

I was born in a small town of Kalinin, USSR in June 1991 - Two months later it became Tver, Russia again. It is a place where medieval feudalism met imperial Russia of the Romanovs, then communist regime. Now it is undergoing the hardships of Putin's era. The vast strips of forests, lakes, nature preserves hide Classical architecture, wooden houses(избушки) with their carved shutters, pseudo-gothic of the beginning of the XX century, Stalin's neoclassicism and Soviet modernism. And graffitis. And khrushchyovkas. And ruins. And who knows what else.

My mom is normal. If somebody understands what normal is. Rational. Logical. Женщина правил. An accountant. I call her every single day and still don't know much about her.

My dad was авантюрист. Adventurer. Captain of his own dream ship, freedom lover. He drew movie posters, he fixed sewing machines, he wanted to be an entrepreneur, he sewed

“American” jeans during the 90s crisis, he worked in a printing shop, many things but nothing permanent. Unfortunately, all his ideas were inevitably doomed within the limited Soviet economy. He was born at the wrong time and at the wrong place. He didn’t know much about his own family. His father (мой дедушка) went missing in action in the first days of WW2, his mom remarried a person who hated children and loved alcohol. She gave my dad away to her sister, his aunt. My dad was weaving his own origin story all his life. And then he disappeared, too. Cancer took him when I was 13. He came from nowhere and he ушел в никуда, leaving me his last name and his talent to dream big.

My grandmother was my heart, my soul, my flesh, my bones, my air. My everything.

My childhood consisted of my babushka’s colorful scarves, her old Singer (that she managed to save during the Nazi occupation), blue building of my school, блинов с картошкой, my

dad's tools, my two cats, a hamster and a Cockatiel named Roma, Brazilian soap operas and Bollywood movies, Mayakovsky's poems that my dad knew by heart, smell of dad's tobacco, eating icicles in winter, looking forward to the New Year's tree, field trips to McDonalds to Moscow, группы Аквариум, Yeltsin on TV, fear of dogs and wanting a dog, fear of dating and wanting to date, тоски, smell of herbs in babushka's tea, Leonid Gaidai's comedy films, picking up berries and mushrooms, dresses that my mom made for me, walking to the art school three times a week, blonde hair, short hair, fake hair, and then my own tobacco, surgery, cheap alcohol.

My practice is many things. I can not commit to one material or routine. Perhaps it is inherited. I do whatever it takes to express the idea. I write, cut, glue, weave, spin, draw, paint, preserve, archive, connect, re-imagine, document, shave, collect, photograph, laugh, stitch, resist, research, reshape, thread,

learn, unlearn, sketch, sew. I love, I hate, I try, I experiment, I throw away and I start again.

Aa

archive анти- analogue absence авангард analyse алфавит
anthology afraid alive андрогиния агитация artist about
actions

Bb

books bold bizarre bibliography blend bygone body
belonging

Belonging. Be-longing It is something that I am always concerned about. It is Inaccessible, ineffable, intangible.

Illusional, ephemeral, elusive. An erroneous feeling of illusional attachment. It is virtual. I try to understand what belonging means.

I ask myself where do I belong? I left home town searching for belonging, spent two years in Hong Kong and it rejected me, and will have a mark of an immigrant in the United States forever. I

belong to several places simultaneously, at once and do not belong anywhere. Everywhere and nowhere at the same time. I have a strong sense of connection to many places and people and disconnection with them. I belong to my work. That is the only place that accepts and does not ask questions. Seeking belonging is seeking dependence. Material, emotional, social, cultural, physical, virtual dependence. I seek belonging and try to break from dependence. Is there a way out of this cycle?

Cc

connection confusion collage complexity cut семья color
culture страх

Dd

disconnection drawing decolonizing documents dystopia
displacement distort dream decentralize drag

Ee

education equality

Ff

film fabric feminism fear future fetish

Future is something that is absent from my practice now. It's vague. Unclear. Madina Tlostanova in her recent book *What does it mean to be post-Soviet?* noticed that many artists in the post-Soviet spaces refer to the topic of dystopia when they talk about the future. "The futureless anthology leaves us with no hope indeed, unless we delink from one of modernity's favorite deceptions - that of the necessarily happy future....in Amerindian tempi-local models the past is in front of us rather than behind us. It is not frozen, dead, closed, museumized," says Madina. This idea also finds reflection in Masha Gessen's book *Future Is History*. Both of them emphasize that it is important to reflect and work on our troubled and confusing imperial and Soviet past otherwise we will be forever haunted by restless ghosts of it.

In my practice, I believe in the importance of working through mistakes and trauma of the past as well as reflecting on personal and collective trauma. However, I do not think it is enough, so I also see the importance of focusing on the future. I do not want my practice to be a dystopian one, nor one filled with constant ghost hunting; I want to look forward. Perhaps, creating non-binary objects, which I have been trying to do for a while, is a way of addressing the future reality and connect it to memory. It is a way to practice a new political imagination; to dream about a reality that will be free from binary restrictions, censorship and intolerance.

Fear. My work is not about fear. Perhaps, it should be, as it defines a large part of me. It wakes up with me in the morning, it goes to sleep with me at night. Fear has been passed to me through my mother's milk, as it has been for for many other Russians. It's a fear that takes on different

shapes and, has been living among us for years under totalitarianism. I have learnt to live with it, talk to it and ask it to be quiet., I pet it, I hug it, I ask it to leave, yet, it is still with me. One day I will give it a shape and look at it face to face. For now, I will remind it that правда сильнее страха and try to cuddle it to sleep.

Gg

gender construction

Hh

hair hidden humor home homesick hope history heal

healing

The first step on the way to healing is noticing, admitting, looking directly in the eyes of past and taking full responsibility for this visibility. The past of my country is scary, the present is scary, the future is vague. What is my

role on the way to healing? One of my friends recently said for her 35th birthday, that all she has been trying to do is to make less damage in the world. I share this position. I am healing a little at a time.

li

identity in-betweenness installation inspiration intimacy

Identity is another aspect crucially important to my practice. It is something I am seeking to understand through my work: my own identity. I am engaged in self-exploration, self-reflection, self-interrogation. It is an attempt to understand the terms of the public through the private and to gather a sense of understand my historical past through identity. How is it constructed? How do I translate it?

Inspiration. I draw inspiration from books, theory, memories, photos, my childhood drawing, news, music, people. (I

would like to write a longer passage here but I got stuck. I will continue working on it)

Jj

Kk

Ll

laughter layers lost in translation language

Mm

memory memorylessness meaning markers multilingual

mixing materiality material history metaphor to mend

Currently I am working on a Master's thesis based on Russian Soviet and Post-Soviet Queer Art. This work, as with my other works, is motivated by memories, or more precisely, by the absence of those memories. That is, by memorylessness. I first encountered this word in Dan Healey's book about the nature of homophobia in Russia. We have complicated have a complicated

relationships with memories in the Post-Soviet space. It is a main instrument in the hands of the dictatorial regime. We have collective amnesia, we are in denial, and that hides a lot of danger in it. Amnesia, wherever it is imposed or by choice, is always one of the things that springs hatred, intolerance and ignorance. I have a deep interest in collective memory and in how things end up in it—in what belongs there and what was erased from it. I have interest in the distorted idea of the past, in false memories that have been selected and planted there by those in power. In some ways, the conversations about social justice and equality are always about memory for me. Forgotten wounds can't be healed. I am connecting the past to the present, trying to make happier memories for those who will be to outlive us. Things that are not part of our collective memory pool tend to cause the flee, fight, flee, freeze, fawn response. I want my work to provoke the opposite reaction, sometimes via humor, sometimes via personal references and stories, but to do so while always engaging in the

historical context.; I want to induce a people to pause, to open up space for reflection, allowing my audience and reflect and to question everything.

I pull material for my works from memories. My memories or memories of those who entrust them to me. I put together multiple stories and narratives, I try to do adequate historical research. In the series, *Family Ties*, I grapple with am trying to understand the relationships between women of the same family but from different generations through referring back to my own childhood experiences, forgotten family stories, photos, documents, and letters. I explore this subject of memoryofthrough all mentioned memory and memorylessness within my family, paying attention to what is hidden, what is “sold” as an actual memory, what is forgotten and what is imposed and passed on. I explore what memories are pushed away as too traumatic and what illusions are chosen to substitute them. (elaborate on the works?)

Nn

needles non-binary

Oo

opinions objects ontology

Pp

photos paper politics paint patterns pencils past present

post-Sovietness public art Postmemory people parody

purpose

Qq

to queer

To queer is a method. And for me it is! It is a verb to me. An instrument of resistance and re-existence. The way to reimagine binaries. I want to unshape, reshape, unsettle practices, spaces, conversations, to distort, to make the solid unstable. It is about

creating a means tofor developing the critical imagination by
letting the ambiguity prevail, by ironically inverting.

Rr

Russia re-existence resistance repair re-imagine research
rug restless ghosts

Rug. I imagine my practice as a rug. An old dusty rug. A rug that has absorbed the histories of the previous owners and generations before them. A, a rug in which memories are that has memories woven in. A rug that has been passed on so many times that the its original ownership is lost. everybody lost the count whose it was initially. When we try to interpret the weavewhat is woven on it we need to do our best to learn and attempt try to see what the maker wanted to show and share - collective trauma, family lineage, gender dynamics. I also want to talk about what is swept under that rug. However my old rug is neither not too precious nor too fragile as to bean antique piece.

My rug is repurposed, torn and sewn again, redone, reimagined, made weird, odd, unshaped and changed, like the rugs of the Azerbaijani contemporary visual artist Faig Ahmed. Offer another sentence about the nature of his work. I see myself as a weaver of that rug, as a storyteller, as a curator, translator and a guide to these stories and a dreamer for the future ones.

Ss

satire sewing secrets sexuality storyteller synecdoche
shape - unshaped social construct Stockholm syndrome

Tt

trauma texts tears thread textiles trial and error

Uu

Unshaped unsettled unrecognizable

Vv

Ww

women (all people who identify as women) words weight

weave what if

Xx

Yy

Zz