did not say anything. Despite all their harmlessness, I was afraid of both madly and always went to the other side of the street.

When, almost 3 decades later, by fate I met the inhabitants of the 5th Psychiatric Hospital in Khotkovo, that was a surprise that almost none of the women were «psycho» in the literal sense of the word, almost all of them were victims of violence and because either of that lost their mind, or undermined their strength and will to live. Victims, but not crazy. Early rape, including incest, assaults on the street, beaten by their husbands. Lonely, deprived of familz and state's support of the family and the state, they could not cope with the situation and ended up in the hospital. There was actually no way back. They told me their stories, greedily smoking cigarettes one after onother and none of them blamed anyone.



### Tanka Khimki

Turututurum

Tanya is 53 years old. Without a break, she mutters something and suddenly appears everywhere at any time of the day asking people to leave her a puff. During a arugment her speech becomes articulate. Gestures - as if she was i prison for 10 years. But she graduated Moscow State Uiversity education. The first time she was raped at 7. Second time in adulthood.

ЛЕНА  
ВСЕГДА  
ТРАСЁТСЯ  
И ПОЧТИ ВСЕГДА  
ЛЕЖИТ



ЕЁ, КАК И ЖАНКУ  
СЛЕВУЮ, КАК И  
МНОГИХ ДРУГИХ  
ОБИТАТЕЛЕЙ 5-й  
КЛИНИКИ КОГДАТО  
УЗБИЛИ. ЖАНКА  
ОСЛЕПЛА, А ЛЕНА  
ВОТ ТРАСЁТСЯ.  
ДОМОЙ ЗАБРАТЬ  
ЕЁ НЕКОМУ.

**Lena** always shakes and almost always lies i bed. She, like Jeanne the blind and like many other inhabitants of the 5th clinic, was severely beaten. Zhanka got blind, and Lena is shaking. No one can take her for her.

Клава

ХУДЕНЬКАЯ МИНИАТЮРНАЯ  
СТАРУШКА. СНАЧАЛА ДОВОГО  
ХОДИЛА ВЗАД-ВПЕРЕД, ПОТОМ ЕЁ  
ПОЧЕМУ-ТО ПОСАДИЛИ НА ВЯЗКУ,  
СКАЗАЛИ, ЧТО ОНА ОБЛИЗЫВАЛА  
КРОВАТИ, ГОВОРИ, ЧТО ЕЙ НУЖНО ЕСТЬ  
ГОВНО, А ПОТОМ И ВООБЩЕ ВОСПИТАЛИ  
ЭТО СДЕЛАТЬ. ТЕПЕРЬ ОНА СИДИТ И  
УЧЕРТИТ КРУЖИ В ВОЗДУХЕ, С ЛАБЫМ  
ТОЛДСОМ КРУЧЕТ ИЛИ ОЧЕНЬ ИНТЕЛЛИГЕНТНО  
ЛАЮЕТСЯ БЕЗПЕРЕДСТВА С РАЗНЫМИ  
ИНТОНАЦИЯМИ. ВСЁ ВРЕМЯ ВЫИТАЕТСЯ  
СУХАТИТЬ КТО-ТО ЗАХАЛАТ. ЕЁ РУКАМИ  
У КЛАВЫ ВЫСШЕЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ  
ОНА УЧИТЕЛЬ МАТЕМАТИКИ.  
ЕЁ БЫЛ МУЖ. ТРОЕ ДЕТЕЙ НИ РАЗУ  
К НЕЙ НЕ ПРИЕХАЛИ.



### **Klava**

Су-сloo, ptoeey-ptoeey

Klava is a slim, tiny old lady. At first, she walked back and forth for a long time, than for some reason, she was tide up by the nurses. They said that she licked the beds, saying that she had to eat shit. And then she actually tried to do it. Now she sits and draws circles in the air, cockooswith a weak voice or very intelligently spits without interruption with different intonations. She tries all the time to grab someone by the robe. She is scolded. Klava has a higher education. She is a math teacher. Klava's husband beat her. Her three grown-up children have never came to her.

## WHY DO I FEEL ALL THE TIME GUILT?

The fateful question of the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent the cultural process developed in it will succeed in mastering the derangements of communal life caused by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. In this connection, perhaps the phase through which we are at this moment passing deserves special interest. Men have brought their powers of subduing the forces of nature to such a pitch that by using them they could now very easily exterminate one another to the last man. They know this hence arises a great part of their current unrest, their dejection, their mood of apprehension. And now it may be expected that the other of the two heavenly forces, eternal Eros, will put forth his strength so as to maintain himself alongside of his equally immortal adversary.

Z. Freud. Civilization and Its Discontents

Is our life possible without violence possible? Aggression is both a driving and destructive force. Without a certain share of aggression it is impossible to break through, withstand and survive. What share can be considered acceptable? Is a world without weapons possible? And do not we provoke our children by offering new and new aggressive toys?

### Description

The project is built on the contrast of torn out black-and-white photographs of PLAYING children and a colored background. When a photo is pulled out of the context, then the games turn into scenes of murder and violence.

### Materials

Cardboard, bituminous varnish, acryl, 80x100





«Behind the Castle»,  
2014  
gallery A3  
Moscow



## ROMAN ABOUT GIRLS

I think everyone went through it, feeling to one degree or another this difficult period. When the cozy peaceful happy childhood ended and the war with the whole world began. When mom and dad, before be kind and caring, suddenly became unnecessary and disturbing, the teachers became annoying nasty reptiles, and their peers (except the soul mate) were simply enemies. I mean how hard it is to be a teenager. A teenager - girl.

The project consists of 2 parts, 2 time periods.

The 1st part - «archival», is dedicated to the memories of the «happy childhood» heroine's of the story and includes a collage of both family photos and a mini installation in which the painted photos of the family archive (that adorn the walls) are interspersed with abstract flashes, symbolizing lost memories, forgotten faces.

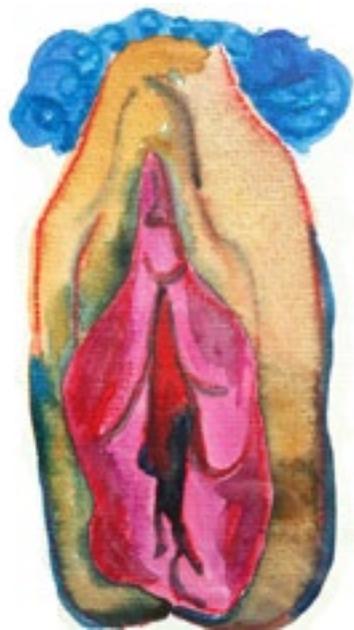
The 2nd part of the project is an analysis of adolescence, a girl's growing up period, a time of rebellion and protest. Aggressive actions in the pictures are accompanied by fragments of phrases of the personal content of the experiences of the heroine and comments by psychologists explaining the problematic of destructive, deviant behavior of adolescents.

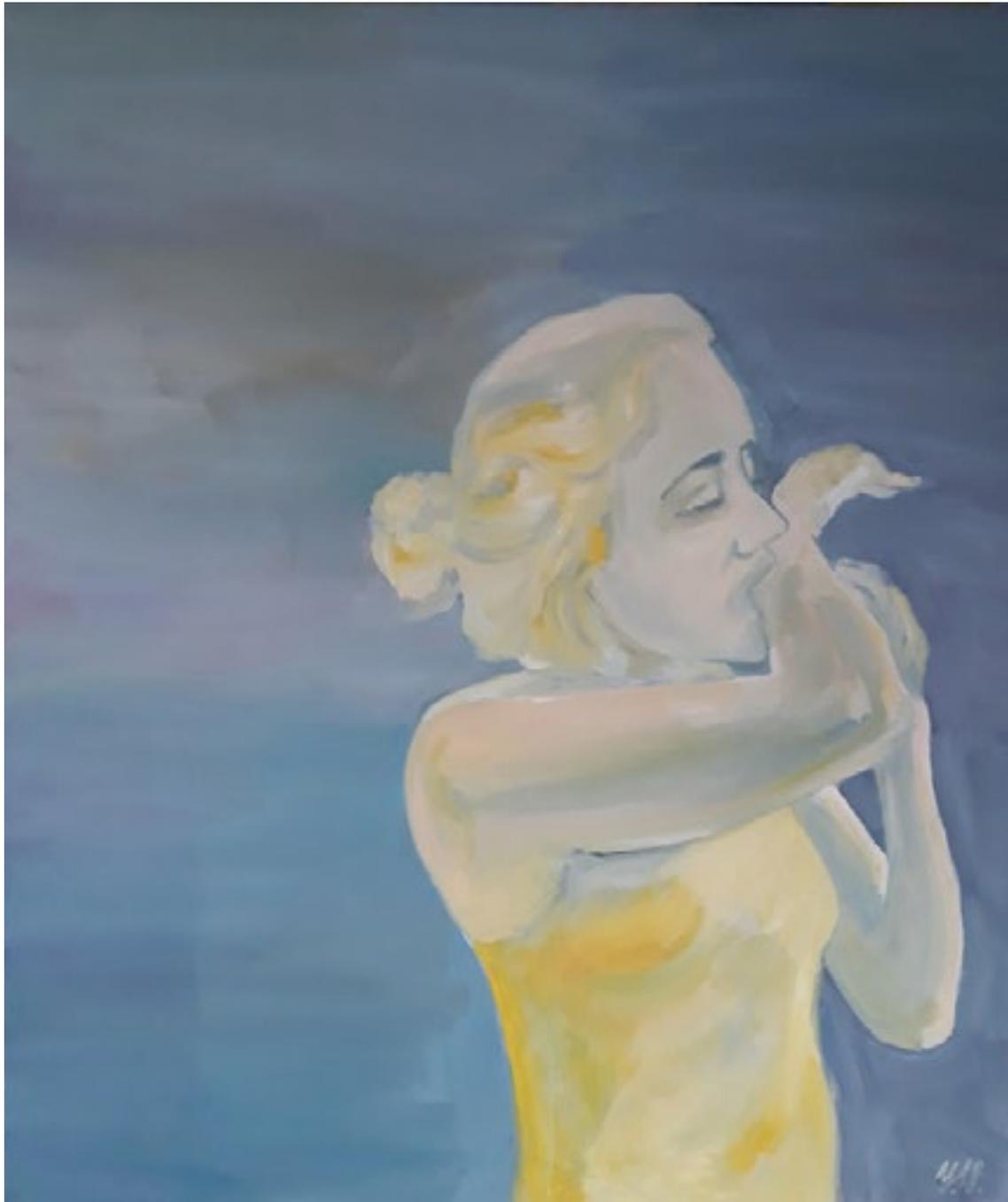
In the signatures quotations from the works of psychologists are used Shmakova K.V., Andreev V.E., Schneider L. B.



**LAST WORKS**







I LIKE YOU. 2018. Oil, canvas. 110X120



MAYA. 2018. Oil, canvas. 110X120



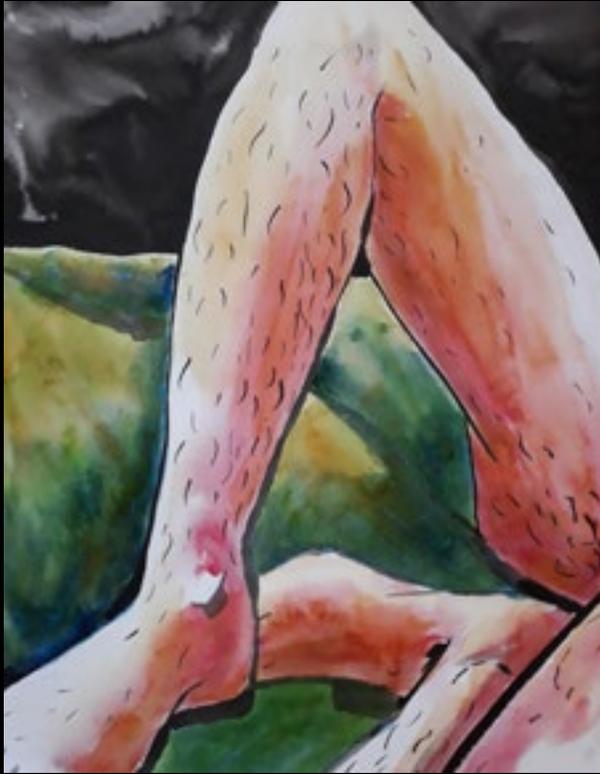
KLARA. 2018. Oil, canvas. 110X120



AVRORA. 2018. Oil, canvas. 80X70



PSYCHOTHERAPY. 2019. Oil, canvas. 110X70



BODY. Die neue Kustlern Der Körper. 2018. Quedlieburg

