



Trash Aesthetics, 2016, magazine, A4



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trash aesthetics

"I hoard therefore I am", was the statement that Yelena used to present her self-branding research at ArtEZ in 2014. In the leaflet that she created based on her research into Obsessive Compulsive Hoarding, Yelena imagined herself as a packrat "burrowing into the fabric of experience to extrapolate treasures through consumption and digestion of my habitat". She used this imagery because this animal reminds of Yelena's own practice of hoarding and creating her environment. Packrats are nest builders, they use materials from their environment to build nests that may preserve the materials incorporated into them for up to 50,000 years. Thus, enabling scientists to study the environment that persisted at the time the nest was built. Similarly, to packrats, Yelena collects objects that are signature for the time she lives in. She uses these objects as material for storytelling. The visual stories that Yelena creates follow a certain aesthetic that she developed during the self-branding course. Initially Yelena was inspired by observations of strategically placed garbage and placement of objects in art exhibitions. It is fascinating how random objects gain museum value through means of presentation. Objects are put against white walls, on pedestals, on elegant mannequins and inside long glass cases with backlight. In this way a space is created that focuses attention on the centre. It is this aesthetic practice that Yelena appropriated into her own artistic practice.



Lucifer, 2016, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



Sphere #1, 2016, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



Sphere #2, 2016, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm

ritual

In 2016 Yelena began to work on a visual diary that she published on Instagram to explore influence of social media on her artistic process. The idea was to document one artwork a day following Julia Cameron's advice in *The Artist's Way*. By appropriating the motto: start where you are, do what you can with what you have, Yelena undertook the challenge to commit at least 30 minutes a day to her artistic practice, despite her limitations. Instead of a studio, that she does not have, Yelena used any available background in her house. Because of a lack of funds for materials, Yelena used anything at hand that she already had, investing the bare minimum when needed, while recycling as much as possible. In this series Yelena builds on aesthetic traditions of religious art to create contemporary rituals, icons, and altars. For example, she appropriates the halo and its placement around the body albeit using everyday objects. These works may be interpreted as an act of blasphemy because Yelena places herself at the centre, commenting on male domination in religious tradition and Russian Orthodox Church.



Choker, 2016, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



The Gaze, 2017, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



Communion, 2017, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm

painful subjects

In 2016 Yelena began to work on a visual diary that she published on Instagram to explore influence of social media on her artistic process. The idea was to document one artwork a day following Julia Cameron's advice in *The Artist's Way*. By appropriating the motto: start where you are, do what you can with what you have, Yelena undertook the challenge to commit at least 30 minutes a day to her artistic practice, despite her limitations. Instead of a studio, that she does not have, Yelena used any available background in her house. Because of a lack of funds for materials, Yelena used anything at hand that she already had, investing the bare minimum when needed, while recycling as much as possible. While exploring alternative interactions with objects Yelena's pathological relationship to things as an obsessive-compulsive hoarder began to reflect in her work. Resulting images produce a slight discomfort in the viewer. During the making process Yelena was often confronted with anxiety that led to a recurring artist block. While reading Rollo May she discovered that anxiety is a necessary part of creativity. Only by confronting anxiety can the artist reach true creative expression and make art. By exposing her mental struggle in the encounter with the World, Yelena provokes the audience to think and give meaning to her work.



BODY ISSUE, 2017, installation, 200x300x150cm



BODY ISSUE, 2017, magazine, A4



BODY ISSUE, 2017, installation, 200x300x150cm

body issue

BODY ISSUE is a series of interviews with artists dedicated to their subjectivity. The personal is political. There is nothing more personal than the body. Inhibiting a body raises the issue of gender performativity. However, pronouns are attributed to us at birth and the World shapes us accordingly. How does this influence artists and the work they create? BODY ISSUE features topical artists and art that is born out of body political issues. The goal is to gain insight into the story and artistic practice of engaged and embodied creators.



Leda Atómica without swan, 2019, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



Not the same Jeanne reclining nude, 2019, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



The Other Three Graces #2, 2019, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm

the liminal body

This series underlines the transformative potential of the body as image. Yelena works with the environment and her body to transform bare life into art, using body language to create the artistic dimension. In this series Yelena mimics the poses of women as depicted in famous paintings. Often, she stretches the limits of her body to reproduce exaggerated postures that simply do not align with potential of the body in real life. Twisting her body to match details in paintings often causes pain. This leads to the realisation that elevated body language of art history is in fact unattainable. Although it is not as criticized as fashion models in magazines nowadays, art historical body language attests of the same unrealistic ideal projected on women. The result of the exercise is pleasing, however ambiguous taking physical discomfort into account.



Serpentine, 2019, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



Contrapposto, 2019, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm



Pudica, 2019, performalist self-portrait, 40x30cm

naked state

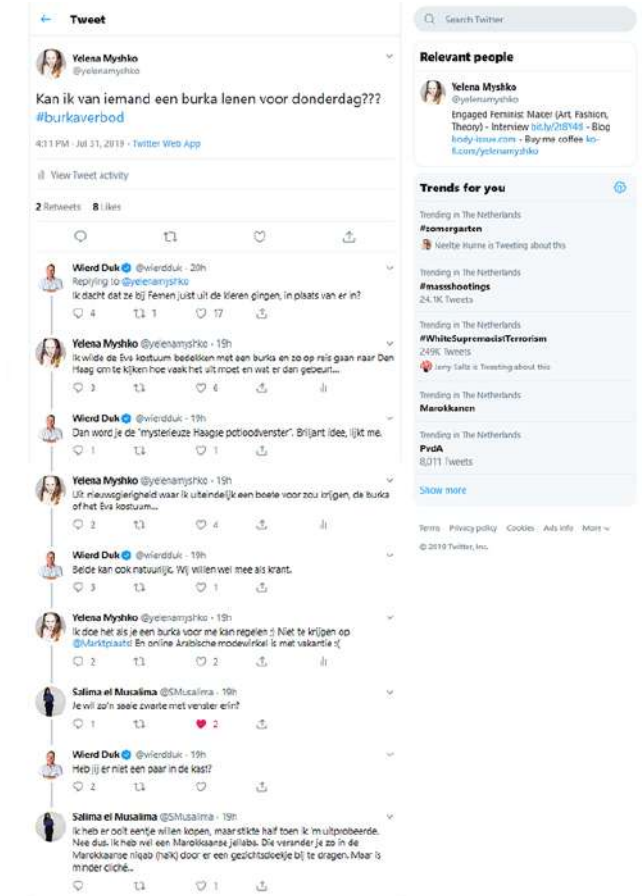
This series was created as part of the Naked State residency in Canada. The focus was on exploring the nude human body in context of nature, culture, and art. For the duration of the 10-day residency, the artists and residency facilitator lived as naturists (in the nude) within the naturist community of Bare Oaks Family Naturist Park to create works about nudity in public space. During this period, Yelena explored the limits of art historical body language. The idea was to present her body in classical poses such as Composite, Contrapposto, Adlocution, Pudica, Serpentine and Odalisque. This approach appealed to Yelena because it was a way to create art without any materials. She used only body language to create the artistic dimension and captured it with her camera.

public enemy

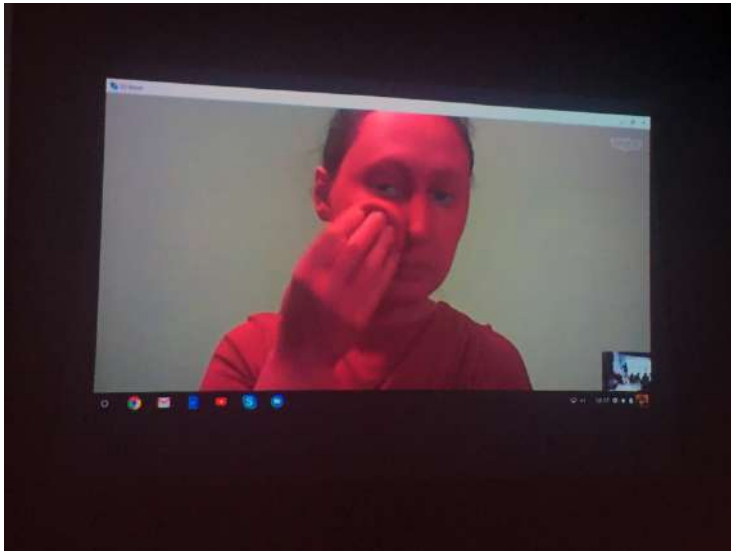


News of the Day, 2019, feminist media actionism, 28.5x40.5cm

Public Enemy is a folder on Yelena's PC where she documents her collaboration with Avant-garde Imam Salima El Musalima. They found each other through a search for purpose in life, that brought them together at a feminist reading group. Salima embarked on a hajj to Paris in search for Allah at religious institutions that turned her down. Yelena joined FEMEN out of frustration with her precarious position in society but left due to collateral damage. Both reached out to feminist public figures and groups but were ignored, backstabbed, and banned. Together they want to challenge the status quo. Yelena and Salima want to prove that there can be solidarity between radical feminism and Islam, sparking dialogue in their communities and beyond. They want to get people talking to each other without censorship to facilitate change. By acting as elusive characters online they trigger the public and the press. Most of the time they create art documents such as twitter posts, classified ads, and letters. However, they also venture into public space to enact performances. Yelena and Salima are nomads alternating between online and offline spaces. The goal is to tell their story and it does not matter how, so they are willing to go right when the left does not want them and vice versa. They are nonconformists, no matter the judgement! Only their personal truth will prevail...



Looking for a Burqa, 2019, performance, 48 hours



Terrorist Treatment, 2018, performance, 15 min



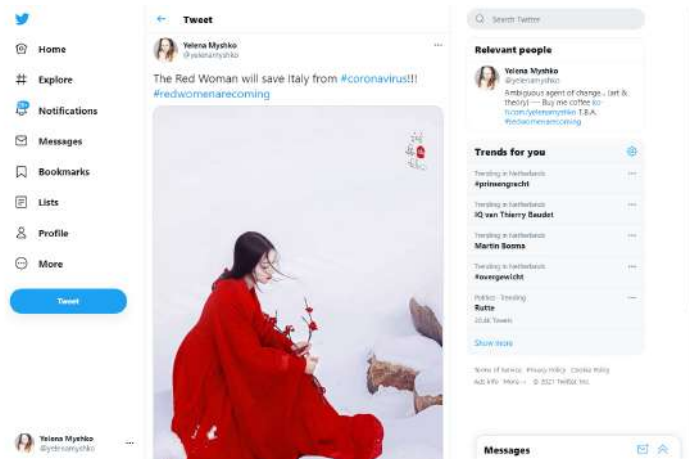
Desperados, 2019, performance, 6 min



Hula Hoop, 2019, performance, 9 min

the red woman

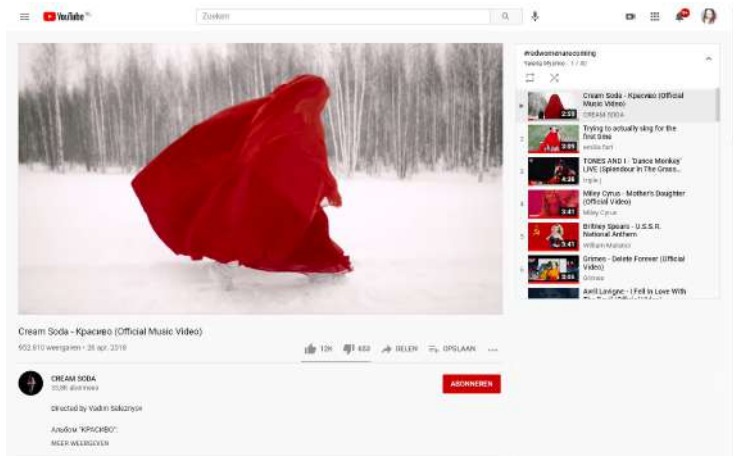
In 2008 Yelena was triggered by the prevalence of terrorists in the news and connected it to the medieval werewolf paranoia. She was fascinated by the overlapping theme of violent outburst. In the middle ages, people were stigmatised, followed, and killed upon suspicion of being a werewolf. The same thing is happening today with terrorists, while reality is blown out of proportion! Over the years, a series of performances developed around this topic. During these performances Yelena undergoes a transformation into her alter ego "the red woman" by changing clothes and body painting herself red. This is followed by an action, such as hula hooping, using a blow dryer in her face or skipping rope. These actions symbolize violent outburst that Yelena emotionally connects to, although she filters this into art instead of promoting violence. Through this act, Yelena tries to raise public awareness of mortality. Death is immanent and can happen to anybody, anytime, and we should be mindful of life.



Twitter Feed, 2019-2020, found footage, 59.3 MB



Sneak Preview, 2020, digital collage, 30x20cm



YouTube Playlist, 2019-2020, found footage, 4.5 hours

#redwomenarecoming

As a reaction to disillusionment with contemporary feminist groups Yelena envisions a post-Guerrilla Girls, post-Pussy Riot and post-FEMEN media actionist movement that critically and playfully reacts on urgent problems with a focus on women. Yelena builds on the old but attempt to be radically inclusive. Therefore, she conceptualizes #redwomenarecoming as a hashtag that can be appropriated by anybody anywhere. Instead of a website, she will create a Wikipedia page that can also be edited by anybody anywhere. Yelena wants to popularize #redwomenarecoming by spreading rumours on social media to trigger an avalanche of participation. What started as a collection of found footage of women in red on Twitter and YouTube, will transform into live performances featuring costumes, bells, and whistles. The #redwomenarecoming in numbers to public and online spaces near you. They will define themselves through their interaction with the press and public. Their goal is to occupy your imagination, the news in print and on TV.

Twitter: https://twitter.com/search?q=%23redwomenarecoming&src=hashtag_click&f=live

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlhOzVWv7J9rR8R6XReLJ41Vh9ZZl5Aa>



Mother without a child, 2020, performalist self-portrait, 40x40cm



"I'm going to mother's" says he, 2020, performalist self-portrait, 40x40cm

An Artist Residency in Motherhood

In 2019-2020, Yelena was pregnant with her first child. Her pregnancy was treated as normal, however, she developed severe pre-eclampsia and lost her child at 31 weeks. The disease went unnoticed despite reporting all symptoms until Yelena stopped feeling fetal movement for two days. Her daughter Feetje was stillborn on April 1st. After her daughter's death, Yelena turned to the media to share her story. She found strength in seeking justice for her case against the health officials that did not intervene on time. However, Yelena did not want to reflect on this experience as an artist until she came across An Artist Residency in Motherhood. The open-minded setup of the residency and reflection on everyday life inspired Yelena to make art again. It dawned on Yelena that during the pregnancy everything around her was focused on money. She was swarmed with information about what to buy for her baby and heard nothing about what could go wrong. Even after her daughter's cremation, Yelena was stalked by ads for new moms, while she had no child to take care of. It seemed like Yelena's daughter only mattered as long as she was alive and had commercial value. In this project, Yelena introduces the under-discussed, taboo issue, of the right to be of the unborn child. The goal is to raise awareness about the difficulty of conception and pregnancy that does not always result in a living child that is more pressing to an increasingly large group of women. As well as expanding the discussion on human rights within the pro-choice movement to include a pro-life attitude as a feminist issue besides the focus on abortion. In this way, Yelena reacts to people's insensitive remarks which uncover that her child does not matter because she was born sleeping.



Pillow princess, 2022, NFT, 5.64MB



Guardian, 2022, NFT, 4.15MB



Collectibles, 2022, NFT, 4.27MB

The Elusive Housewife

“Hello. I am The Elusive Housewife. Diseases keep me at home and limit my ability to create art. That is why I document my performance of everyday life...”

Launched in 2022, although Yelena Myshko conceptualized it in 2021 and is wearing the Pantone colors of that year. Myshko became a housewife after being 100% disapproved for work due to her sensitivity to psychosis (schizophrenia). Since then, she suffered two live threatening pregnancy related diseases: preeclampsia that caused the death of her firstborn, and cerebral venous sinus thrombosis that resulted in longterm headaches. She also suffers from obsessive compulsive hoarding since childhood.

This project is part of An Artist Residency in Motherhood.



Crime Scene

In 2022 Yelena Myshko started to document the mess her daughter leaves behind. This anthropologic research of domestic culture and toddler logic is captured by a smartphone. The discarded objects that are left behind resemble a crime scene and are treated as such. After documentation the mess is cleaned and the objects put back in place.

This project is part of An Artist Residency in Motherhood.

