

Gluklya

Natalia Pershina-Yakimanskaya

Garden of Vigilant Clothes

AKINCI, 2015

Garden of Vigilant Clothes

Solo show at AKINCI, 2015

After the recent presentation *All the World's Futures* at the 56th Venice Biennale, where Gluklya exhibited her forty-three *Clothes for Demonstration against False Election of Vladimir Putin (2011-2015)*, AKINCI is proud to present her new *Garden of Vigilant Clothes* with a vibrant kickoff during Amsterdam Art Weekend.

The multi-layered installation *Garden of Vigilant Clothes* is a spatial adaptation of Gluklya's performance for the Lopukhin Garden in St. Petersburg, Gluklya's native city.* There, citizens have been fighting against the municipal government's plans to privatize the park and build a hotel where now a traditional wooden house—the former residence of 19th-century philanthropist and humanist Vasily Gromov—still stands. For Gluklya, the park is a place where art and society naturally meet. In the case of the disputed Lopukhin Garden, the nature of protest has entwined itself with organic nature, a vital element in Gluklya's *Garden of Vigilant Clothes*. She quotes Russian scholar and writer Dmitry Likhachev: "Nature is social in its own way," and uses this as a starting point for an ongoing research on the interconnection between botanic culture and human culture. In the *Garden of Vigilant Clothes*, Gluklya creates an actual symbioses between plants and humans, revealing their close relation and the social behavior of both species. After all, we influence each other as we are influenced by nature, and as we influence nature on our own terms as well. Balancing on the borders of art and humanism, public and private space, Gluklya considers both art and nature a boundless environment for imagination and experiment, offering all kinds of potential to improve society.

Together with art students from the Padea School in St. Petersburg, Gluklya visualized her ideas by mounting long, vine-like tubes from the windows of willing neighbors. The tubes, debouching into a receiver and held against the student's ears, gave a glimpse of sound coming from the apartments, directly connecting the public space with the private space. Later, when the neighbors came down to the garden, they could enjoy witnessing a version of their own life through the filter of the art students' imagination. For *Garden of Vigilant Clothes*, a similar act on smaller scale took place in Amsterdam. Curious neighbors living in apartments directly surrounding AKINCI, allowed Gluklya to run the long tubes from the exhibition space up to their windows. A few of them agreed to give a small interview on camera, revealing something of their personal thoughts on art and society. One of the neighbors—Gluklya's "bravest citizen"—even donated his red sweater to her artistic process, which she transformed into an object for the exhibition itself. Coming down into the gallery, neighbors can see how their living environment merges with Gluklya's artistic intervention. At the same time, visitors become aware of the neighborhood directly surrounding the exhibition. Echoing the Lopukhin Garden miles away, the gallery space itself becomes a garden of vigilance.

* *'Garden of Vigilant Clothes' at AKINCI is a spatial adaptation of Gluklya's performance in St. Petersburg in September 2015, which has been commissioned by TOK and curated by Anna Bitkina for the public art project 'Critical Mass'.*



Garden of Vigilant Clothes, 2015, performance in St. Petersburg, HD video registration, 4:07 min, music by Vladimir Rannev



Garden of Vigilant Clothes, 2015, overview at AKINCI (photo: Wytske van Keulen)



Garden of Vigilant Clothes, 2015, overview at AKINCI (photo: Wytske van Keulen)

***Migranta Novus* | New Migrant**

An unusual species of weed that appeared in our garden relatively recently. If this weed is not rooted out, it will grow with terrifying rapidity, scaring away the inhabitants of nearby houses. At the same time, some of our researchers discovered that this weed has a peculiar feature. During a laboratory experiment they managed to detect the fact that it has a medial matrix effect on our soil. This is particularly true for its sub-species: *Migranta Viva Stokatto*. Its presence transmits fats, which are necessary for life and growth in our damp climate. And, even more surprisingly, it increases the percentage of mineral concentration in our soil as well.

Migranta Novus, 2015,
group of 5 new migrants, mixed material, 300 x 220 x 90 cm





Details





Garden of Vigilant Clothes, 2015, overview at AKINCI (photo: Wytske van Keulen)

Memoria Proeliis | Remembrance of Combat

This plant appeared together with hope. It comes from the St. Petersburg Lopukhin Garden in Russia. The fight for this public garden, where the municipal government wanted to build a hotel of glass and concrete, lasted for twelve years. If they would have succeeded, only guests of the 'cultural capital', as St. Petersburg has been titled, would have been allowed to walk the grass and breathe the aroma of the garden.

The *Memoria Proeliis* is the most resistant plant of all those I have seen in my life. I invite you to take your hat off and bow, in reverence before it.



Memoria Proeliis, 2015
mixed materials, 220 x 95 x 50 cm



Ofelia Resistance

And here you can see an unusual species of water-lily, the *Ofelia Resistance*. It only appears above the surface at night. It blossoms in May when the nights are still cool and white, and disappears with the first frosts. Soon, very soon, you will no longer see it. It is a perennial plant. The last time we saw it here was in 2011. We can't say for sure whether it will appear again next year, but...



Ofelia Resistance, 2015
mixed materials, 120 x 43 x 50 cm

Nigrum Hans / Black Hans

This very curious plant has, until recently, been classified by experts as a malicious mushroom-shaped reptile; a mistake easily made due to the supposed lack of any roots. This plant, however, deliberately disposes of its roots. They are located at a distance, but still prone to its control. The *Black Hans* originates from the middle latitudes of Russia. In the Netherlands, a special fertilizer has been developed for it: "Hail to Great Russia!", which is inscribed on its ribbon. This malicious parasite, similar to fungal infestation, clings to the walls of public buildings that have a sufficient level of humidity. The plant signifies a situation of moisture-heat, similar to how a thermometer reveals a body's temperature.

Nigrum Hans, 2015
fur hat, ribbon, writing, 77 x 30 cm





Garden of Vigilant Clothes, 2015, overview at AKINCI (photo: Wytske van Keulen)

Mater Veritas | True Mother

This plant was recently bred by our Michurinians (followers of the great biologist and geneticist Ivan Michurin, who developed a practice in selection). 'Mater' is the Latin word for 'mother'. In order to document all of the properties of this plant, we will undoubtedly need to carry out a whole series of costly experiments, for which we will need additional funding. It seems, that the demographic configuration of our population inspired botanists to bestow this name on it, given that this plant is extraordinarily prolific. In its constellation we can observe binary oppositions that rarely occur in a single species: as you see here, the leaves are heavy and at the same time the whole body of the plant is soft and tender, with a delicate nerve structure on the top.

We can state that the main characteristic of this amazing plant is that it combines, within itself, features of all the plants in our collection. A recently conducted experiment confirmed our hypothesis, so that we can now claim with certainty that the rest of the plants are dependent on the *Mater Veritas*. When it withers, the other plants living in its vicinity are condemned to lose their liveliness as well. Plants of this species have long and powerful roots that quickly entangle other plants, slowing their growth. However, the outer part that lives above the earth has surprisingly absorbent qualities. Our communication network, connecting the homes of our neighbours to the gallery, passes through this plant.

The *Mater Veritas* prefers to grow close to another rare plant, the *Virgo Tendendi | Virgin of Endeavor*.

Mater Veritas, 2015
mixed materials, embroidery, 240 x 80 x 50 cm



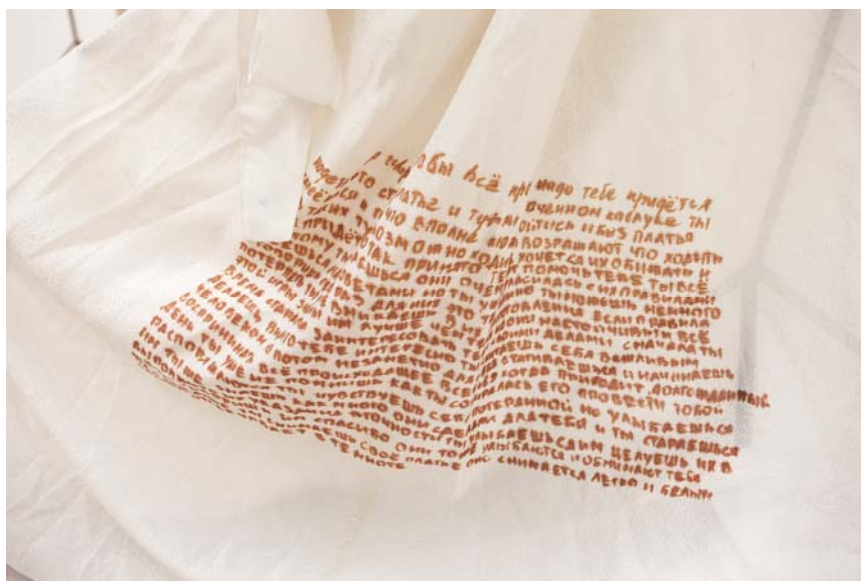


Mater Veritas (details), 2015
mixed materials, embroidery, 240 x 80 x 50 cm



Virgo Tendendi | Virgin of Endeavor

This is a marvellous, frost-resistant plant. Unfortunately one which is barely capable of surviving a heat wave. Its brightness might appear unique, but that is not the case. The red arrow with the shape of a banal mop indicates the special character of this plant: it looks towards the future.



Virgo Tendendi, 2015
mixed materials, 86 x 120 cm



Migranta Viva Stokatto

A luxuriant type of weed with a long life span. It spreads with unusual speed. This plant is capable of destroying practically any other plant. Paradoxically as it may seem, however, the *Mater Veritas* / *True Mother* is resistant to its singular force. We have even observed this plant display greater fertility as a result of being in the vicinity of the *Migranta Viva Stokatto*.



Migranta Viva Stokatto, 2015
mixed materials, 170 x 110 x 90 cm



Hyacintho Parasite | Blue Parasite

The blue skirt here acts as a parasite on the roots and stalks of a whole group of resistant plants. It does not have a clearly defined stem, leaves, or even roots, and receives nutrients from its host organism. On the parts of the plant which are affected, military twigs and sprigs appear, at first, and then an entire sky-blue body. The flowers have a specific aroma—rotting flesh—that attracts insects, especially pollinators like Odiniid flies. The ripening of the bud takes several months, while its flowering lasts for several days.



Hyacintho Parasite, 2015
mixed materials, 160 x 123 x 50 cm



Migranta Novus / *New Migrant*

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Migranta Novus, 2015
mixed materials, 105 x 40 cm



Necesse Sanctions / Inevitable Sanctions

This plant is named after the prohibition of bringing certain products into Russia —particularly cheeses—by the European community, in response to the annexation of Crimea. Its flowers bear a surprisingly close resemblance to one of the best cheeses we know: 'jong belegen.' Its level of resistance is quite high; it has a life span of over seven years and can survive in practically any conditions. The only weed whose presence makes this plant uncomfortable is *Migranta Viva Stokatto*, presumably because their chemical composition is, in essence, very similar.



Narcesse Sanctions, 2015
mixed materials with Russian coat from communist times, 230 x 190 x 150 cm



Irritatricem Parabolam Draco | *Rebellion Dragon*

This plant was raised in the Netherlands, as a result of crossbreeding with *Mefisto Novo*. It is a delicate plant, afraid of storms and cold ground. Its name relates to its singular properties of quick resilience. It is known for its considerably long life span. Paradoxically, however, it is a fairly fragile plant, demanding special care. If the plant is not moved, watered three times a day, and kept in a greenhouse, it will live a long life. Its flamboyant roots, resembling a dragon, can be used to cure cancerous skin diseases.



Irritatricem Parabolam Draco, 2015
mixed materials, sweater donated by neighbour
120 x 190 x 60 cm

***Migranta Compilervo* | False Migrant**

This group is a sub-species of *Migranta Novus* and represents a more complex variation of the family of Migrants. Possessing advanced powers of mimicry, it pretends to be a plant of the *Migranta Nova*, but in fact is nothing other than *Artifex Inquisitorem* | *Artist Contemporary* from the family *Curiosus Mentis* | *Inquisitive Mind*. The empathic characteristics of this plant are beyond comparison. Its stalk bends in any direction depending on who it is in contact with. It is the most unpredictable plant ever to be analyzed by botanists. It is not as fertile as the *Migranta Novus*, but it spreads very quickly in our mild European climate.



Migranta Compilervo, 2015
mixed materials 130 x 95 x 58 cm



Migranta Novus* / *New Migrant

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Migranta Novus, 2015
mixed materials, 160 x 145 cm



Mefisto Novo / New Mefisto

This plant appeared in our garden not long ago, on the night between the 26th and 27th of September, with the tragic demise of the sculpture of Mephistopheles that adorned the Lakhtinskaia Ulitsa in St-Petersburg, a house built by architect Aleksandr Lishnevsky. As we know, nature does not look indifferently on such events, which is why the garden soil reacted by producing this unusual plant. Its characteristics are currently being studied and will continue to be studied by our specialists for a long time. A new generation of botanists is already conducting laboratory experiments to research the qualities of this plant's roots. According to our latest reports, the plant may die very soon if we do not introduce a special grade of fertilizer that will sustain its life. The name of the *Mefisto Novo* was chosen to refer to the dangerous tendency of the Russian authorities to demonize 'otherness', which is seen as a dark unconscious force here, merely set on destruction. Unfortunately, this unusual, noble plant started to wither as soon as it arrived in the Netherlands. The journey had a negative effect on it. The form of its stalk changed and it can now function only as a decorative plant in indoor conditions. Experts advised us to change the name of the plant to *Mefisto Oblomov*.

Mefisto Novo, 2015
mixed materials, 80 x 90 x 130 cm



Una Tibialia | Lonely Socks

This plant, shaped as a Greek tunic, is unusual in its kind: it accumulates within itself the idea of uniting people, which at first may seem insignificant, but in fact designates the border between high and low. This plant lives only when it is supported by single socks, objects deprived of their function. If you have a single sock, please bring it and support this plant!

Una Tibialia, 2015
mixed materials, 184 x 50 x 40 cm



About

Born in Leningrad, **Natalya Pershina-Yakimanskaya** (artist name Gluklya) lives and works in St. Petersburg and Amsterdam. Shortly after graduating from the Mukhina Academy of Art and Design, she joined with Olga Egorova (Tsaplya) in co-founding the artists' collective **The Factory of Found Clothes** (FFC) which uses installation, performance, video, text and 'social research' to develop the concept of 'fragility'—exploring relationships between internal and external, private and public. In 2002 they wrote their manifesto 'The place of the artist is by the side of the weak.' The manifesto reveals a transformation of the artist's understanding of the importance of the social and political context in Putin's Russia. FFC worked together for more than 10 years, and in 2012 Gluklya took over the leadership of the group. Since 2003 Gluklya has also been an active member of the Chto Delat? group.

Gluklya often uses clothing as a tool to build connections between art and everyday life. Addressing the personal stories of her characters, she analyses the conflict between the inner life of a person and the political life of the world (as in the performance 'Debates of Division: When The Private Becomes Public', 2014). The artist's method of using "clothes" in her project is comparable with using the subject of "meals" in participatory projects, as a tool for developing new methods of communicating with others not in the art world.

Clothes for Demonstration against false election of Vladimir Putin 2011—2015
in 'All the World's Futures', 56th Venice Biennale, 2015

Gluklya's work has been exhibited in Russia and abroad. Her work made part of the exhibition All the World's Futures, curated by Okwui Enwezor, at the 56th Venice Biennale. Gluklya had a solo show 'Utopian Unions' at the Museum of Modern Art Moscow (2013) as well as group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem (2014); Hermitage Museum, Amsterdam (2013); 10th Krasnoyarsk Museum Biennale (2013); MUMOK, Vienna (2012); Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden Baden (2011); Shedhalle, Zurich (2011); SMART Project Space, Amsterdam (2011); Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (2011); Kunsthalle, Vienna (2011); ICA, London (2010) and the National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow (2006). Gluklya won in 2014 the Joseph Brodsky Prize.

