

KOXHI
AEEH

Art. Solidarity. Resistance

КОЖИ
ДЕШ

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“Every day” is the slogan protesters in Belarus shout to emphasize the duration and rhythm of the resistance, to express confidence that the protests will continue tomorrow, that they will not end. Since the first nights of police violence and days of mass mobilization in early August 2020, this phrase has reflected the temporality of the struggle. Amid the ongoing political crisis, the phrase “every day” unites people in a joint promise to take to the streets. The exhibition borrows this slogan and focuses on exploring solidarity, “weak” resistance tactics, revolutionary poetics, technological infrastructures, mechanisms of state violence, the emotional landscape, spatial and architectural dimensions of the protests.

This exhibition draws upon artistic practices that resonate with the history and present moment of protest movements and solidarity networks. The emancipatory potential of art is manifested in the variety of forms and techniques. The art in the exhibition explores, models, and tests political reality, it becomes a direct criticism of power, an act of dissent. Engagement, involvement, and opposition to official ideology is a principled position of many cultural workers in Belarus.

The social fabric is being strengthened through increased solidarity, volunteering, mutual assistance, and neighborhood self-organization. Even before the presidential election, civil society had begun to undertake government functions by helping doctors cope with the first wave of Covid-19. After the election, numerous civic initiatives began building an infrastructure to help those who had been unfairly and unlawfully dismissed from their jobs, beaten or arrested. The wave of solidarity, support and care was strengthened through IT and digital platforms, crowdsourcing, and citizen journalism. Contemporary art — both professional artistic practices and anonymous activist gestures — helped to create a distinct critical language.

Outraged by the falsification of the election results, people across the country took to the streets to protest against the state violence, which resulted in legal default. The resistance movement began spontaneously and remains decentralized. It is arranged like a net, like water, like the endless process of embroidery. Unlike tactics of occupation, the mass actions are aimed at filling the space like molecules. In the absence of distinct leaders, marches by women, pensioners and people with disabilities, strikes, student demonstrations, and doctors’ solidarity chains are being organized. A new social sculpture is emerging that is self-forming and removes the hierarchy between professional art and grassroots creativity, where a street statement can become more pointed and accurate than an artistic project.

Like this protest movement, which does not have a center, this exhibition — its architecture, concept and curation — does not have a rigid linear structure. The space is organized along a series of conceptual nodes running through the whole exhibition that represent the ten terms in the exhibition glossary. They form “gravitational fields” that help to contextualize the artistic processes that are emerging against the backdrop of a deep systemic crisis. All the artworks in the exhibition are networked through these terms. The exhibition’s variable, mobile architecture echoes the dynamics of the unpredictable political situation in the country.

Being a gesture of solidarity with the revolutionary processes in Belarus, this exhibition presents a cross-section of contemporary art that constructs and manifests pulsating forms of interaction, resistance, collectiveness, and a future that we are already living today — every day.

RESISTANCE TACTICS

In analyzing the Belarusian protests, researcher Almira Ousmanova underscores that this is a “protest of the multitude which every day invents politics, constantly changing places and forms of protest using a grassroots form of organization.”* She describes the constant transformation of the resistance tactics that appear, flare up, coexist, and support one another in the protests. Unlike a single effort that is easily stopped, the decentralized, non-hierarchical, and networked nature of the protests allows the transformational potential to accumulate at the intersection of various forms of resistance — from spontaneous and natural, to organized and massive. They include direct confrontation with security forces, marches by thousands of people, strikes, economic boycotts, queueing as political action, solidarity chains, residential neighbourhood (dvory) activities, “silent” resistance tactics, hacking and cyber-guerilla activities, pickets, performances, political posters, graffiti, dance, educational lectures, singing together, and many others.

These actions can be performed live or in virtual space, by one person or a group, involve local or national communities, be short-term or long-term. The range of strategies, none of which can be considered dominant or most effective, is a distinct feature of the Belarusian protests. The cumulative effect of using diverse tactics is reshaping the urban space, rewriting economic and social relations, and organizing parallel infrastructures.

** Almira Ousmanova. Digital Multitude: The Multiple that Takes over the One. 2020 / Online: New Eastern Europe*

PROTEST CHOREOGRAPHY

Since August 2020, resistance has become a regular occurrence in Belarus — it is now a part of everyday life. A protest has its own rhythm, its own dynamics, its own choreography. We can describe the location and organization of protesters’ bodies in the urban space using the concept of choreography. Physical presence itself is important and has different forms: solidarity chains and single-person pickets, demonstrations and assemblies with thousands of people, walks and residential neighbourhood (dvory) parties, concerts and artistic actions.

The movement of the protests is diffused and decentralized: small groups flow together like water to form large columns. And this is the main feature of the protest movement — it’s everywhere, it’s not interested in the center, it’s always flowing rather than occupying. Unlike the passiveness of political language and monologue, an important feature of protest choreography is the shared bodily experience. The phrase “I’m walking” — what activist Nina Baginskaya said when she was stopped on the street by riot police, or “I’m going out!” — the last message Raman Bandarenka sent to the chat group several minutes before his death, became mobilizing slogans and defined the choreography of the street protests.

“FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS”

It’s very difficult to envision the future of the protests in Belarus — what they will lead to, how and when they will end. The scenarios will change depending on the political views of those produce them — optimistic and dystopian, progressive and conservative — and they will all follow a normative chronology. But what if we suppose that the future is already here? What if the life we want — democratic, self-organized, feminist — is already happening now?

Artist and researcher Olia Sosnovskaya describes this temporal paradox as the “future perfect continuous” — borrowing the grammatical tense in English that describes an action that began in the past, takes place in the present, and will continue in the future. This

tense captures duration and cuts through history.

For example, as of March 25, 2021 the protests will have been going on for 228 days — every day. “By moving, mourning, organizing, exhausting, refusing, celebrating together, we simultaneously rehearse and exercise the future.”* Future perfect continuous refers to all the complex relationships between the protests, time, history, and calendar.

** Olya Sosnovskaya. Future Perfect Continuous.
2020 / Online: Ding Ding Magazine*

“PARTISAN AVENUE”

“This is our city!” is one of the important slogans of the Sunday marches, meetings and walks taking place throughout the country. Unlike different forms of occupying space, marches have become one of the main forms of protest and gather up to 500,000 participants. This constant movement of protesting bodies fits organically with the architecture of Minsk and other large cities in the country — with their wide, cross-cutting avenues and their central squares.

Partisan Avenue, the location of the October 18 Partisan March, became one of the toponyms of the protests. Like Artur Klinau’s cultural partisanship project, it appropriated and redefined the partisan legacy of resistance that became a central mythologem of the official ideology.

“Partisan Avenue” is a poetic metaphor that defines the political dimension of post-war cities that were rebuilt on ruins. Rapidly urbanized, without a historical center, but with constellations of residential neighborhoods, these cities have become productive spaces for local self-organization and protest activity. This spatial element also refers to the utopian dimension of socialist planning: the never-ending street.

Originally intended for official demonstrations, this year these avenues were filled with hundreds of thousands of people who oppose the regime.

“ALIVE AND FRAGILE”

“In prison, we are subjected to violence: both physical and psychological, and its consequences haunt us for even longer. We are alive and fragile,”* LGBTK+ activist Vika Biran writes in her prison diary. She notes that her story is both unique and mundane. It is mundane because “there are a lot of us.” Since the protests started in August 2020, more than 30,000 Belarusians have been arrested, jailed and subjected to violence.

The continuous ebb and flow of confidence and fear, euphoria and depression, the potential of collective action followed by an all-consuming sense of apathy and internal burnout — the protest experience is an emotional roller-coaster.

Rejuvenation and regeneration become possible in an extreme situation by documenting one’s personal experience using text, (jail) drawings, slogans, and song, and then putting them out in the collective space. This brings them back into the political field, which allows you to find support, overcome trauma, and formulate an agenda to move on.

** Vika Biran. From Okrestina to Berghain: “I write, therefore I am.”
2020 / Online: Makeout.by*

MECHANISMS OF VIOLENCE

The level of violence by law enforcement during the protests in Belarus is shocking. More than 7,000 people were arrested in the first days alone (August 9–12), and many of them were subjected to aggression, violence and even torture. The fact that none of the protesters have been acquitted and none of the police have been charged is symbolic of the legal default in the country. Mass marches, solidarity chains and strikes were society’s response to the repression of peaceful protesters and formed what researcher and philosopher Tatiana Shchitsova calls “a community of the shocked”* — where shock leads to the solidarity of society in the stand against the government’s abuse of power.

But police aggression against protesters didn't appear suddenly; it was sewn into the body of society at the infrastructural, legal and political levels. The monopoly on violence and its legitimization is the principal axis of the Belarusian regime, and it exists on many levels: from the bureaucracy, education and military duty to the family. The patriarchal image of Lukashenka decodes these relationships into abuser and victim. The issue of domestic violence is important to understanding the Belarusian political context because it allows us to analyze the relationship between private and political violence.

Trauma and post-traumatic syndrome is visible not only in those who came face-to-face with police brutality, or spent time in police stations and jails. Psychologists say that everyone in the country is traumatized and collective therapy is needed.

**Tatiana Shchitsova. For the Genealogy of the "Community of the Shocked": Common Sense / Sensus Communis / Koine Aesthesis. 2020 / Online: Koine Community*

STRENGTH OF "WEAKNESS"

The confrontation between government and society is not only social and political in nature, but also ontological. The rigid patriarchal and authoritarian hierarchy of power is opposed by a fundamentally different system of relationships — one that is self-organizing, leaderless, horizontal, and fragile. Protesters build a non-violent logic of resistance in response to government violence and repression. A "housewife" running for president, solidarity chains of women, residential neighbourhood (dvory) meetings and dispersed resistance tactics, marches by pensioners and people with (un)limited abilities utilize the emancipative and political potential of the strength of "weakness." The optics of power don't always perceive these tactics as a threat or the participants as serious opponents, which provides time and opportunity for mobilization, building solidarity and a different logic of functioning.

At the same time, such fragile communities require longer, more intimate settings, which makes them potentially more vulnerable. That's why "weak" tactics of resistance are coupled with the formation of infrastructures of care: support of the vulnerable bodies of protesters

through the organization of medical, legal, and financial assistance for victims, creation of volunteer organizations, sharing and participatory economics practices.

(IM)POSSIBILITY OF LANGUAGE

During the protests, language provides a symbolic battlefield against the authorities. Political language, formulated as a call or demand, is most clearly manifested in slogans.

Of fundamental importance, however, is the search for language itself — language that can grasp and redescribe the current situation: the new forms of relationships, solidarities, time, affects, and so forth. People's lives and energies oppose the ideological stereotypes and they resort to radical and creative forms of expression. The existing language is insufficient and a new one is reconstructed in the form of political mottos, ironic slogans, poetic lines, and songs — that is, in those complex — collective and anonymous — forms that create gaps in everyday language and generate new meanings.

A tragic anemia of language appears where violence and death prevail. In other words, "revolutionary" language tries to capture the singular experience of an "event," while also being a tool that changes reality.

When direct political expression is impossible, creative formats such as silent actions, walks, clapping demonstrations, ironic slogans, group singing, and courtyard decorating become abstract weapons of struggle. Poetics becomes politics. Poems, songs, music fill courtyards and streets, as people's voices resound in a polyphonic chorus.

SOLIDARITY NETWORKS

In 2020, an “alienated society in the heart of Europe,”* as Olga Shparaga put it, began, unexpectedly for many, to self-organize — without a center, without leaders, without hierarchies. The key metaphors for the power of the solidarity that united people in their desire for change were the chain — shoulder to shoulder with strangers, and the network — the organizational structure of the platforms, initiatives and movements capable of accumulating and transforming the energy of protest into social change. This self-organization of protest activity was expressed on all levels: social — replacing the dysfunctional healthcare system during COVID-19; political — helping political prisoners and victims of police and state violence, and so on. The network, a topographic figure without a center, characterized the nature of the connections: fragile, temporary, not always stable, but penetrating and all-encompassing. These networks were able to capture the collective energy that was expressed in the strong desire to help, involvement and civic engagement. The feeling of mutual support, sisterhood, neighborhood and camaraderie fueled the daily rhythm of the protests and kept them from subsiding.

** Olga Shparaga. Alienated Society in the Heart of Europe. 2010 / Online: Artaktivist*

SHIMMERING INFRASTRUCTURES

The use of technology is characteristic of all protest movements of the 21st century, but its variety in the Belarusian protests is impressive: hundreds of mutual assistance initiatives built around social networks, more than fifty projects that use complex IT solutions such as platform systems, AI, big data, blockchain, and hacking.

Technology was embedded into the very fabric of the protests: torn from the logic of the market, the networked nature of IT merges with the networked logic of protest. As eeefff group puts it: “Political expediency determines the instrumentation.”* New protest infrastructures are

formed that are distributed, mobile, massive and transparent. These infrastructures create a broad understanding of protest that goes beyond taking to the streets and involves online activity, efforts to stop the economy, creating grassroots initiatives, neighborhood protest groups, care and support structures, civilian control over the judiciary and law enforcement, and so forth.

The essence of resistance is not to gather in one large column on some street or in a square, but to shimmer everywhere all at once.

** Dzina Zhuk, Nicolay Spesivtsev. Solidarity Infrastructures. 2020 / Report for the World Without Labor biennale*

#DAMAUDOBNAVBYTU (WOMAN COMFORTABLE IN EVERYDAY LIFE)

INSTRUCTIONS

2019–21. Series of 4 posters: digital print on paper.
29,7×42 cm

This project by the #damaudobnavbytu group (woman comfortable in everyday life) conceptualizes the relationship between domestic violence and government repression of protesters. 75% of Belarusian women become victims of domestic violence and the absence of legislation in this area becomes a mechanism for normalizing, escalating and legitimizing state violence. In 2018, Lukashenka criticized the draft law on combatting domestic violence, saying,

“A good belting could sometimes be useful for a kid.” Like a scale model of a patriarchal family, the state treats protesters like naughty children — torturing, beating and even raping them in detention.

“Instructions” is a series of four posters that provide statistics on various forms of violence: domestic violence, which happens behind closed doors, and police violence, which is met with impunity.

#damaudobnavbytu is an activist art project that researches and analyzes gender inequality in the post-Soviet space. The project was launched in 2018 in response to sexist comments made about female editors of major independent Belarusian media who had been detained.

RUFINA BAZLOVA

THE HISTORY OF BELARUSIAN VYZHYVANKA

2020–21. Machine-made cross-stitch embroidery. 45×735 cm

A vyshyvanka is a traditional Belarusian shirt with decorative embroidery. Artist Rufina Bazlova fills this method of embroidery with political context: she literally embroiders the history of the Belarusian protests, documenting and coding it without using traditional written narrative.

Embroidery was always on the periphery in the hierarchy of the arts — the way the women who created the designs were excluded from history and deprived of their vote. For Rufina the use of embroidered is not only a return to a traditional Belarusian craft but also the inclusion of those excluded or deprived of the right to vote. “Weak” groups — women, pensioners, people with (un)limited abilities — play an important role in the Belarusian protests. As it turns out, a majority of the population are excluded from the political sphere.

Embroidery was traditionally a collective practice: women gathered together to embroider and share stories. Embroidery is a practice of solidarity, both in terms of execution and from a formal perspective. The red crosses on the fabric are a metaphor of networks, coexistence and coupling.

Finally, Rufina uses a play on words in the title of her work. In Belarusian, the words vyshyvats (“to embroider”) and vyzhyvats (“to survive”) rhyme and differ by one letter. “The History of Belarusian Vyzhyvanka” underscores the unprecedented level of state aggression against protesters.

Rufina Bazlova (1990) – artist, lives and works in Prague. Gained an international profile for her series “The History of Belarusian Vyzhyvanka.” Author of the comic book *Ženokol* (Feminnature), in which she explores feminist themes in folk traditions. Studied stage design at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and illustration and graphic design at the University of West Bohemia. Co-founder of the theater group Sled Pod Kožichem (Herring Beneath the Fur Coat).

BERGAMOT GROUP

FLIGHT

2020. Action, video [3:55]

During their summer 2020 residency in a village near Brest, the Bergamot group staged an action that later became the basis for the video "Flight." Four people took turns carrying a fifth as if he or she were flying, while the other participants filmed in on their phone. The performance recreates a physical situation that occurred repeatedly during the protests in Belarus — riot police carrying protesters to police vans. Detentions are often carried out by masked officers in black, with no identification, who often record the events on their phone or camera.

This somatic practice also creates a fragile bodily situation, a kind of choreography of support and solidarity where your colleagues' hands don't let you fall: the way injured people are evacuated from war zones or street clashes. This powerful image shows the tension between bodies and effects, experience and support, strength and trust. Bergamot reinforces this image by moving it from the urban to the natural context, analyzing gestures and the directions of our bodies, underscoring the politization of our joint movements.

Bergamot art group was founded in 1988 in Brest by Volha Maslouskaya (1974, lives and works in Brest) and Raman Tratsiuk (1981, lives and works in Poznan). The group addresses the themes of communication, violence, gender and social roles. They work with performance, video, photography and objects.

CULTPROTEST.ME + ANTIBRAINWASH.NET

100 POSTERS

2011–21. Digital print on paper. Various sizes

Resistance Tactics, Protest Choreography, "Future Perfect Continuous", "Partisan Avenue", "Alive and Fragile", Mechanisms of Violence, Strength of "Weakness", (Im)possibility of Language, Solidarity Networks, Shimmering Infrastructures

Raman Aksionau, Tasha Arlova, Anately Belov, Vika Biran & Olga Łaniewska, Andrei Busel, Mitya Churikov, Lena Davidovich, Paul Dorokhin, Andrei Dureika, Dzmityr Dzmityrjeu, Zhanna Gladko, Mikhail Gulin, Uladzimir Hramovich, Studio Hutkasmachnaa, Nikita Kadan, Nikolay Karabinovych, Aleksander Komarov, Yuriy Ledyan, Ulia Liashkevich & Baba-Zaba, Victoria Lomasko, Artyom Loskutov, Sergiy Maidukov, Victor Melamed, Vika Mitrichenko, Hanna Murajda, Marina Naprushkina, Nikolay Oleynikov & Anya Kurbatova, Nick Osadchyi, Vasilisa Palianina, Honest People, Dan Perjovschi, Karol Radziszewski, Ania Redko, Daria Sazanovich, Konstantsin Selikhanov, Sergey Shabohin, Slavs and Tatars, Antonina Slobodchikova, Anton Snt, Karolis Strautniekas, Masha Svyatogor, Alexey Terexov, Jouri Toreev, Daria Trublina, Vladimir Tsesler, Maxim Tyminko, Irina Varkulevich, Work Hard! Play Hard! Working group, Yaugen, Ilya Yerashevich, Oleg Yushko

Cultprotest.me is an online platform of visual resistance in Belarus. The website was launched in July 2020 by artists Maxim Tyminko and Sergey Shabohin. Cultprotest is an extension of the antibrainwash.net platform, which existed from 2011 to 2013. Like its predecessor, cultprotest is a self-published platform. Anyone can download the protest materials created by Belarusian and international artists and designers and print them, use them in street protests, stuff them in mailboxes, hand them out on the streets, etc. The cultprotest collection is constantly growing and currently has over 450 posters and leaflets.

ALENA DAVIDOVICH

FIGHT LIKE A GIRL

2020. Wall painting: water-based paint and acrylic.
450x550 cm

Alena Davidovich's works borrow the visual code of street art and apply it to the gallery. The artist combines textual and visual messages to recreate a recognizable aesthetic. Her site-specific works form a single narrative that blurs the boundary between individual pieces and creates the feeling of a continuous artistic expression.

"Fight Like a Girl" was created in 2020 for the exhibition Belarus. Art of Resistance in Amsterdam. Stylistically, Alena's works are both graffiti and protest posters. Many have become popular symbols of protest. Like the artist's artwork, protest posters often include drawings and designs in addition to words.

The central element of Alena Davidovich's work is the popular slogan

for the women's and feminist movement "Fight Like a Girl" — a phrase that reflects the strength of weakness. Combining the phrase "be like a girl," meaning weak, gentle and fragile, with the verb "fight" creates a feminist message that defines the new strategies of resistance and tactical lines of struggle. The artist underscores the important role of weakness in the Belarusian protests. As the artist herself said, "The wall painting was made to draw attention to a new creative approach in non-violent resistance where the game changers were mostly women."*

** Alena Davidovich. From her correspondence with the curators of the exhibition "Every Day." 2021*

Alena Davidovich (1970) – artist, lives and works in Amsterdam. Graduated from the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik in 1988. Studied at the Belarus State Academy of Arts in Minsk. Graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam in 2004. The artist's works can be classified as site-specific art and often combine wall painting, video installation and performance.

ANDREI DUREIKA

PUNCTUATION

2021. Wall painting: water-based paint. 500x3000 cm

Andrei Dureika is an artist known for working with shapes and text, for whom the conceptual understanding of context and architecture are the basis for creating monumental art.

The current work is a variation of an asphalt drawing made on Novorossiyskaya Street in St. Petersburg in 2015 that was dedicated to Russia's war against Ukraine, and the fear of its continuation in Belarus. It was initially an attempt by the artist to understand the situation by linguistically decoding concepts and expressing it using words and texts. But paradoxical historical interpretations and aggressive revisionist

rhetoric so heightened the artist's focus on words that it resulted in a mishap of punctuation, numbness. "There are no words..." Here p u n c t u a t i o n comes to the rescue. Text, transformed into a sign of abstract impulsive language of ecstasy, is comparable to the sound of pictorial speech. It is no coincidence that to convey this tragic and traumatic experience the artist refers to the prehistoric monochrome painting in the El Castillo cave as a form of undeciphered proto-language. But this isn't a path of pure abstraction. The element's symbolisms, multiplied and repeated in space and time, act as a post-verbal signal.

Andrei Dureika (1971) – artist and curator. Lives and works in Dusseldorf. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College (1991) and Dusseldorf Art Academy (2004). Archives and chronicles Belarusian actual art abroad. Member of the expert council of the KALEKTAR / ZBOR research platform of Belarusian contemporary art.

eeefff

OUTSOURCING PARADISE 2019–21. Video installation [20:18] surrounded by a wall of water, code, office furniture. 250×500×500 cm

“Outsourcing Paradise” is a continuation of the study of outsourcing — the hidden labor supporting many platforms and IT companies. eeefff creates a fictional space where these workers can talk about their experience of alienation. The artists post questions about the possibility of “algorithmic solidarity” among the so-called “digital proletariat.” By focusing on the figure of an outsourcer and “interface deformer,” on his or her “algorithmic production drama,” eeefff shifts the focus from the user to the operator.

The installation refers to office fun zones at IT companies that blur the boundaries of work and free time. Displayed at the exhibition is the recording of a screen where websites and platform aggregators are “decomposed.” The video is surrounded by a waterfall. In a situation of long-term protests, where mood swings, fear, burnout and fatigue are common, recreation and

the creation of structures and networks of mutual support take on important political meaning.

During the protests, information technologies (development of platform aggregators, open source code, bots, maps, big data) become important tools in the fight against the power structures and the apparatus of violence. When technologies are removed from the market their emancipatory potential is returned, connections and networks of solidarity are formed between those creating and using the IT solutions.

The video work was created with the support of the <https://liquid-fiction.space/> residence initiated by Frida Sandström; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art; Berliner Gazette as part of the exhibition SILENT WORKS — The Hidden Human Labor in AI-Driven Capitalism.

eeefff is a collaboration of two people, Dzina Zhuk and Nicolay Spesivtsev. Active from 2013. Based in Minsk and Moscow. eeefff works with emotional effects of the new economic regimes. Methods: making public actions and situations, online interventions, framing environments and settings. Co-organizers of WORK HARD! PLAY HARD!

“Future Perfect Continuous”, Shimmering Infrastructures, Solidarity Networks, “Alive and Fragile”

FREE CHOIR

WORTHY SONGS

2020. Video documentation of an action

Workers of state cultural institutions joined the protests and strikes immediately after the announcement of the election results. The cast of the Janka Kupala National Academic Theater gave performances in front of the theater building. The Free Choir sang near the building of the Belarusian State Philharmonic in Minsk and in many other locations in the city. On August 13, 2020, philharmonic workers went on strike. They stood on the steps of the Concert Hall with posters saying “My vote was stolen.” The Free Choir performed Belarusian songs that have become popular during the protests: Mury (Walls), Heta My (This is us), Magutny Bozha (O Almighty God), Sciah (Flag), Pahonya (Pursuit).

The choir appears in random public places in Minsk — in underground passages and subway cars, at the railway station, near the circus, in shopping centers, near the Holocaust victims memorial, and also participates in self-organized neighborhood concerts.

“The Free Choir is a group of musicians who cannot stay silent, for whom song is a way of expressing their position,” the participants say.

According to them, the choir was a reaction to the political events in the country.

The Free Choir has two albums: Kaliadny (Christmas carols) and Hodnyja Piesni (Worthy Songs), which includes Belarusian patriotic songs and hymns. The second album was dedicated to Raman Bandarenka and all the Belarusians who are fighting for their freedom. Some of the songs in the album were banned at times and their authors killed. The album contains works by 20th century composers Mikalai Ravensky and Uladzimir Terauski, and contemporary composers Zmitser Vaitysyushkevich, Olga Podgaiskaya and Andrey Melnikaw. The Worthy Songs project is a revival of Belarusian cultural traditions and the voice of a new political reality.

The Free Choir was organized in August 2020 in Minsk as a reaction to political events in the country. It included musicians from different choir groups. The choir appears suddenly in random public places in the city, sings songs that became popular during the Belarusian protests, and then disappears. They have released two albums: Kaliadny (Christmas Carols) and Hodnyja Piesni (Worthy Songs).

Resistance Tactics, Protest Choreography, “Partisan Avenue”, “Alive and Fragile”

ZHANNA GLADKO

ON THE OTHER SIDE

FORCE FARCE FALSE. 2020. Object, dust on glass.
150x100 cm
On the Other Side. 2021. Set of 6 photographs, glass,
print. Each one 40x40 cm
FORCE FARCE FALSE. 2015–20. Video installation:
strings [15:00]

These works by artist Zhanna Gladko are from the project “Inciting Force.” The series started out as an analysis of the artist’s difficult relationship with her father but expanded with time, both in terms of media and themes: the main focus is on mechanisms and relationships between power and authority in society, gender issues, culture and interpersonal relationships.

The installation “On the Other Side” consists of a set of self-portraits in which the artist recreates gestures borrowed from protest choreography while standing in front of the sea.

The three-channel video shows the artist’s father destroying her piano (2015), her performance with strings from this piano (2016), and a piece of glass with the slogan “FORCE FARCE FALSE.” The slogan was created on glass using dust that Zhanna collected over a long period of time in her parents’ apartment. The glass was kept

on a balcony overlooking Partisan Avenue in Minsk, which became one of the main locations of the protests. The video shows police vans and protesters moving along the street on different days, the Sunday marches, and the column of demonstrators during the Partisan March on October 18. The inscription “FORCE FARCE FALSE” is a reference to a time of slogans, manifestos, instability, doubts, fears and hopes, a time of anger and inspiration looming in the air.

The artist says that this slogan is “a symbolic dedication to a turning point in the post-truth era when the flow of information is characterized by the layering, displacement and devaluation of meanings.”

*Zhanna Gladko.
From her correspondence with the curators of the exhibition “Every Day.” 2021

Zhanna Gladko (1984) – artist, lives and works in Minsk. Studied at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts in Minsk (2003–2009). Has been actively working in the field of contemporary art since 2010. Main series of works – “Inciting Force” – tells an autobiographical story. The artist works with family archives, videos, photography and objects.

JANNA GRAK

CENTRAL AND REVERSED PERSPECTIVE

2008. Installation: wood, metal, pigments, lacquer.
1350x330x230 cm. 180 elements, each 46x46x7.7 cm

This site-specific installation consists of modules from the artist’s previous works. Janna Grak often creates her sculptures from same-type modules and uses them in different projects, creating a constructor set that she uses to assemble her spatial compositions.

The spectator can go through both spaces and see the work from different viewpoints. From one side the work represents the concept of reverse perspective, meaning that the vanishing point is placed as if inside the viewer, making him or her the starting point of the work.

CAPTURE OF SPACE

2020. Installation: wood, ceramics, string.
900x500x500 cm

“Capture of Space” is an abstract sculptural wall composition made of ceramic and wooden objects connected by string. The work addresses the dynamics of expansion, a network evolving in space. The image of a network refers to the method and nature of organizing social and technological networks, which play a key role in the current events in the country. Working with colors and objects, the artist pays special attention

The other side creates a delusion of central perspective. Thus, one and the same work encompasses two different approaches to the problem of perspective at the same time.

By referring to the theme of central and reverse perspective, the artist places the viewer in the simultaneous presence of opposing models of vision. One of them is absolutely monochrome and black, the other is bright and colorful. This work in many ways reflects the current state of people in Belarus, who see different prospects in society and are experiencing sharp mood swings.

to the optical illusion of movement in space. The constantly changing, pulsating optics of linear structures is commensurate with life. As the artist put it, “Sculpture has a right to move.”*

*Quote from
<http://zbor.kalektar.org/10/>

Janna Grak (1971) – sculptor, lives and works in Dusseldorf. Member of the art group Revision. Graduated from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts in Minsk (1998), Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Arts in Amsterdam (2000), Dusseldorf Arts Academy (2006). Creates sculptures, videos, interactive objects and site-specific installations based on the optical illusion of geometric shapes.

MIKHAIL GULIN

PERSONAL MONUMENT

October 9, 2012. Action performed on Independence Avenue and squares in Minsk: photo and video documentation including performance directed by Valentina Moroz; changeable interactive object: wood, acrylic, lacquer. Three elements 40x40x40 cm and one 40x40x120 cm

Mikhail Gulin's actions in the urban space are always poignant. His playful style and use of ironic interactive elements are particularly conducive to social contact. The action "Personal Monument" during the Minsk festival Going Public. On Difficulties of Public Expression seemed to contain but the slightest hint of provocation. Nonetheless, it became an iconic work of the decade, anticipating today's protest tactic of "walking." The artist created the changing sculpture using the most basic geometric elements: three pink cubes and one yellow rectangular block. He walked

along the avenue and built temporary sculptural variations on the blocks in the main city squares. But the "game" ended on October Square when he was arrested and beaten by riot police and his work was confiscated. Despite being acquitted in court, the artist lost his teaching position at the university. Exposing a number of social and cultural conflicts, the action presented an accurate picture of the repressive reality in modern Belarus, where even a geometric abstraction in public space becomes a political statement.

IMMORTAL

2020. Changeable object: wood, plastic, acrylic, LEDs. 10 elements 100x100x40 cm

The artist created the installation "IMMORTAL" for the Kyiv exhibition and borrowed the title from the famous slogan "The People's Deeds are Immortal" that's on top of the buildings in Victory Square in Minsk. The artist says that in the given political realities of lawlessness and

repression, he finds the religious aspect, the concept of an afterlife and punishment after death, particularly important. The artist deliberately brings together Soviet and Orthodox iconography expressed in the image of hellfire.

Mikhail Gulin (1977) – artist and curator. Lives and works in Minsk. Graduated from the department of monumental and decorative art of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts (2004). Does projects together with Antanina Slabodchikava as a member of the art group 1+1=1. Primary media: painting, performance and installation.

ULADZIMIR HRAMOVICH IN COLLABORATION WITH GENADZIY GRAK

WEAK HORIZON

2021. Plywood, glass, oracal. 300x1000 cm

Uladzimir Hramovich sees materials such as concrete, granite, metal, paper and paint not just as surfaces that history leaves its imprint on but as agents that themselves deform history. In his artistic practice, Hramovich draws on the history of modernist art and architecture, the history of ideology and political movements, and the transformation of the urban space in Minsk. He is interested in the tension between the past and the present and studies monuments and rituals of memory that are overloaded with ideological meanings and embodied in material objects.

The work "Weak Horizon" is a model of a modernist façade based on the destroyed VDHKh expo center (1968–2017) in Minsk,

inside of which is a frieze or "horizon" of narratives about the 30th anniversary of Belarusian independence (1991–2021). The "horizon" of images refers to different ideological counterpoints of the modern Belarusian state and its architectural embodiment (National Library (2006), new building of the Belarusian Great Patriotic War Museum (2014), etc.), as well as the history of destruction and construction sandwiched between nostalgia for the Soviet past and the capitalist present. The work was created in collaboration with Genadziy Grak, a Belarusian graphic artist of the older generation. The artists present a kind of monument to the weak horizon of history.

Uladzimir Hramovich (1989) – artist, lives and works in Minsk. Graduated from the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik in Minsk (2009) and the graphics arts department of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts in Minsk (2015). Member of the Problem Collective since 2016. Works with installations, graphics and video. Explores themes of history and memory.

Genadziy Grak (1937) – graphic artist and book illustrator. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College (1961) and Belarusian State Theater and Art Institute (1976). Has been participating in art exhibitions since 1967. His works can be found in the Museum of Modern Fine Art in Minsk as well as in private collections in Belarus and abroad.

Resistance Tactics, Protest Choreography, "Partisan Avenue", (Im)possibility of Language

"Partisan Avenue", (Im)possibility of Language

Protest Choreography, "Future Perfect Continuous", "Partisan Avenue"

BORIS IWANOW

RED SHORE

Skull. 2019. Graphite on paper. 155×122 cm
 Red Shore. 2019. Graphite on paper. 130×310 cm
 Portrait of Maxim's Grandfather. 2019.
 Graphite on paper. 155×122 cm
 Portrait of Katya's Grandmother. 2019.
 Graphite on paper. 155×122 cm
 Portrait of Kaji's Neighbor. 2019.
 Graphite on paper. 155×122 cm

The "Red Shore" project, part of which is displayed at the exhibition, is a retrospection of the Belarusian village. Working with the past and delving into the history of the "collective farm project," in his series of drawings Iwanow speaks paradoxically about the present and the future of disappearing village culture. His realistic drawings are melancholic, naive and ironic. The people, objects and fragments of ruins are a reference to the Soviet utopia of collectiveness. More than a decade ago, Boris moved from the city to the village of Vurada in the Lyepyl region, where the Red Shore collective farm once existed. The artist studies its traces and begins his research of collective farm civilization at the village cemetery. The crumbling photographs on the

tombstones highlight the fragility of life. He transfers the portraits from the tombstones with archaeological precision and later enlarges them into large graphite drawings on paper, which preserve the lightness and reflection of light, despite the author's gloomy poetry. "November. Drizzle. I peer into time and gradually in my subconscious the shores of this fantastic country called 'RED SHORE' appear. 'THE DEPARTED' rise from their graves and ask: 'WHY?' There is no answer There are only drawings on paper made with a simple pencil, gray like the dullness of our existence."*

* Boris Iwanow. *From his correspondence with the curators of the exhibition "Every Day."* 2021

Boris Iwanow (1952) – artist, lives and works in the village of Zaozernaya, Lepiel District, Vitebsk Oblast. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College (1970) and the Belarusian State Academy of Arts (1993). In his current projects he focuses on the history of the Belarusian countryside. Works with photography, drawing and painting.

SERGEY KIRYUSCHENKO

BILBOQUET

2020. Diptych: acrylic on canvas. 200×240, 280×240 cm

Sergey Kiryuschenko's works have been gathering attention for well over four decades now while the artist himself has been adjusting the direction his practice takes every five to seven years. Although he sees himself as a painter, he, nonetheless, constantly keeps turning to other media.

In the diptych "Bilboquet," the artist hints at the playful nature of the painting, where, in pursuit of an object, the viewer finds themselves in a multidimensional reality, leaving only pointed traces of movement. In

his practice, Kiryuschenko has long turned to the grid — the emblem of modernism in the fight against reactionary. According to Rosalind Krauss, it is the grid that declares the art space to be autonomous, closed and self-sufficient. It follows that the autonomy of art gives artistic practice a certain independence, where politics is not professionally competent, which means that its power is not absolute.

BLACK STRUCTURES

BS-101. 2018. Pigment on canvas. 160×240 cm
 BS-102. 2018. Pigment on canvas. 160×240 cm
 BS-103. 2018. Pigment on canvas. 160×240 cm
 BS-104. 2018. Pigment on canvas. 160×240 cm

The abstract sometimes more accurately conveys the state we are in, especially in times of heightened tension and strong, ongoing conflict. In its title, the series "Black Structures," which consists of four works, places the viewer in a field of collision, and not only in purely a pictorial and figurative space. The choice of palette, reinforced by the strict composition,

conveys the sharp contrast of emotion. The author tries to overcome the dominant totality, whether through multiplication and variability, sharp dizzying turns of direction, opposing fullness and emptiness, and even a decisive line across the grid — all for the sake of a victorious white stroke of lightning.

Sergey Kiryuschenko (1951) – artist, born in Chita (Russia), lives in Minsk. Studied at the Belarusian Polytechnic Institute (1969) and the Belarusian State Theater and Art Institute (1972–77). Member of the Belarusian Union of Artists. Member of the Nemiga-17 group (1988–2002). Co-founded the research platform of Belarusian contemporary art KALEKTAR in 2014.

ALEKSANDER KOMAROV

PALIPADUAZENNIJE

2012/21. Three-channel video installation: metal, wood, cardboard. 700×700×400 cm. Video [20:00]

In his artistic practice, Aleksander Komarov researches social identity, the hybridity of language, and different forms of ownership. The installation “Palipaduazennije” is part of the “Language Lessons” series, which includes video interviews with three Minsk musicians, a dictionary, and a vinyl record. The series is dedicated to the issue of language in modern Belarusian culture. The video installation uses footage shot by Komarov in the botanical garden in Amsterdam. He invited Belarusians living in the Netherlands to create an imaginary language that sounds like Belarusian. Together they made a small dictionary where random Belarusian words were fused with the Latin names of plants in the garden where the filming took place.

Aleksander Komarov (1971) – artist, lives and works in Berlin. His projects are dedicated to the issues of migration, identity, globalization and the state of contemporary art in its economic context. Komarov is co-founder of the AIR Berlin Alexanderplatz residency. He has been lecturing at New York University Berlin since 2018.

Palipaduazennije, pavierbadzhennije, pipludzhannije, pasifloraszina, prezennije — these are some of the words from this invented language or slang. Identity, boundaries and transit, migration and post-socialism are key issues in this project. Komarov refers to the tricky status of the Belarusian language in the cultural policy of the Belarusian state, its fragility and disappearance, but also to resistance, survival and “germination.” The artist shows how language can be perceived not only as a hierarchical structure that accumulates and reproduces power but as a shared feature that is produced, changed and developed through exchange and communication.

ZAKHAR KUDIN

OPEN CANVAS (ZHES-ART)

ZhES-Art #1. 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 289×190 cm
ZhES-Art #2. 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 290×190 cm
ZhES-Art #3. 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 290×190 cm
ZhES-Art #4. 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 290×190 cm
ZhES-Art #5. 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 290×190 cm
ZhES-Art #6. 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 276×185 cm
Courtesy of the family collection of Natalia Coudine and Tanya Kudin

Cleanliness and order are the first things tourists notice in Belarus. But the stereotypical comment “it’s so clean here” is rarely followed by how the locals would say it: “like a military barrack.” While working on the project, Zakhar Kudin copied onto canvases “works of ZhES-art” — geometric graffiti created by the municipal services workers who paint over protest slogans and drawings. Also known in Belarusian art as “fuprematism” (fundamental suprematism), it has long been a symbol of censorship. Thus, the artist appropriated temporary artifacts and translated them into the field of art. The artist emphasizes the irony of the situation: while fighting political statements, the authorities involuntarily create objects that refer to modernism and avant-garde — like the works of the UNOVIS (Utverditeli Novogo Iskusstva or The Champions of the

New Art) art group in Vitebsk — which the Soviet system censored throughout the 20th century. By appropriating images, the artist realizes Malevich’s dream of a synthesis of Suprematist painting and architecture. Zakhar himself called this multi-layered contextual phenomenon “abstract realism.”

This project by abstract artist Zakhar Kudin was the subject of the documentary film “Pure Art” (2019) by Maksim Shved. Zakhar’s personal exhibition “Open Canvas” opened at the OK16 cultural hub in Minsk in 2017. Zakhar Kudin died in late 2019 while the film “Pure Art” was being shown in cinemas. In 2020, the authorities closed down OK16, which was owned by Belgazprombank. The bank’s former director and would-be presidential candidate Viktor Babaryka is still in prison.

Zakhar Kudin (1986–2019) – painter and sculptor. Lived in Minsk and New York. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College (2007). Defined his work as “neuro-art.” In recent years he worked with digital art and made several monumental projects. His works are in the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus and in collections in Europe, Asia and the USA.

ALEXEI KUZMICH

I BELIEVE, OR THE PHILISTINE WORLD OF POLITICAL ANIMALS

August 9, 2020. Action in two parts.
Video documentation [2:50]

On August 9, 2020, the day of the presidential election in Belarus, Minsk performance artist Alexei Kuzmich held a political artistic action in two parts. In the first part, the artist came to his polling station during the day, registered, took a ballot, and entered the voting booth. In red marker he drew a phallus on the ballot and stigmata on his palms. He took off his shoes, stripped down to a loincloth, stuck the ballot to his bare chest, blindfolded himself with the official flag of the Republic of Belarus, walked to the center of the polling station, and stood there for 20 seconds in a pose symbolizing the crucifixion of Christ. Then he picked up his things and left.

During the second part of the action — at night — the artist stood briefly in the same image and posed in the city center between protesters and police. Alexei Kuzmich carried out his action during one of the most

tense nights, putting himself at great risk. Though judging from the video, he managed to inspire the protesters. The artist was later arrested, but survived jail thanks to the help of hospital doctors. He fled Belarus and now moves between different cities of Europe: Budva, Paris and Berlin.

The artist contrasts his hypermasculine body with the institutions of power and culture. The heroization of the artist performer is achieved not only through masculine rhetoric but also through the figure of a martyr, which refers directly to Christian canon. This is very important for Alexei, whose father is a Belarusian artist known for his paintings depicting Madonna. Video documentation of the action is accompanied by two texts written by the artist.

Alexei Kuzmich (1987) – artist and performance artist. Studies social and political context, transforming it into material for his art. Was forced to emigrate from Belarus due to political persecution by the authorities after his performance on the day of the presidential election in Belarus in 2020 and now lives in different cities of Europe.

LIPOVY TSVET GROUP

COMMOTION IN BUS №23 November 19, 2011. Video [7:21]

Even though the Lipovy Tsvet group was only around for two years, their activist practices were a reaction to the political crisis in the country. They managed to expose the diseases of Belarusian society and show that fear and violence are hiding behind the apparent stability — the central ideology of the Lukashenka regime.

Lipovy Tsvet was founded in Mogilev by Denis Limonov and Yuliy Ilyushchenko. It was there that they filmed the emotional video-premonition “Carousel,” in which Denis Limonov spends time in an apartment and public space, worrying and exposing the unhealthy chaotic atmosphere of the city and the country. Later the group moved to Minsk and two new members joined: Katya Samigulina and Ira Trubina. Interestingly, all four members of the group never participated in an action together, which also reflects the complexity, sporadic nature and safety of actionist practice in conditions of lack of freedom.

In November 2011, the group carried out its action “Commotion in Bus №23.” In the video, Denis Limonov eggs on passengers to discuss the political situation in the country. He creates a tense atmosphere in the thick of everyday life, urging Belarusians not to be afraid. The seven-minute video of the confrontation between the artist and passengers was posted on the website naviny.by and quickly got thousands of views.

The group’s works were displayed only once in Belarusian institutions: during the closed-door roundtable “Art and Government Pressure: The Belarusian Version” (moderated by Alexander Kolesnikov) at Ÿ Gallery on January 8, 2012. The format of this event caused a conflict within the group that ultimately resulted in its breakup.

CAROUSEL

2010–11. Video [38:53]

Lipovy Tsvet group (2010–2012) – art group from Mogilev that was active in 2010–2012. Members: Denis Limonov (1983), Yuliy Ilyushchenko (1985), Ekaterina Samigulina (1989), Irina Trubina (1987). The group’s activities coincided with an upsurge of civic activism in Belarus and is a prime example of politically oriented art.

ALEXEV LUNEV

ISLAND TAMENESS

Landscape. 2020. Graphite and acrylic on paper.
104×140.5 cm
Landscape. 2020. Graphite and acrylic on paper.
104×140.5 cm
Écorché. Thing! 2021. Graphite and acrylic on paper.
105×150 cm
Écorché. Thing! 2021. Graphite and acrylic on paper.
105×150 cm
Landscape. 2020. Graphite and acrylic on paper.
104×140.5 cm
Écorché. Thing! 2021. Graphite and acrylic on paper.
105×150 cm

Alexey Lunev's graphic work "There is Nothing" (2009), which declared the horizon of global absence or ideal zero, became an iconic work in Belarus. Ten years later, in 2019, the artist made "Écorché. Thing!" as an antonym to "There is Nothing." These two works complete a coordinate system and the artist proposes examining everything that he's made in the space of these works.

Alexey Lunev works with the themes of time and repetition, reproducing his works and creating them using a time and labor intensive technique. The exhibition features two sheets, each of which is reproduced three times. The artist had two reasons for creating "Landscape." The first was the film based on the Tennessee

Williams play "Boom" — the story of a female philanthropist and misanthrope who meets her death on a paradise island. Elizabeth Taylor's remark "Pain! Injection!" in this work is almost a direct quote. The second is the association of Belarus with an island and the concept of "island tameness," which gives the work its name and refers to the reduced wariness among animals living for a long time on an isolated island with no predators. Alexey Lunev arranged the graphic sheets in a tautological sequence, covered them with a reflective glass surface, and placed them at an angle to the floor so as to create an unstable installation that repeats and flickers, eluding the viewer's attention.

Alexey Lunev (1971) – artist, curator, member of the expert council of ZBOR. Studied at the Minsk State Art College named after A. K Glebov (1989–1991). In his works refers to the fluidity and experience of time. Explores this phenomenon through multiplication. Lives and works in Navapolatsk.

ANGELINA MASS

I'M BELARUS AND I WON'T GIVE UP

The Grail of Our Memory. 2020.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm
I'm Belarus and I Won't Give Up. 2020.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm
Freedom is Behind Faith and Courage. 2020.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm
Broken Mirrors Full of Promises. 2021.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm
Mother of Tears. 2021.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm
Fear Sits in a Deep Hole. 2021.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm
Sham. 2021.
Watercolor, acrylic, pastel on paper. 70×100 cm

Artist Angelina Mass creates self-portraits reflecting her experiences associated with the dramatic events taking place in Belarus. She was a direct participant in the protests and is now observing and commenting on what's happening from Berlin, expressing an active civic position. The graphic self-portraits created during this period reflect the artist's wide range of feelings: from tears and excitement to a determination to fight, from hatred of the aggressors to belief in victory.

The images displayed depict a grail that collects tears in order to not forget everything seen and experienced; a militant pose on a stork — an unofficial symbol of Belarus; and a flaming heart, wounded by the inhuman actions of the security forces it witnessed. In the series of queer self-portraits, Angelina addresses issues of sexuality and migration, physicality and pain, desire and depression. Her works refer to (post) punk subcultures and queer aesthetics, reworking and exaggerating the affectivity and narcissism of social media and digital platforms.

Angelina Mass (1995) – artist, lives and works in Berlin. Graduated from the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik in 2013. Currently studying in the intermedia department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan. Author of the musical project "Scum Angel."

VIKA MITRICHENKO

AMUSING PICTURES

2021. Ceramic tiles with overglaze drawings. 180x300 cm

In her work "Amusing Pictures," Mitrichenko describes her experience in Belarus. This is a picture diary, a report on one day in the life of the artist. But at the same time it is also a record of the emotions felt when experiencing from a distance events that cannot be influenced.

At first glance, Vika Mitrichenko's works are very individual, full of personal mythology and family stories. But on closer inspection you can see that these are deep, universal issues. By talking about complex issues and avoiding generalizations, Vika allows the viewer to become part of the story. According to the artist, "Cultural heritage, the history of art, big social turbulences, global political and cultural shifts, they are just patchworks sewed together from a huge number of small peculiar stories, little insignificant events, family tales and personal anecdotes."* In sewing this blanket out of visual quotes

from contemporary and classical works, and fastening them with notes from her diaries, the artist turns reflections about censorship in art, professional activity and political crises into fascinating comics.

The use of ceramic tiles emphasizes the connection between the private and the political, the personal and the social. The tile simultaneously refers to both the home and to public spaces.

Through helplessness, but at the same time an understanding of the irreversibility of retribution against executioners and rapists, at the end it suddenly becomes clear that "Wrapped in carpets, we'll be victorious."** And this gives hope.

* Vika Mitrichenko. *From the artist's statement.* — vikamitrichenko.com/cv

** Vika Mitrichenko. *From the work "Amusing Pictures."* 2021

Vika Mitrichenko (1972) – artist, lives and works in Amsterdam. Graduated from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts (1995), Gerrit Rietveld Academy (2004) and Rijksakademie (2007) in Amsterdam. Works with installations, graphics and sculpture. Exhibited at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, MAD Museum NY, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Musee des Arts Decoratifs Paris, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen.

"Alive and Fragile", (Im)possibility of Language, Strength of "Weakness"

MARINA NAPRUSHKINA

PLATFORM

2007/21. Acrylic and varnish on wood. 300x700x200 cm

"Partisan Avenue",
Protest Choreography,
(Im)possibility
of Language

"Platform" might be mistaken for a minimalist sculpture, but is actually a copy of the platform used by the present government of Belarus. For important events the platform is set up, as a propagandistic instrument to glorify the President statesmanship and divert attention from politics. The absurdity of this solitary red pedestal reflects on the excessive use of the term 'platform' as an

imaginary basis for dialogue and freedom of speech, whilst at the same time this freedom of speech is stifled in most 'democratic' societies. The stage also makes reference to the exhibition as a space where subjects that are otherwise suppressed can be discussed and reflected upon in a way that is beyond real politics.

I WANT A WOMAN PRESIDENT

2020. Acrylic on canvas. 180x220 cm

Resistance Tactics, (Im)possibility
of Language, "Alive and Fragile",
"Strength of Weakness", Solidarity
Networks

The canvas begins with the words "I want a woman president" and is an homage to the poem by American artist Zoe Leonard "I Want a President," 1992. Naprushkina articulates the politics presented by people with "other" experiences, ones that professional politicians don't have. In doing so she criticizes the patriarchal status quo in Belarus and searches for an alternative language of political expression.

Marina Naprushkina (1981) – artist, lives and works in Berlin. Founder of the Office for Anti-Propaganda platform, New Neighborhood / Moabit initiatives. Her work is aimed at creating structures based on self-organization. Participant of international exhibitions and biennials: 11th Istanbul Biennale, 7th Berlin Biennale, Kyiv Biennale, and others. Author of books and texts.

**MATERIALS FOR
THE OFFICE FOR
ANTI-PROPAGANDA**

Newspapers “Belarusian Selfgovernment”. 2011–13
Coloring book “My Dad is a Policeman, What He Does at
Work”. 2011
Notebooks. 2020–21
Printed materials in display cases: digital and offset
print, felt-tip pen on paper. 2010–20

Resistance
Tactics, “Alive
and Fragile”,
Solidarity Networks

In 2007 Naprushkina founded the Office for Anti Propaganda. It concentrates on power structures in nation-states, often making use of nonfiction material such as propaganda issued by governmental institutions. Started as an archive on political propaganda the “Office” drifted to a political platform. In cooperation with activists and cultural makers, Office for Anti Propaganda launches and supports political campaigns, social projects, publishes underground newspapers. For the exhibition Naprushkina presents a selection of newspapers, posters and exercise books.

ULYANA NEVZOROVA

**THIS POSTER
COULD BE THE REASON
FOR MY DETENTION**

October 22, 2020. Happening, video [0:56]*

Artist Ulyana Nevzorova has been active in the streets of Minsk since the start of the protests in August 2020. Her works, often anonymous – performances, posters, murals — comment creatively on the political situation in the country. One of her interventions on October 22, 2020 became very popular on social media. She held up a poster in a subway car that said “This Poster Could Be The Reason For My Detention.” This brief gesture instantly politicized the public space and provoked reactions by passengers: one woman tried to restrain the artist, while a guy, in a show of solidarity with the artist, unfurled a white-red-white flag behind her back. The brief and simple gesture showed the difficulties of self-expression in public space and the critical situation with freedom of speech in Belarus. According to the current legislation, even a one-person protest falls under Article 23.34 of the Code of Administrative

Offenses: violation of the procedures for organizing and holding mass events, which is punishable with a fine or imprisonment of up to 15 days. Absurd, dramatic situations like this happen all the time. For example, in 2018, LGBTQ+ activist Vika Biran was charged with an administrative offense for holding a mass event when she took a photograph with the poster “You are a fake” (it was considered a one-person protest) in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and KGB. Ulyana Nevzorova’s gesture and video capture the importance of physical presence as an extension of political space. The artist was not detained, but the words on the poster and the poster itself were entered into the investigation report before they arrested Ulyana’s sister, Maria Kalenik — an activist and student of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts.

* *Operator: Polina Nevzorova*

Ulyana Nevzorova (2001) – artist and activist. Lives and works in Minsk. Graduated from the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik and the Liberal Arts College in Belarus. Participant of the Belarusian Human Rights School program. Currently all her activities are related to human rights violations in Belarus. Works with graphics, photos and videos, street interventions.

Resistance Tactics, (Im)possibility of Language,
Protest Choreography, “Alive and Fragile”

ULADZIMIR PAZNIAK

POLITICS OF FEAR

Eat the Rich People. 2016. Bread crumbs.

Size of one letter: 8×6.5×1 cm

Temporary Lenin Mausoleum. 2016. Wax on wood.

21×44×34 cm

Model of an AK-47. 2016. Plastic. 12 cm

Chocolate Soldiers. 2016. Chocolate.

Size of one soldier: 15 cm

Bones. 2016. Wax. Size of one bone: 15 cm

Uladzimir Pazniak creates sculptures, objects, drawings, performances and videos. His politically engaged statements borrow from Soviet and post-Soviet history, as well as leftist political thought. Five works from his 2016 series "The Politics of Fear" are presented at the exhibition. The series exposes signs and traces of the Soviet political and military past: a reconstruction of the first wooden "Temporary Lenin Mausoleum"; a small souvenir replica of an AK-47 assault rifle; a cast of a chocolate soldier from the operetta The Chocolate Soldier based on George Bernard Shaw's play Arms and the Man. The artist deliberately provokes the situation by transferring images from Soviet history into

the Polish context in 2016, and this time into the Ukrainian context in 2021.

In this project the artist explores corporeality, mortality and immortality, eternity and temporality ("Bones" and "Temporary Lenin Mausoleum"). To create an image of the ephemeral, the artist makes his sculptures out of pointedly cheap materials such as wood, wax, chocolate and bread. For example, the artist created the sign "Eat The Rich People" using "prison clay" — chewed up bread. The Chinese-made model of a Kalashnikov and gadgets are a criticism of the market, consumerism and fetishism. This collection of objects is a reference to political fears, anxiety, conspiracy and populist discourses.

Uladzimir Pazniak (1985) – artist and teacher. Lives and works in Szczecin. Graduated from the art department of the State University of Grodno. Received a master's degree in painting and new media from the Academy of Art in Szczecin (2016). In his artistic practice he uses media such as sculpture, drawing, performance and video.

LESIA PCHOLKA

THE ART

OF THE REGIME

2020–21. Installation. 240×700×40 cm. Photographs from

the action "The Art of the Regime": digital print, banner fabric, wood

On August 15, 2020, cultural workers of Belarus held the action "The Art of the Regime" where they formed a chain of solidarity by the Palace of Arts and held up photos of protesters who had been beaten by the police on August 9–12. Artist Artem Pronin undressed to show the bruises and wounds on his body. After the action, the participants stuck the photographs on the billboard of Art-Belarus Gallery, whose collection had been seized even before the elections. One of paintings from the collection, Chaim Soutine's "Eva" (1928), has become one of the symbols of the Belarusian protests.

The cultural workers used the action to publicly express their disagreement with the current regime and to demand an end to police violence. This wasn't the only act of collective resistance by the artistic community: two days before, artists held

the action "Don't Paint — Strike!" to protest against the results of the elections and to express solidarity with the strikes sweeping the country.

Lesia Pcholka, like many other artists, has changed the focus of her practice: in the tense situation photography and documentation of events are becoming important acts of resistance. The Belarusian authorities are stripping journalists working for foreign media of their accreditations and prohibiting them from covering the events in the country. Social networks are becoming a new outlet for protest.

Echoing the action, documentary photographs are presented in an installation in the form of a solidarity chain aimed at drawing attention to the violence in the country and the legal default that continues in Belarus to this day.

Lesia Pcholka (1989) – artist, lives and works in Minsk. In her artistic and research practice works with the themes of memory and everyday life. Leader of the VEHA sociocultural initiative. Teaches at the European College for Liberal Arts in Belarus. Was detained on January 23, 2021 for participating in a picket.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS DOCUMENT

“Press under pressure” is the name of the website created to document evidence of repressions against independent media and journalists in Belarus. As a journalist, writing about the protests, filming them or streaming from them means putting yourself in danger of being detained or even sentenced for a crime. More than 400 journalists were detained in the six months of the protests. Many of them became involved in criminal cases or served an administrative sentence, many suffered violence at the hands of the police. Among the injured journalists were many photojournalists who were subjected to repression and beaten for doing their job, despite wearing a bright PRESS vest.

Documentary photography is present at the exhibition not only as a visual material that captures different aspects of protest activity at the micro and macro levels, public and personal moments, massive and almost invisible events — the presence of photojournalism in the exhibition is also a gesture of solidarity and support with the media.

The exhibition features a series of photographs by Nadia Buzhan, Alexander Vasukovich and Yauhen Attsetski. They were all detained at different times of the protests; Alexander Vasukovich was sentenced to 11 days of administrative arrest.

Despite this, each of them continues to document what is happening. Photojournalists perform different functions in the protests: they inform, some of their photos become symbols — such as the image by Nadia Buzhan, a photographer for

Nasha Niva weekly, of two girls kissing in front of a wall of riot police.

Photojournalism also plays an important role in documenting police violence and repression against protesters. Photographer and artist Alexander Vasukovich, who works with the topic of domestic and political violence, documents police aggression.

Even with the fear and threat of being detained, photographers manage to capture long-term changes. Yauhen Attsetski chronicles the transformation of the Square of Changes — a protest courtyard that has become a self-organized alternative public space. It was here that Raman Bandarenka was killed.

The series “Black & White. Live. Reportage photo from 90s” by photographer Sergey Kozhemyakin refers to events from thirty years ago — the protest movements, meetings and marches in Belarus in the 1990s. The social choreography of protest in these photos resonates with the present, the past becomes the present and rushes off into the future. In a global sense, the slogan “Every Day!” is not only about the temporality of the Belarusian protests in 2020-2021, it is also an indication that the struggle for one’s rights is not over.

Yauhen Attsetski (1983) – photographer and civic journalist. Based in Minsk. Works mainly with documentary photography. Co-founder of the fsh1 school of photography (Minsk). Organizers of the 2020 photography festival. Has worked with the UNDP, UNICEF, Red Cross.

Nadia Buzhan (1991) – photojournalist. Worked for Zviazda and TUT.BY. Presently works for Nasha Niva/ NN.BY, the oldest Belarusian newspaper. Took part in group exhibitions at Aff Galerie (Berlin, 2016), CECH (Minsk, 2014), Belarus Press Photo (Minsk, 2015), TUT.BY gallery (Minsk, 2019). Her projects address the themes of freedom and religion.

Alexander Vasukovich (1985) – independent photographer, based in Minsk. Won the Grand Prix and multimedia award at the Belarus Press Photo contest 2012 and Grand Prix at PRAFOTA 2015 for his project about domestic violence in Belarus. He works mostly on topics of human rights and social injustice.

Sergey Kozhemyakin (1956) – photographer, teacher of the history of photography. Lives and works in Minsk. Uses anonymous and personal photo archives to create a series of conceptual works. Participates in exhibitions in the USA, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, etc. His works are in museum collections around the world.

PROBLEM COLLECTIVE

INFORMATION BOARDS

Information Board 1. 2021.
Plastic, digital print, metal. 160×120 cm
Information Board 2. 2021.
Plastic, digital print, metal. 160×120 cm
Information Board 3. 2021.
Plastic, digital print, metal. 160×120 cm

Problem Collective — an artistic and research collective from Minsk — juxtaposes strikes in the historical perspective with the modern day strikes in Belarus. Many factories, universities, cultural institutions and companies are striking against police and state violence. Not reported by the official media, the strike manifests through low quality images, public statements, insider reports, employees' dismissals and arrests, chants and banners. The visual form chosen by the collective is an information board or stand — a popular tool used in schools, libraries and factories to disseminate information.

Every stand is dedicated to a specific theme related to the possibilities and political potential of a strike. "Information Board 1" makes reference to the relationship

between the movement of workers, extraction of natural resources and the notion of "the commons." "Information Board 2" reflects on a strike in a library — by both librarians, the lowest paid job in the country, readers and possibly even the books themselves. "Information Board 3" emphasizes the importance of a feminist strike and invisible care work. During a recent visit to the National Library of Belarus, one of the Collective's members asked one of the workers if they had been on strike, and she replied, "Oh, even if we were striking, nobody would have probably noticed." Problem Collective searches for visual imagery — abstract and concrete, figurative and realistic — of several important historical strikes and compares them with the strikes of 2020 and 2021.

Problem Collective is an artistic and research group formed in Minsk in 2016 by Aleksei Borisionok, Uladzimir Hramovich, Olia Sosnovskaya and Alesia Zhitkevich. Started as a reading group, Problem Collective hosts group reading sessions with a focus on the (post) socialist and modern history of Belarus.

PROTEST NEWSPAPERS

2020–21. Newspaper files printed on a printer

Political mobilization contributed to the emergence and distribution of protest newspapers — grassroots self-publications created anonymously and collectively. In the first days after the elections, when the internet was blocked throughout the country, the lack of up-to-date information forced people to go out into the streets and deliver information through face-to-face communication, graffiti, leaflets and newspapers.

One of the first such publications — Chestnaja Gazeta (Honest Newspaper) — was created on September 1, 2020, and soon this became a widespread practice. There are regional periodicals in Mogilev, Gomel, Bobruysk, Grodno and other Belarusian cities, as well as local newspapers that cover political events in various residential neighborhoods.

The main goal of the protest periodicals is to offer alternative, "truthful" coverage of events in the country for people who

don't have access to the Internet and who don't read independent media. They are also important because of repression of the media. Since the protests started, 76 independent media and political websites have been blocked, and in late 2020 the authorities stripped the largest information portal TUT.BY of its status as a media outlet.

Grassroots publications also help build a sense of solidarity. Anyone can download the latest issue of a newspaper from its website or telegram channel, print it out at home, and put it in mailboxes, leave it in a cafe or some other public place. Today these publications are distributed throughout the country, in large and small cities, and even in villages.

The exhibition features a weekly update of protest periodicals.

ALES PUSHKIN

A PRESENT FOR THE PRESIDENT

1999/2021. Replica of the object used in the action “A Present for the President ‘For Five Years of Fruitful Labor!’” held on June 21, 1999 at 38 Karl Marx Street in Minsk. Metal, manure, paper, acrylic, posters, pitchfork, handcuffs, money. 120×90 cm

“A Present for the President” is one of the most famous actions of contemporary Belarusian political art. It was a reaction to events in the country, including the end of Lukashenka’s first term as president on July 20, 1999. The artist went to the square in front of the Presidential Residence, dumped a cart of manure onto the asphalt, put devalued million ruble banknotes, the new constitution and an election poster with Alexander Lukashenko on top, and stuck a pitchfork into the pile with a banner saying “For five years of fruitful labor!” There was also a Belarusian red and green flag on the bottom of the cart. The flag and coat of arms used in the action are symbols of the regime and of Soviet restoration and are references

to the dramatic turning point in the modern history of Belarus — the 1995 referendum, after which the national symbols (the white-red-white flag and the Pahonya (“pursuit”) coat of arms) were abolished and Russian became an official language.

Ales Pushkin was detained almost immediately afterwards. The court sentenced him to two years of probation and five years of deprivation of rights. 17 years later, in 2016, after the exhibition “ZBOR. Belarusian Art Movement” at Izolyatsia in Kyiv, Belarusian customs officials confiscated the photo of the action that was displayed at the exhibition and the work was declared extremist by the court.

ART TUT.BY 2014

March 25, 2014. Video documentation of the action “Art0ccupy” during the exhibition “Art0ccupy” in the central square of Bobr, Belarus [6:24]

Almost all of Pushkin’s actions relate to the history of repressed national culture. The regularity and rhythm of his activity reveal the hundred years long struggle of Soviet vs. national, nomenklatural vs. artistic, technological vs. human. The action Art tut. by 2014 was held on Freedom Day and was timed to the anniversary of the proclamation of the Belarusian People’s Republic in 1918, which Soviet historiography stubbornly ignored. The current government, not afraid to look stupid and ridiculous, also resorts to repressive methods of elimination and destruction.

Ales Pushkin (1965) – artist, activist and performer. Born and lives in the town of Bobr. Graduated from the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik (1983) and the Belarusian State Theater and Art Institute (1990). Member of the Union of Artists of Belarus. Founder of the first private gallery in Vitebsk, Pushkin’s Place.

MAXIM SARYCHAU

I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU

2018–20. Installation: paper, digital photo print, drawing, documents, letters. 1300×300 cm

The central theme of the project is police violence. The unprecedented level of violence against peaceful protesters forced many Belarusians to take to the streets. Shock caused by the repressive actions of the authorities and demands to stop the repressions lie at the heart of the Belarusian protests. But the use of torture and violence in 2020-2021 is not something new for Belarusian law enforcement. In 2018, the UN Human Rights Council noted that these methods are often used by Belarusian police.

In the project "I Don't Want to Kill You," Maxim Sarychau explores the deep-rooted violence and its regular use against detainees. He documents interviews with people who were tortured and pressured by

law enforcement in the past five years and exposes mechanisms of aggression that are the norm rather than the exception in the work of state structures.

"I Don't Want to Kill You" is what a policeman said to one of the respondents while pressing the barrel of a pistol to the back of their head. The normalization of violence as a method of work is exemplified not only by the alarming statistics (more than 30,000 people have been arrested, most of them beaten, tortured and even raped) but also by the fact that no police have been charged for inflicting serious injuries, and no investigations made into the death of protesters.

Maxim Sarychau (1987) – photojournalist and artist. He works on long-term visual projects that address issues of power and violence, both by the state and within traditional society. His projects and photographs have been published in the Wall Street Journal, Die Zeit, Der Spiegel, Stern Crime, Meduza, Fotograf and others. Lives and works in Minsk.

ALA SAVASHEVICH

GHOST

2017. Steel and felt. 430×150×150 cm

In her artistic practice, Ala Savashevich refers to the collective experience of the Soviet past. She works with textile and clothing to research the relationship between materials and ideology, physical experience and body politics. The artist refers to monuments and the concept of "monumentality," analyzing their purpose during Soviet times, how their functions changed in the post-socialist context, and how their forms and meanings transformed.

She subverts monumentality by working with specific materials and mediums — textile and performance — that are capable of questioning the ideological aspects of materials.

Her sculpture "Ghost" (2017) draws attention to a secondary detail of the bronze Lenin statue in the town of Stolin, namely the coat. By exhibiting the coat, but removing the political leader's body, Ala refers to the themes of memory, ideology and materiality.

"Future Perfect Continuous",
"Partisan Avenue", Protest
Choreography,
Strength of "Weakness"

POSE. POSITION. WAY

2018. Video [00:57]

There is similar tension in her video "Post. Position. Way" (2019) in which a woman's heels rest against the points of metal stars. These contradictions between a body locked in ideological frameworks and its pose and expressiveness, monumentality and fragility, become the focus of the artist's research.

Ala made the video project "Voices" (2020) in response to the current protests in Belarus. Female cultural workers and activists from Poland read letters written by female cultural workers in Belarus about the ongoing political struggle.

"Future Perfect Continuous",
Mechanisms of Violence,
"Alive and Fragile"

Ala Savashevich (1989) – artist, lives and works in Wrocław. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College and studied at the Belarus State Academy of Arts in Minsk. Received her master's degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław in 2017. In her artistic practice uses monumental forms, videos, photos and performances to refer to collective and personal stories.

NADYA SAYAPINA

DOLLHOUSE

2020–21. Multimedia installation: metal, wood, acrylic, felt, paper, colored pencils, sound. 550×450×300 cm. Video “We Washed Each Other’s Hair” [8:40] is exhibited as a part of the installation. Nadya Sayapina (idea, model), Karolina Polyakova (video). Participants: Polina Brodik, Kasya Shulgan, Olga Komissarova, Lena Amnuel, Dia Proector, Nadiya Zhiva, Polina Babchenok, Viktoria Bavykina, Natasha Chychasova

The installation “Dollhouse” is a depiction of the artist’s and her cellmates’ personal experience in the Akrescina and Zhodino pre-trial detention centers. It was not only an experience of fear and frustration but also solidarity, caring, “quiet” tactics of resistance. Caring for each other, empathy, building fragile infrastructures of everyday life, interpersonal relationships, support systems and sisterhood - these are lines of solidarity networks where weakness opposes strength and imagination becomes a political tool.

The installation centers around a table — the foundation of the prisoners’ daily life — and blankets, which embody warmth and care, and were in short supply

in the overcrowded cell. Nadya and her cellmates made drawings and portraits, kept a pseudo-diary of the Little Mermaid, played games, wrapped each other in blankets, sang, washed each other’s hair, shared their intimate dreams.

The transformation of the cell into a “dollhouse” represents the reappropriation of a cold, inhuman space of violence and aggression. A dollhouse is a deceptive girlish world, a world of sweet dreams, sensuality, infantilism, security. But placed in the context of the prison system it becomes a symbol of the strength of weakness, lines of resistance, caring and support. This is how Nadya describes her experience:

*We washed and braided each other’s hair.
We shared personal stories and told fortunes using books.
We gave each other massages, improvised beauty treatments and ballpoint tattoos.
We played simple games and made our own out of paper.
We drew, sculpted and painted.
We kept diaries and sang songs.
We argued and flirted with the guards as if they were boys from a different group or counselors.
It’s like we were playing camp in a correctional facility.
We spent our days turning a ten-person cell into a dollhouse.*

Nadya Sayapina (1989) – artist. Using various forms, from painting to performance, she focuses on mediation as a way to express the voice of “others.” On September 7, 2020, Nadya was detained for participation in the protest against violence (indirectly – for the performance “Heritage”). She fled Belarus in October and now works in Kyiv.

DARIA SAZANOVICH

SUDDEN EXTREME INTIMACY

2020. Interactive installation: video, 3D animation

Daria Sazanovich is known in Belarusian cultural circles as an artist, illustrator and designer who uses modern media tools to help human rights and activist groups. In her project “Sudden Extreme Intimacy” she refers to the digital landscape that changed dramatically in 2020 (primarily due to the spread of the Covid-19 virus) and transformed how we work and communicate, and to the role of modern technology (messengers, algorithms, digital platforms) in the Belarusian protests. Daria creates 3D spaces and environments that capture this digital sudden extreme intimacy through a series of video calls where the speakers’ interfaces are blended to an uncomfortably close level.

“The role of the vertical was replaced by distribution and non-hierarchy, and participation in such communication doesn’t require sanctions or representatives.” That’s how Antonina Stebur and Aliaxey Talstou describe the role of technology in the protests in Belarus.* Daria Sazanovich’s work addresses this technological aspect and the distorted interfaces, masks, layers, glitches and errors — effects that refer to the new qualities of digital solidarity and empathy, and to the anxiety, frustration and alienation of the online experience.

* Antonina Stebur and Aliaxey Talstou, “Like Water. The Dynamics of the Belarusian Protest: From the Existing Technological Basis to the Utopian Horizon of the Future”. 2020 / Online: syg.ma

Daria Sazanovich (1990) – multimedia artist also known as sheeborshee. Lives and works in Bremen. Graduated from the European Humanities University in Vilnius (2016) with a degree in visual design and media. Currently studying towards a master’s degree in digital media at the University of the Arts Bremen. Designer and illustrator for many independent media and NGOs.

SERGEY SHABOHIN

SOCIAL MARBLE: THE RISE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN BELARUS

2020. Archive of a 20-day procedural exhibition. Multimedia installation: metal, wood, marble effect adhesive film, paper, digital print, computer. 1540x200x250 cm

In this work, artist and activist Sergey Shabohin refers to the metaphor of “social marble” — the cheap marble-patterned plastic film that municipal services in Belarus use to cover up graffiti on real marble. “In this symbol is the capacious image of the political structure of modern Belarus, where caustic ‘capitalist’ aerosol pigments are so deeply absorbed into ‘Soviet’ marble that they can’t be washed off and all that remains is to cover them up with Chinese-made film.”*

The archive documents how civil society in Belarus was born, with key prerequisites and dates; how protests moods emerged and were transformed; and how everything resulted in an organized, peaceful revolution. The

documentary materials include a timeline of the rise and development of protests, as well as a glossary of the new civil society. There are also texts, photographs, terms, quotes, references and dates in the form of documents printed and glued on the wall.

Contributors: Vika Biran, Aleksey Bratochkin, Volha Hapeyeva, Mikhail Gulin, Yuliy Ilyuschenko, Andrei Karpeka, Alexei Kuzmich, Marina Naprushkina, Nadya Sayapina, Antonina Stebur, Irina Sukhiy, Nikolai Khalezin, Vladimir Tsesler, Olga Shparaga.

* *Sergey Shabohin. From his correspondence with the curators of the exhibition “Every Day.” 2021*

Sergey Shabohin (1984) – artist, curator, activist, founder and chief editor of the portal of contemporary Belarusian art ArkAktivist.org, co-founder and chief editor of the platform of contemporary Belarusian art KALEKTAR.org. Lives and works in Poznan. Studied at the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik (2002) and the Belarusian State Academy of Arts (2009). Themes: communities, public space, museums and archives, fear and the social body.

JANA SHOSTAK

A MINUTE OF SHOUTING FOR BELARUS 2020/21. Action, video [10:00]

In her practice, Jana Shostak focuses on non-institutional actions where her minimalist approach to choice of method and her appeal to the linguistic tradition of contemporary art are clearly manifested. During Pope Francis's meeting with pilgrims in Krakow, Shostak held up a banner saying "Papa call me!" with her phone number. Her action was aimed at drawing attention to the problem of pedophilia in the Catholic Church. The image was broadcast all over the world. In 2017 the artist launched a campaign in Poland to replace the word refugee with the word Novak.

Many people have been forced to leave the country in the wake of the police violence, searches and criminal investigations since August 2020. But crossing the border during

COVID-19 remains extremely difficult for political refugees. Sometimes it seems that hopelessness and despair lead to failure. All that's left is to scream.

In early August, Jana organized the action "A Minute of Shouting for Belarus" where she would go out into the square by the EU Delegation building in Warsaw every day. On September 8, after Mateusz Morawiecki met with Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in a Krakow suburb, she "shouted" at the Polish prime minister in front of the cameras to draw attention to the problems at the border. Two days later he called her, confirmed that there had been violations in the implementation of the resolution, and resumed the issuing of visas to citizens of Belarus.

Jana Shostak (1993) – artist and activist. Lives and works in Warsaw. Received a bachelor's degree in art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow and in media art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, workshop of Myroslaw Balka (2017). Her artistic practice focuses on projects that galvanize communities outside the art world.

Strength of "Weakness", Resistance Tactics, "Alive and Fragile", (Im)possibility of Language

OLGA SHPARAGA

PRISON DRAWINGS

2020. 8 graphic and text pages, colored pencil on paper. 250x200 cm

"The drawings were made during my second detention, which began on October 9. They were made between October 18 and 23 in the prison in Zhodino (I was released on October 24). Drawing helped me to structure my time and to document and experience the moment more fully. I empathized with my cellmates, but I also admired them for their fortitude and spirit. That's how I wanted to remember them. In addition, the materiality of the prison has its own texture, and the sketches help me to feel it in greater detail, to try on the variety of prison experiences. These drawings are about shared female experience, about sisterhood."*

"Sisterhood in prison also showed how important it was for Belarusian society to build horizontal relations in

this revolutionary moment, and the huge role played by women; society places responsibility on them for empathy and caring for others. As Julia Mickiewicz pointed out in a conversation, while the women were in prison, the men — our partners and friends — began taking care of things more. I hope this will promote gender equality, without which the democratic transformations our society is so keen on will hardly be possible."**

* *Olga Shparaga, Vilnius, February 24, 2021*

** *Excerpt from Olga Shparaga's book "The Revolution Has a Woman's Face. The Case of Belarus." The book will be published by the German publishing house Suhrkamp.*

"Alive and Fragile", Mechanisms of Violence, Strength of "Weakness", Solidarity Networks

Olga Shparaga (1974) – philosopher, PhD candidate, head of the concentration "Modern Society, Ethics and Politics" at the European College of Liberal Arts in Belarus (ECLAB). Member of the Belarusian PEN Center, the Fem group of the Coordinating Council and the Office of Education of the Cabinet of Sviatlana Tikhnanouskaya. Author of the book "Post-Holocaust Community: Towards an Inclusive Society" (Minsk, ECLAB-Books, 2018) and the monograph "Awakening of Political Life: Essay on the Philosophy of Publicity" (Vilnius: YSU, 2010).

JURA SHUST

NEOPHYTE II

2021. Mixed media installation: car, fir branches, crepes, salt, adhesive tape, two video projectors, video [30:24]. 500×1500×1200 cm
The production of this video was supported by transit.at and Badischer Kunstverein (Karlsruhe) as part of the project “Things We Sense About Each Other”

As Belarus is gripped by a major political crisis, mass protests and unprecedented violence, and the world is engulfed in a pandemic, Jura Shust films a group of Belarusian millennials who find themselves in a parallel world. As the artist himself writes, “Through the looking glass, where time has closed in a loop, where the past and the future are one.”* Young people go through a series of mysterious rituals that are references both to pagan myths and to the aimless pastimes of modern youth: they make drawings on the ground, burn a tree stump, sing, beat each other with nettles and decode burns. The forest becomes a place of protection, a shelter for magical and partisan forces, a space of non-linearity and freedom.

The installation includes: a two-channel video recording of this serene and hypnotic world; a salt carpet covering up the words “We will not forget” — the phrase inscribed on the pavement near

the makeshift memorial to Alexander Taraikovsky (who was killed in the early days of the protests) that municipal workers would cover with salt; a numberless car crowned with pine needles that ran over the salt, hinting at the vehicles used by law enforcement to abduct people; as well as crepes hanging from branches that materialize from the video narrative as an archaic symbol of the sun. The heroes of the first part of the Neophyte project (2019) were looking for crypto objects in the forest — bookmarks or fern flowers. In the second part, young people explore spaces of opacity and regeneration under conditions of authoritarian rule and total surveillance.

* *Jura Shust. From his correspondence with the curators of the exhibition “Every Day.” 2021*

Jura Shust (1983) – artist, lives and works in Berlin. Received a master’s degree from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Ghent and graduated from the Higher Institute for Fine Arts, Ghent. In his artistic practice he focuses on the intersection of rituals and myths with technology, science and biopolitics.

ANTANINA SLABODCHYKAVA

REQUIEM FOR A DREAM

2021. Multimedia installation: wood, metal, wax, water-based paint, acrylic. 300×500×200 cm. Video “Gvalt” [2:14] with the participation of Iryna Herasimovich

The installation “Requiem for a Dream” is a complex, multi-layered statement reflecting the feelings, fears and hopes associated with the protests in Belarus. The emotional state of the protesters and those who remain in Belarus today have not only intimate and personal dimensions but also political ones.

The artist’s installation — a black cube the size of a police van — is a symbol of aggression and repression. Police vans packed with peaceful protesters are the first stage in an encounter with the machine of violence, one which more than 30,000 people have had during the protests.

Inside the narrow, claustrophobic space of the installation, the viewer sees a wax composition of the three main symbols of the election campaign and the united headquarters of the opposition. Before the

election, Antonina made a drawing of a heart, fist and victory sign that became one of the most important and recognizable symbols of the protests. Six months into the protests, the artist reinterprets the work in the new conditions of resistance. The melted wax composition, enlarged to life-size, is both a symbol of soft resistance tactics and a symbol of collective trauma. “I think my heart burst,” the artist says. “The awareness of what is happening is so unbearable.”

In this work Antonina shows the ability of art to not only depict something but also to create a field of tension, a collective space for experiencing complex, often contradictory emotions. It is this feeling of shock, of a “bursting heart,” that binds the protesters together and is important to the political solidarization of society.

Antanina Slabodchykava (1979) – artist, performer. Lives and works in Minsk. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College named after A. K. Glebov and the Belarusian State Academy of Arts. Works with different media, from collage to total installations. In her work she addresses themes of motherhood, identity, gender, power and memory.

ANNA SOKOLOVA

BLOWN-UP

2020. Multimedia installation: flag, wind machine controlled by frequency converter and Arduino, surveillance camera, monitor. 500×750×400 cm

A black-white-black flag flutters in the wind from the fan. The surveillance camera directed at the flag captures the movement of the white stripe on the black background and transmits the image to the monitor. The work was first shown at the Bloom Gallery in Dusseldorf in 2020. After the space was closed due to the quarantine, Anna Sokolova's dynamic installation could be seen through the large showcase window, which "duplicated" the monitor screen.

The meditative, repetitive movement of the white stripe on the black background is the main element of Anna Sokolova's series

Anna Sokolova (1975) – artist, lives and works in Dusseldorf. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College, Belarusian State Academy of Arts, Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts, Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Works with architectural space and multimedia installations.

of works entitled "Ornament." The works represent the experience of rethinking the potential of lines and ornaments in the context of new media. Video and computer programming of visual objects manifest the existence of a line as a dynamic rather than a static phenomenon. The medially conditioned dynamics of the line — that is, its constant transformation in time — offers new forms and ways for a work of art to interact with the surrounding space and a new way for the viewer to perceive this space.

Strength of "Weakness", (Im)possibility of Language, Solidarity Networks

TAMARA SOKOLOVA, ANNA SOKOLOVA

GUMMITWIST

2020/21. Multimedia installation: rubber band connecting two columns, wooden podium, monitor. 115×1000×150 cm. Video: full HD, no sound, [10:00] loop

The installation "Gummitwist" was created by Tamara Sokolova and Anna Sokolova for "Touchable Distance" — the last exhibition at the legendary Ÿ Gallery of contemporary art in Minsk. Its closure is connected with the arrest of one of the co-owners, Aliaksandr Vasilevich, who was recognized as a political prisoner. The exhibition was devoted to the quarantine and the experience of cooperation and solidarity during the coronavirus pandemic. Isolation and the complete absence of tactile connections prompted female artists living in different countries to create a joint work remotely. A feeling of uncertainty and

tension, in the literal sense, is transmitted through the elastic band stretched around the large columns, while the vibrating video image enhances the feeling of shock and fear. The reference to a children's game is an attempt to return to the carefree times between a mother and daughter. Lines of communication stretched in the void create signs that do not require speech. This is a tactic the artists use when working with minimalist sculpture, revealing the tragic situation where the imagination follows the rules of the game — to increase the level of difficulty the action is moved higher and higher.

Tamara Sokolova (1950) – artist and sculptor. Born in Mühlendorf, lives and works in Minsk. Graduated from the Belarusian Theater and Art Institute. Member of the Belarusian Union of Artists. Member of the Nemiga-17 group (1988–2002). Works with shapes that combine the concrete and the abstract.

Anna Sokolova (1975) – artist, lives and works in Dusseldorf. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College, Belarusian State Academy of Arts, Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts, Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Works with architectural space and multimedia installations.

OLIA SOSNOVSKAYA

EXERCISE

2021. Three digital collage, print on oracal.
Each 150×100 cm

Olia Sosnovskaya explores the relationship between language, affect and political movements through the concept of “musical scores” in the context of the current clashes in Belarus, as well as other political events in (post)socialist history. Analyzing movements as gestures and collective choreography, Sosnovskaya uses the concept of scores in a broader context: graphic recording of motion, including texts, documents, images. The score is used in recording movement, dance or music, and allows you to operate in several

temporalities: the past, because it is a document; the future, because it provides for endless reproduction of movement; and the present - the reading and performing of an action. A score is also a means of representation and suggests a certain degree of untranslatability (of an action and its effects into a sign).

The artist studies the use of language, speech and text in politics, in describing current events and past experiences. She works with the concept of affect and explores what remains beyond language.

Olia Sosnovskaya (1988) – artist, researcher and organizer. Lives and works in Vienna and Minsk. Member of the art group Problem Collective and co-founder of the self-organized platform Work Hard! Play Hard! Ph.D. candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Works with text, performative and visual practices.

OLIA SOSNOVSKAYA & A.Z.H.

F-WORD

2021. Video [12:10]

The video “F-Word” by artists Olia Sosnovskaya and A.Z.H. is part of the “Armed and Dangerous” project by Ukrainian artist Mykola Ridnyi (www.ozbroeni.in.ua). The video series is devoted to the war in Donbas, militarization of society and attitudes on violence in modern Ukraine.

Olia Sosnovskaya and A.Z.H. refer to the current protests in Belarus, political struggle, police and state violence through the discourse of fascism. In both the Western and post-Socialist contexts, this concept is a space of symbolic struggle. The topic of fascism and victory over it has for a long time been instrumentalized by the Belarusian government in its official narrative and is central to the modern state ideology of Belarus. Since the start of the protests, the ideological state apparatus has been trying

to paint those who take to the streets as nationalists and fascists, particularly by pointing to the use of the white-red-white flag (a symbol of the protests) by Belarusian collaborators in WWII. Meanwhile, the protesters also call the authorities and law enforcement “fascists.” They point to the repressive apparatus, which ignores the law and applies all forms of violence against “others” — those who don't support the government's status quo. Both of these positions, in turn, are criticized by the academic community for historical untruths.

The artists trace the context of the use of the concept of fascism and show the political, social, affective and symbolic effects they produce.

Olia Sosnovskaya (1988) – artist, researcher and organizer. Lives and works in Vienna and Minsk. Member of the art group Problem Collective and co-founder of the self-organized platform Work Hard! Play Hard! Ph.D. candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Works with text, performative and visual practices.

ALIAXEY TALSTOU

OBSERVING SOLIDARITY 2020. Video [16:57]

“Partisan Avenue”,
Solidarity Networks

The exhibition features two works that Aliaxe Talstou created during the protests. They are united by the idea of solidarity and unfold against the backdrop of the architecture of Soviet modernism, which was international and emancipative in nature and associated with the processes of the acceleration of the future.

The video “Observing Solidarity” documents a mass column of people marching past the Soviet high relief “Solidarity” that was created in 1979 by Anatol Arcimovich and Anatol Jaskin.

IF THE PAST WILL NOT END 2020. Performative poetry: video documentation [4:42]

“Future Perfect Continuous”,
“Partisan Avenue”,
(Im)possibility of Language

The work “If the Past Will Not End” was shown in Brest in November 2020 and documents a performative poetic statement. The artist reads his own poetry, referring to the legacy of Soviet modernism. He poses questions to himself and expresses doubts about ideology, the possible of the future, and changes in general. “I demand

Aliaxe Talstou (1984) – artist and writer. Lives and works in Minsk. Focuses on the topics of social and political tension, the impact of technology on human consciousness, environmental disasters, crisis in general. In his artistic practice he uses a wide range of techniques and media, from painting and drawing to speculative meditation.

The high relief depicts people of different countries united in the struggle for rights and freedoms around the world. The video was made during the first month of the protests, when many cultural workers felt lost amid the scale of the unfolding events. Aliaxe Talstou acts as an observer and records what happens. Two eras and two columns of solidarity reveal the impossibility of putting control of the protest in the hands of a single group, and take the movement for rights to the global level, uniting them with other social and political movements.

a fantasy! I demand a dream! Future!” he exclaims, emphasizing the impossibility of a linear understanding of time. In a situation where protest is a temporal chasm, poetry becomes one of the best ways to search for language in times of fragility, instability, uncertainty and hope.

IGOR TISHIN

LINE OF FEAR 2021. Installation: metal, wood, coal, acrylic. 400×900×270 cm

“Future Perfect Continuous”, “Partisan Avenue”,
Mechanisms of Violence

Igor Tishin’s art has always been undisciplined and out of control — like in the exhibition “Lessons in Bad Art” (1992), where he brought together the voices of pupils and students that represented an alternative to dogmatic academic education, and in his project “Quiet Partisan Movement” (1997), where he constructed the image of a partisan and brought it out of ideological instrumentalization.

The conceptualization of his artistic method, based on expression, collage, suggestiveness and special use of lines, takes place in the project “Soutine’s Line” (2012), where it is not only a means of figuration but also cultural and political development. The title of this project refers to Stalin Line, an open-air military history museum near Minsk that embodies the state approach to exploiting the history and memory of the Second World War. Soutine’s Line, as the line of avant-garde

and modernism, becomes the interrupted line of modernist art and politics, with its open utopian horizon and innovative artistic language. Like Chaim Soutine’s biography, this line slips and migrates, and resonates in 2020 with the seizure of Soutine’s painting “Eva” (1928) and the entire corporate collection of Belgazprombank as a result of the absurd arrest of one of the potential presidential candidates, Viktor Babaryka. This portrait of a girl became a symbol of cultural and political resistance in the summer of 2020.

In this new installation, in which the artist paints constructions made from plywood and boards, this line, as an artistic method and conceptual horizon, like the events in Belarus, strays, breaks off, stands out and accentuates. This is a line of fear and solidarity, doubt and despair, confusion and agitation. This is the line of effects — tense figures and tense landscapes.

Igor Tishin (1958) – artist, lives and works in Minsk, Brussels, St. Petersburg. Graduated from the Minsk State Art College (1978) and the Belarusian State Theater and Art Institute (1983). Taught at the Minsk State Art College (1986–91).

RAMAN TRATSIUK

ELECTRIC OBJECTS

Electric Objects / Pliers. 2020. Metal, wood, plexiglass, high voltage generator and electronics. 30x140x17 cm

Electric Objects / Sickles. 2018. Metal, wood, plexiglass, high voltage generator and electronics. 66x66x17 cm

Electric Objects / Saws. 2018. Metal, wood, plexiglass, high voltage generator and electronics. 70x160x17 cm

Electric Objects / Machetes. 2018. Metal, wood, plexiglass, high voltage generator and electronics. 50x50x17 cm

This work by Belarusian artist Raman Tratsiuk was created prior to the current events in Belarus, but the image of tools with an electric charge appearing between them accurately demonstrates the tension between protesters and security forces. Ordinary rusted garden tools — saws, sickles, machetes and pliers — placed in the context of the exhibition are perceived not as tools of labor but as objects of resistance, violence and death. From time to time an electrical spark appears between the objects, which is both a metaphor for an explosion of energy,

such as the energy of the protesters, and a metaphor for violence and fear.

Aesthetically, Raman Tratsiuk's works refer to avant-garde art. Black tools on a white background in a transparent plexiglass cube are references to the works of Kazimir Malevich, Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova. The artist, who in his practice often uses performance and ready-mades, characterizes these as performative works in the sense that the electric charge activates the objects and introduces an element of randomness and tension.

Raman Tratsiuk (1981) – artist, curator and performer. Lives and works in Poznan. Member of the Bergamot group. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan (1999–2007). Received his PhD in fine arts and multimedia communications in 2012. Associate professor at the faculty of art education and curatorship. Interests: performativity, participation, issues of self-presentation online, art in everyday life.

MAXIM TYMINKO

HOW LONG CAN YOU STARE AT 250,000 SQUARE CELLS CHANGING COLOR?

2021. Multi-channel media installation: two projectors, microcomputer, video cables, Javascript, generated in real time. 250x500x500 cm

This work is based on Game of Life, a mathematical model devised by mathematician John Conway in 1970. It is one of a wider class of mathematical models known as cellular automata.

A cellular automaton is typically a regular array of cells, each of which is either “off” or “on.” Following a small set of simple rules, a cell “chooses” its state depending on the state of neighboring cells. For example, this work uses the following rules: a cell switches “on” if it has exactly three “on” neighbors, and switches “off” if it has less than two or more than three “on” neighbors. Adding time to the system and initiating the process of choosing a state in an endless cycle produces an extremely complex and unpredictable system that resembles an evolving biological organism or colony expanding its habitat. Numerous

complex clusters arise that can multiply, move, absorb and mutate. Observing and studying this dynamic model is an exciting activity, but it takes on additional meaning if we interpolated it onto turbulent social processes.

There is a striking similarity between this model and the strategy that emerged in the Belarusian protests. Self-organization, horizontal connections, decentralization of protests and mutual support networks rhyme with the emergence of complex structures in Game of Life. The development of the system balances on the boundary between determinism, given the clear set of elementary rules, and the complete unpredictability of extremely complex chain reactions and interactions between emerging points of tension.

Maxim Tyminko (1972) – media artist and curator. Lives and works in Amsterdam. Studied at the Minsk State Art College (1987–1991) and Academy of Media Arts Cologne (2000–2006). Founder of the self-publishing platform Antibrainwash.net, co-founder and editor of the platform Cultprotest.me, co-founder and developer of the pxFLUX media art distribution platform.

ALESIA ZHITKEVICH

ASEXUAL BELARUS

2015–19. Installation. 125×1000×700 cm. 10 plastic nameplates. 80×80 cm, 125×100 cm, 125×65 cm

The series “Asexual Belarus” appeared in 2015 and was the artist’s reaction to an incident on the Minsk Sea when riot police went after sunbathers on an unofficial nudist beach that had been there for the last 20 years. Alesia Zhitkevich addresses the topic of power on the micro level, at the level of sexuality, and the normalization of human bodies. The artist uses the image of the beach as a symbolic space of the highest manifestation of freedom, including freedom of the body. At the same time, the beach acts as a transit space, where the boundary between private and public, intimate and social, personal and political is blurred. If an individual has the right to

self-identification and free expression of their sexuality, then there is a high level of tolerance in that society and desire to defend your rights and those of others. The artist criticizes state control over people’s bodies, which prevents the formation of the individual in society. “I hope that in the future, this colorless, faded, painful, asexual Belarus that now ignores and suppresses the ‘bodies’ of its citizens will become the coolest and freest beach in Europe.”*

** Alesia Zhitkevich. From her correspondence with the curators of the exhibition “Every Day.” 2021*

Alesia Zhitkevich (1990) – artist, lives and works in Minsk. Graduated from the Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik (2009) and the graphics department at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts (2015). Member of the art research group Problem Collective since 2016. Works with graphics, installation, audio and video art.

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Due to the continuation of the quarantine restrictions, the educational program for the exhibition (discussions, lectures, workshops, slow art meetings, excursions, children's programs) may change. Please, see the current schedule of events by following the link →→→→→



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