



CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FOR AN EQUAL BALTIC

GOOD PRACTICES ON ART ACTIVISM
FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN
THE BALTIC SEA REGION,
GEORGIA AND UKRAINE.

PARTNERS



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



INTRODUCTION

Creative Industries for An Equal Baltic (CIEB) is a regional collaboration between several partners from the Baltic Sea region BSR (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Germany) and Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia and Ukraine) with the support of the Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Collaboration funding and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main aim of our project is to bring creative activists in the BSR & Eastern Partnership countries together to exchange experience and build regional collaboration to address common challenges through arts and culture.

On 10 - 12 April 2019, ArtGora forum in Riga brought together nearly 40 artists and cultural managers from 8 countries (Sweden, Germany, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia and Ukraine) who are working on promoting gender equality (SDG 5). In Riga, we exchanged ideas, opinions and good practices. Participants hosted their own workshops and gave presentations on their artistic work and methodologies. We dedicated time for networking and one-on-one exchange. We produced Talk Real interviews and Mind the Gap stories featuring artists who shared their views and artistic work on promoting gender equality.

This publication is a collection of good practices by the artists who took part in ArtGora Riga forum. In the introduction, we present some highlights about the gender (in)equality situation in the target countries of the CIEB project.

ABOUT OUR COVER POSTER:

Design by: Simona Cavalieri (Italy)

When I think about gender equality,

I think about complexity, fragility, strength..

I think about relationship.

When I think about art,

I think about complexity, fragility, strength

I think about beauty.

When I had to think about this poster I thought about the fragility, but at the same time about the strength of a bacteria. I find out how beautiful can be a colony of them. So I thought about using a picture of “Candida albicans”, a vaginal bacteria, because of its beauty and its complex structure and moreover because I believe that being ironic is a strong and smart way to talk seriously about things that matter.

TEXT BY: Rasha Shaaban and Cristina Baró Miró

PUBLICATION DESIGN BY: Cristina Baró Miró

GENDER EQUALITY IN CONTEXT

by Cristina Baró Miró

Art has a key role in the development of societies through its influence on our individual and collective thinking as well as our actions. Artistic expressions and trends have often been a response to a certain reality, usually presented as an alternative to a discouraging scenario. Dadaism, for instance, was a behavioural proposal of day-by-day goofiness opposed to the darkness of the First World War. Likewise, Maya Angelou fought for civil rights through her poetry, writing about gender, race and life, using her own experience as a black woman in the American society to expose racism and discrimination.

We all live under patriarchy, which is a rigid and toxic dichotomy of gender roles. Patriarchy is defined as a social system in which men, especially cis men, hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Patriarchy was developed in a way to benefit men. Yet, it can also hurt men in many ways, as men are under the constant scrutiny of the fabricated norms that patriarchy has put in place. To be fair, Patriarchy does not exist only in men. Women can be just as patriarchal as men by holding those same types of values and biases.

Gender (in)equality and LGBTQ+ rights are repeatedly in the spotlight nowadays. At the same time, there are numerous artists willing to have a positive impact in the current situation. We observe art expressions that expose the adversities many people are facing in their daily life, caused by misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other types of discrimination, dragging attention towards personal, structural and institutional violence against women and people that identify as queer.

Furthermore, art and activism are also highlighting the intersectionality of topics that once were reserved for a specific sector of society such as maternity - the freedom of choice when it comes to self-expression or the benefits of educating societies in gender equality.

For many of these cultural and artistic projects to be financially sustainable, have a greater impact in society and have the resources to accomplish their goals, they should be supported by the institutions. Governmental institutions carry the responsibility to reinforce and encourage such initiatives and adapt their legislations accordingly.

In the Baltic Region, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea was put in place since 2009 is implemented. Started in 2009, the first macro regional strategy was created to ensure safety, mobility and prosperity in the participating countries. The EU member states involved in the EUSBSR are Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The EUSBSR implementation is coordinated in close contact with the European Commission and all relevant stakeholders, i.e. other member states, regional and local authorities, inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies. The Strategy is also welcoming cooperation with EU neighbouring countries (Russia, Iceland, Norway and Belarus).

In addition to strategic priorities for youth, environment, sustainable development, gender equality is addressed by improving the intercultural dialogue and regional cooperation. The Baltic Sea Strategy action plan is focusing on more cross-border cooperation between schools, academies and other educational institutions, increased youth mobility and exchange activities, including the use of European Commission Solidarity Corps programme (formerly the European Voluntary Service) for young people, more focus on cultural diversities and intercultural dialogue in cooperation on migration policies and programmes for labour mobility and entrepreneurial cooperation and Initiatives to promote the Baltic Sea Region to internal and external partners and regions.

The Eastern Partnership it's another highly important cooperation between countries in Europe, in this case, between the EU, its Member States and the six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Through this partnership, a clearer strategic communication is pursued along with a structured engagement with a wider range of civil society organisations, ensuring gender equality and non-discrimination.

IN FOCUS

ESTONIA

Regarding Estonia, the country has taken major commitments to ensure safety and gender equality, such as the adoption of the “Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023”. Some problems addressed by this plan are: small portion of women in comparison to men on decision-making and management level, gender pay gap, gender stereotypes and reproduction of stereotypes and women’s low level of awareness of their rights and opportunities in standing up to their rights. LGBTQ+ legal union is possible -although it is not called marriage- but couples cannot jointly adopt a child. A challenge to change the public opinion is set, because as reported by the Human Rights Centre in Estonia, around 60% of the population remains intolerant towards queer people.

GEORGIA

According to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), Georgia faces around 35% gender pay gap and alarming statistics of gender-based violence. LGBTQ+ situation is not the safest either with up to 90% of young adults opposed to same-sex marriage. Activists for gender equality and queer rights often describe their experience as being offended, aggressively treated and humiliated.

Notwithstanding, the national legislative framework in Georgia reflects key principles of gender equality and is in line with international commitments. Various organisations and institutions are working towards the economic and political empowerment of women and on creating policies and legal framework that ensure and promote meaningful equality between men and women in every area of life.

GERMANY

Germany has taken steps forward to achieve gender equality, although it is still facing some important challenges to ensure equality amongst its citizens. Since 2016, there has been some legislative improvement fight gender wage gaps such as women's quota (2016) which made it mandatory to have at least 30% of the supervisory board positions are held by women. In 2018, the employees were given the right to know how their salary compares with that of colleagues of the opposite sex doing similar work. On the other hand, abortion is illegal in Germany and the system has barriers that encourage women to continue the unwanted pregnancy. Regarding LGBTQ+, in 2017 full marital and adoption rights were given to same-sex couples.

LATVIA

Even though Latvia has acquired major achievements regarding men and women equality rights, especially within the labour market, it still has a long way to go to ensure LGBTQ+ rights. Same-sex couples cannot get married nor adopt. And there are no laws against conversion therapy (a controversial practice based on trying to change somebody's sexual orientation from non-heterosexual to heterosexual). The country has an opportunity to grow further in queer rights, providing a legal frame with equal rights and stronger laws against discrimination.

LITHUANIA

Concerning the gender situation in Lithuania, women represent just one fifth of parliament's members and not all of them support women's causes. As other Baltic countries, at the end of the 20th century, Lithuania took action to ensure their gender equality laws fitted the EU standards to be able to join the union. The Office of Ombudsperson of Equal Opportunities was set up, and since then laws have been approved to avoid discrimination because of gender, age, race, etc. There is, though, a gap between institutional actions and real-life results concerning gender and LGBTQ+ rights that represent a challenge for the country to overcome.

POLAND

The situation of gender equality in Poland has been rather tense for the past few years. The country has a big challenge overcoming the inequalities between genders. Abortion is already banned in most circumstances in Poland. In 2016, thousands of women in Poland went on a strike in protest against proposals for a total ban on abortions. They marched through the streets wearing black as a sign of mourning for their reproductive rights. It became known as Black Monday. Even though the ban was rejected by the parliament, women's rights activists and organisations have seen how their funding has been denied since then, together with Government agencies dragging state employees who support women's rights protests and High-level PiS leaders publicly discouraging efforts to combat violence against women. The Church has had a great influence as well in censoring concepts related to gender and attacking LGBTQ+ and women's rights activists accusing them of destroying

SWEDEN

Sweden has promoted social laws that help achieve gender equality not just in the institutions or workplace. The country is known for its generous parental leave policies which encourage men to take an equal share of the time off and it is also the country where respondents were second most likely to approve of men identifying themselves as feminists. It is also considered one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly countries in Europe and was the first one to legally approve gender reassignment. There is still room for improvement, as intersex rights are not contemplated enough in the legislations, with no further anti-discrimination protections or specific healthcare protocol.

UKRAINE

In Ukraine, the government and its institutions have taken many steps to achieve gender equality. In theory, Ukraine's political agenda recognises that human rights play a central role in the development and gender equality is crucial for achieving sustainable development. However, according to the UN, Ukraine still faces challenges affecting the enjoyment of equal opportunities and rights by women in general and those facing compound discrimination in particular. The root causes can be found in deeply rooted systemic gaps which have not been addressed and in patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes, understood as the social structure phenomenon in which the male individuals are granted privileges and a dominant status over the females, both explicitly and subliminally. This phenomenon is manifested in the values, attitudes, customs, expectations, and institutions of the society, and it is maintained through the process of socialization.

ARTIVISTS



HOW TO SAY YES?

www.kuidasoeldajah.ee

How to Say Yes? is a sexual education performance for young people in the age group between 14-20 that explores how youngsters value sex and how they relate to sexuality. It explores questions like: When is the experience good, when is it bad? What is filthy and what is romantic? How to say no and how to say yes?

The aim of this project is to stimulate discussion among young people on a mutually respectful sexual experience. The 45-minute show is both entertaining and educational, through humorous and playful approach it conveys a positive attitude about sexuality and the body, emphasizes the importance of safe sex, talks about mutual consent and how different young people can be. The performance is documentary: based on interviews with young people; and it also features young people on stage.

Aet Kuusik is a feminism activist and her main fields of interest are intersectional feminism, sexuality and sexual education, feminist organising and animal rights. She is a member of a collective that runs feminist media outlet Feministeerium.ee. She studied public administration and linguistics. Together with Tiina Sööt she created a sex educational performance *How to say yes?*

THE ARTIST



AET KUUSIK // TALLINN

EXPOSÉ

DANCE

FESTIVAL

www.alyssachloe.com

Exposé Dance Festival is the first dance festival of its kind presented in Gothenburg exploring the artforms of Vogue and Pinking /Whacking with workshops, party, and the competition The Fame Ball. It aims at introducing ballroom culture promoting the LGBTQ+, minorities, and women in the community in Gothenburg.

In 2019 Exposé Dance Festival was able to gather people from Sweden, Norway, Rotterdam, France, Germany, and London.

ALYSSA CHLOÉ // GOTHENBURG



THE ARTIST

Alyssa Chloé is a dancer/educator/producer originally from the USA based in Gothenburg. She specialises in 2 artforms that originate from NYC and LA's Underground Gay scene called Vogue and Pinking/Whacking. After building a dance career in NYC, she has been in Europe for the past 6 years introducing these artforms and the culture to Gothenburg.





METROPOLITANKA

METROPOLIAN WOMEN HERSTORIC

www.warsztatyrownosciowe.pl; www.ikm.gda.pl

Metropolitanka- Metropolitan Women Herstoric is an educational project which reveals the almost forgotten stories of Polish women political activists and workers of Vladimir Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk who had a great impact in the democratic transformation which led to the collapse of Communism. It is carried out by The City Culture Institute and city residents.

Metropolitanka is a *herstoric* project, which tells about the role of women in history, omitted in academic, school and everyday conversations.

Herstory, or stories told from the perspective of women, seeks to more fully paint the history of the Tri-City metropolis, as well as the entire Pomeranian region.

THE ARTIVIST

Anna Urbańczyk is a Polish human rights activist, equality trainer and culture manager. She is also WenDo coach for women and girls and those socialised into female gender role facilitator. She is a member of The Equality Board of Mayor of Gdańsk & Gender Commission of the Union of Baltic Seas. She is as well a member of the nationwide Anti-discrimination Education Society. She works in The City Culture Institute in Gdańsk, as a social projects coordinator.

METROPOLITANKA 



THE DEFIANT TRAIT

www.baromiro.com



Born in Catalunya, Cristina has been working with women, gender equality and feminism through miscellaneous approaches, focusing on photography and documentary film.

THE ARTIST

First time developing a piece in Sweden, the artist researches the expression of womanhood amongst a few individuals that identify

The Defiant Trait is a photography project that was materialised for the first time in an exhibition in June 2019, Sweden. The images convey women self-representation, inspired by the exploration of womanhood and its portrayal. The concept is based on a series of interviews between the artist and each participating woman, where the topic *What does it mean to be a woman?* is discussed. Topics discussed include childhood, role models, challenges, discrimination, sexuality, views on today's society, gender roles, self-awareness and self-care. After one individual interview, the picture concept is decided. Each picture represents a part of the model that she wants to showcase as an interpretation of the unique understanding of the connection between her and her feminine identity. The first results showcased a shared-space of experiences and feelings, regardless of the model's background.

CRISTINA BARÓ MIRÓ // MALMÖ



mini LAMPA

www.facebook.com/www.sieviesusadarbiba.lv



THE ARTIST

Edite Kalnina is a psychologist by profession, NGO activist and feminist. She is now working with Women's NGOs Cooperation Network Latvia.

The performance project miniLAMPA engages with pre-school and primary school children on gender roles in Latvian society, on gender stereotypes and how to minimize them. For 3 years, the performances have been performed at conversation festival LAMPA organised by Foundation DOTS in Cesis, Latvia. The conversation festival is visited by 10 000 participants annually. Hundreds of children have seen the performances. In 2018 Scenario was based on the book "Hello, Rubby!" The performance is a collaboration between NGO Women's NGOs Cooperation Network Latvia and Drawing Theater Latvia.



EDITE KALNINA // RIGA



ŽALGIRÈS

<http://dramosteatras.lt/lt/spektaklis/zalgires/>

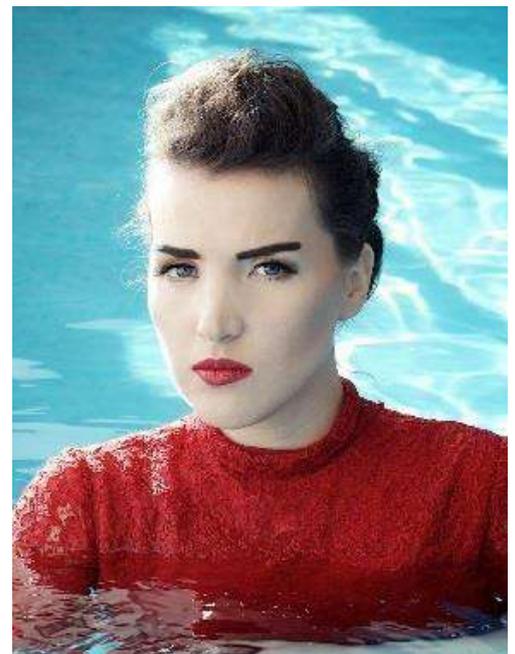
THE ARTIST

Gabriele Labanauskaite is an independent freelance artist, art curator, member of academia and art entrepreneur. She is a professor assistant at Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy. She is also a poet, prose writer, playwright and book critic.

Žalgirès is a play about LGBT female basketball team. In 2011, Gabriele Labanauskaite joined an amateur female basketball team. While playing together, she got a permission of team members to use the primary experience of the basketball court as the initial inspiration of the play that originated the same year in a project, organised by “Adelfa” the agency of dramaturgy in Finland. Then, a one-act comedy *Alaska* was introduced in a Russian theatre festival The Golden Mask and Women Play-writers International Conference in Sweden.

Through basketball and related situations, Žalgirès talks about stereotypes of the female image, the presentation of LGBTQ+ members in our society, and other issues of equal human rights. This is to address the questions of feminism: Why do you need a half-naked blonde to sell a car tire? Or: Why are male basketball players commented on by professionalism and female athletes by appearance, suggesting pre-game promotion of crab sticks?

GABRIELE LABANAUSKAITE // VILNIUS





A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN: FEMINIST'S QUESTIONS TO ARCHITECTURE

www.ingridruudi.ee

THE ARTIST

Ingrid Ruudi is a researcher, curator of architecture and visual arts, working at the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture of the Estonian Academy of Arts. She is also finalising her PhD there.



INGRID RUUDI // TALLINN

The exhibition *A Room of One's Own: Feminist's Questions to Architecture* is the first instance of applying feminist and gender theories to Estonian architecture of the last hundred years. Based on nine polemical questions, the exhibition tackles issues related to knowledge production of local modernist and postmodernist architecture as well as the issues of professional culture of today. The exhibition provides statistical information regarding the possibilities of study, practice, and social acknowledgement of women architects from the Soviet era to the present time as well as video interviews with 15 practitioners from different generations. In the exhibition, the artist presents a critical and polemical tool, a means to spark discussion, rather than a place for presenting ready-made research results or pronouncing final judgements. It is an attempt to open up avenues for further research and discuss positions from which to reflect on architecture. The exhibition was displayed at the Museum of Estonian Architecture in 2019.

JANA KUKAINE // RIGA



GLANDULA MAMMAE

THE ARTIST

Jana Kukaine is an art critic, curator and researcher from Riga. Her main objective is to promote feminist art scene and to develop feminist discourse of art criticism. She also works as a lecturer at Art Academy of Latvia and in 2016 she wrote a book named "Lovely Mothers. Woman. Body. Subjectivity" (Riga: Neputns), which offers a feminist perspective on motherhood, female body and contemporary art.

GLANDULA MAMMAE was one of the artist's last projects, a contemporary art exhibition about female breasts. The title comes from the Latin name for the mammary gland. While questioning gender normativity and constructions of womanhood, the exhibition also examined the perspective of breasts as a landmark for resistance and transgression, articulating new forms of culture based on empathy, gender equality and critical thinking. The exhibition took place in Riga, at Pauls Stradins Museum for History of Medicine in summer 2018.





JOANNA BEDNARCZYK // LUBLIN

DEMAKIJĄŻ WOMEN'S FILMFESTIVAL

THE ARTIST

Joanna Bednarczyk is the organiser and founder of Demakijaż - Women's Film Festival since 2016 in Lublin, Poland. She is also an initiator of the grassroots initiative "Grrrlz Get Loud" promoting female artists on the independent music scene. My main fields of interests are film and music. She works professionally as an English lecturer and she is also a board member of Homo Faber Association.

Demakijaż - Women's Film Festival is one of the most inclusive events organised in Lublin. The festival attracts every year nearly 1500 audience from all over Poland. The last edition was held in 2018 on the theme "Rebellion" with different aspects of femininity and diversity of female characters in cinematography.. are presented. The festival shows films about girls and teenagers, seniors and elderly women, artists, activists and LGBT+ communities. It touches upon acute problems women experience nowadays and discusses about the past and the future of feminist movements. Demakijaż challenges the artificial images of women that we see in the press, commercials, series and movies.

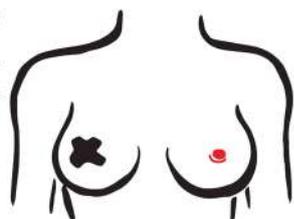
FESTIWAL KINA KOBIEC

DEMAKIJĄŻ

24-28.10.2018

CENTRUM KULTURY W LUBLINIE

CENTRUM KULTURY W LUBLINIE





JOSEFINA POSCH // GOTHENBURG

sculpture HUB

www.snowballproductions.com

THE ARTIST

Josefina Posch is an internationally active artist with a situation-specific practice and research addressing environmental and sustainability concerns through materiality explorations and exists in the borderline between sculpture, new media and social engaged work. She is also active as curator, activist and lecturer at Valand Academy Gothenburg University, founder of Snowball Cultural Productions, board member at Galleri Box and a member of the Swedish Sculptors' Association.

The project sculptureHUB is a networking site and blog for sculptors in response to the uneven gender representation within the sculpture field. The main target audience is women sculptors in the Nordic countries with aspirations to reach beyond the field and geographical boundaries. The project consisted of over a year of research, presentations, a round-table discussions, studio visits and meetings with curators, institutions, gallery owners and self-organised collectives and was realised in collaboration with curator and researcher Sofia Landström. The project was created by Snowball Cultural Productions.



ISSP

www.issp.lv/en

ISSP is a platform for contemporary photography based in Riga, Latvia. It is a non-commercial organisation running a range of top-edge national and international education programmes in photography. Since a year, they also have a photography gallery and a space for artist talks and workshops, that is the only independent photography gallery in Latvia. There is currently a two-month programme that offers young people the opportunity to learn the basics and technical skills of photography in a creative and relaxed atmosphere through joint games and experiments. At the same time, participants learn about the variety of photography directions - from documentary to art photography; from media and advertisement images to social networking selfies - and develop visual literacy, which is becoming increasingly important today.



THE ARTIST

Julija Berkovica is the founder of ISSP in 2016 and dealing with the education programmes and strategic development. She has a master's degree in Eand Business from Stockholm School of Economics. Before turning ISSP into professional organisation, she was the coordinator of BaltMet, a network of 11 capitals around the Baltic Sea.

JULIJA BERKOVICA // RIGA



BLUE BACKPACK FOR A GIRL



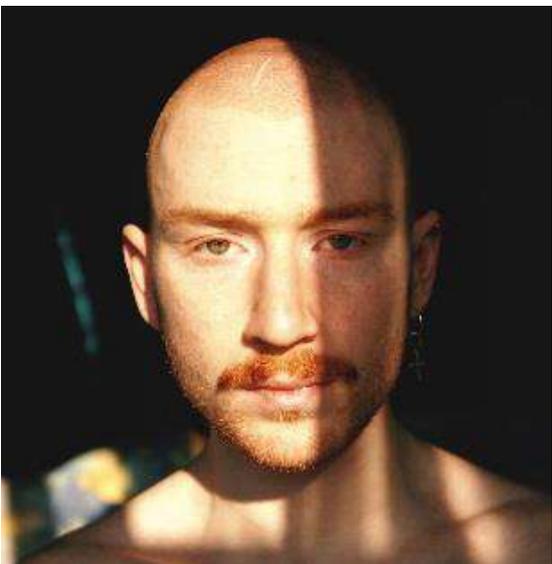
Blue Backpack for a Girl is a story about gender stereotypes and socially constructed clichés and phobias. The story is inspired by a personal life experience that involved the artist's daughter. The little girl bought a blue backpack with an astronaut on it and was called out by her classmates because the colour blue and astronauts are not "girly" enough. After this situation, the artist got inspired to share the story and got the opportunity to speak to children about the lack of gender in colours.

THE ARTIVIST

I am an artist, graphic designer and lecturer. I work in the areas of interdisciplinary projects, video performance, social design, conceptual art, book design and communication. In my works I examine the synergy of individuality and sociability. Presence of a physical body (and consequently, physical pain) and need to be happy at any price (and consequently, expectations) level the differences between individuals and repress our uniqueness. I apply a transgression strategy (acceptance of the approach of other) and invite a viewer to observe consequences of the experiment – discovered inadequacies and newly created meanings.

JURGITA JUDDYTE // VILNIUS





LASHA TSERTSVADZE // TBILISI

GEORGIAN QUEER SENSUALITY

www.lashafox.com

The project Georgian Queer Sensuality is a photography collection of nude queers. The artist started working on this theme almost 2 years ago. According to him, it is hard to find people in Georgia who are willing to get naked and do not hide their sexuality. Thus, he often photographs himself to encourage others.

THE ARTIST

Lasha Tsertsvadze is a photographer and queer activist. He won the Equality Movement Prize as an artist for his activism work in 2018. Lasha has done the first queer nude exhibition in Georgia. He loves working on gender and sexuality issues.



COMMENSURATE TO BE WITH

<https://lizabaliasnaja.tumblr.com/>

LIZA BALIASNAJA / VILNIUS



THE ARTIST

Liza Baliasnaja is a dance artist working between Belgium and Lithuania. Currently, she is studying at the Institute of Philosophy in KU Leuven. Her artistic work evolves around dance and philosophy. She is interested in practices that are present in the two spheres, both of which she intends to question and challenge through her work.

The artist's recent project Commensurate To Be with is a dance performance which takes place in non-theatrical interested in practices that are present in the two spheres, both of which she intends to question and challenge through her work. The work is dealing with the notions of time and collectivity, she addresses the way bodies come together as equal actants upon each other and the space, by carefully composing with soft, non-gender representational movement vocabulary. The performance is designed for four dancers that share a consistent practice around somatic explorations, methodologies toward collective care and feminist philosophy. She develops her piece from an interest to collaborate on collective dancing and listening. "I am guided by a curiosity to understand what possibilities open up while dancing together rather than alone. What tools can be invented choreographically and performatively in order to achieve a shared sense of perception between the four subjects," says Liza.





LOULOU D'AKI // ATHENS

MOTHER OF CHOICE

www.dakiloulou.com

THE ARTIST

Loulou D'Aki is an independent photographer, born and raised on the Swedish seaside. Her work evolves around the idea of freedom, and how human beings are conditioned by society.

Before becoming a photographer, she was a singer and music is still an important part of her life.

Alongside commissioned work, she focuses on long term projects which turn into exhibitions and books.



The photography project Mother of Choice aims to show women's possibilities and choice to be a single mother and have a child on their own. Over 40 years after the Social Democrats launched The Family in the Future Manifesto, Sweden is witnessing a big change in the traditional family unit. In April 2016, a new law passed in Sweden, permitting assisted fertilisation to single women.

Before then, women without a man would have had to turn to IVF clinics abroad or to private sperm donors in order to become pregnant. The artist takes away all the shame and social stigma about being a single mother. The exhibition examines also looks to alternative methods such as men who, through anonymous websites, are willing to donate sperm for free to women without a partner.

This photography project focuses on women who already have become mothers through IVF or insemination abroad before the law came through, and on those who now plan to undergo or have begun the treatment in Sweden. The exhibition was screened at Organvida photo festival in Zagreb, Croatia in September 2018.

HEROINA

Heroína (Heroine) is a solo performance in which Maria was a director, set designer and actress. It is inspired by the biographies of several great women who have lived in the last 200 years. The staging combines several artistic means of expression: dramatic acting, puppetry, movement theater, songs. It is a reflection on the difficulties faced and still encountered by women on their independent professional and life path and challenges related to intergenerational communication.

MARIA ŻYNEL // BIAŁYSTOK



THE ARTIST

Maria Żynel's background is in theatre: directing, set design and acting. The artist works in independent and institutional theaters and as an assistant at an art university (Theater Academy). Graduated of the Theater Academy A. Zelwerowicz in Warsaw Department of Puppetry Art in Białystok, acting department and the State Film, Television and Theater School L. Solski in Łódź, Film Production Department. The artist is also the author of theater workshops for the deaf, hearing-impaired and those learning sign language.





INTERRUPTIO

<https://reprorechtfilm.org/>

THE ARTIST

Melanie Lyn is part of the feminist film collective Kollektiv KINOKAS, which was formed in the Summer of 2018 to work on the documentary film and website project Interruptio. They are currently a group of seven womxn with backgrounds in film, theatre, art and politics. Some of the topics of interest include alternatives to the male gaze in film as well as empowering, multi-perspective storytelling.

Interruptio is a documentary film project about reproductive justice in Germany, which aims to investigate perspectives that are often marginalised in the debate, contribute to the campaigns calling for the de-criminalisation of abortions in Germany, as well as provide a counter-narrative to conservative, right-wing discourses on abortions. The project includes a website featuring personal testimonials of people who have had abortions, which shed light on how institutions and societal norms affect individuals in their self-determination and also provide a resource for people who are in the process of deciding whether to terminate or keep an unwanted pregnancy themselves. By incorporating a mixture of private stories, interviews with specialists and with activists, the film attempts to shed light on the scope and multifaceted reasons why reproductive self-determination is limited in Germany. Although the focus lies on the right to abortion, the related issue of the right to bear children and how this right is influenced by societal discourses and legal frameworks is also raised.



MELANIE LYN // BERLIN



REBEL VILLAGE

shorturl.at/fjLUZ

RebelVillage is an art residency that brings local, regional and international artists in a community that will collaboratively create works that respond to various challenges that the local community faces - exclusion, unemployment, discrimination, decaying infrastructure and architecture around, which has to be rediscovered and given a new life.

THE ARTIST

Originally from Poland, Natalia Skoczylas comes from a mix of political science training, 12 years+ of cultural journalism, community work and activism. She has lived a nomadic life for a decade and worked in 8 countries, doing culture of all sorts. She works on urban game design school and the future of internet and populism in Central and Eastern Europe. Natalia is part of Edge Ryders, a large community of all kinds of changemakers, innovators, activists and entrepreneurs.

WOMEN OF GEORGIA

www.ninobaidauri.wixsite.com/photoworks/women-of-georgia

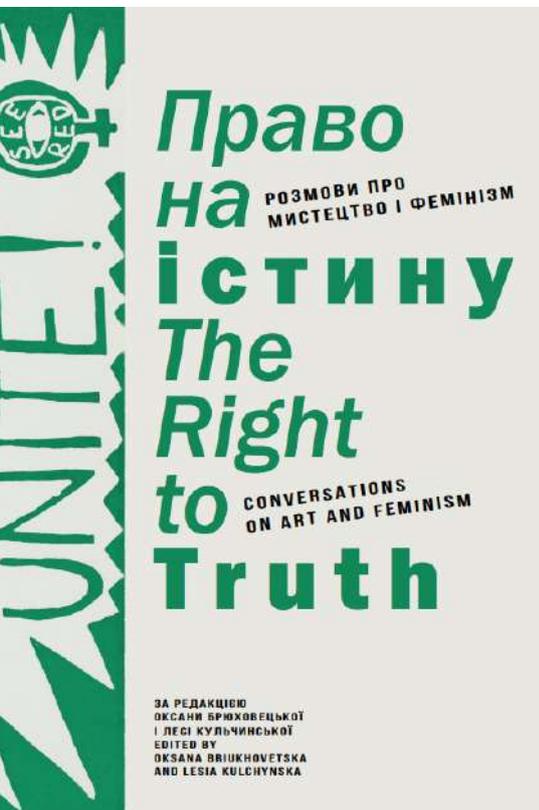
THE ARTIST

Nino Baidauri is a freelance photographer, translator and a social psychologist. Her key area of interest is human rights. Her works fit into the fine-art and documentary photography genres. She currently works on social issues and stories related to the lives of women, people with disabilities, racial, ethnic, religious minorities, etc.



NINO BAIDAUURI // TBILISI

Women of Georgia is a platform to air the voice of women, unique, diverse voices of the invisible majority. The platform facilitates providing society with more information about how distinct and specific needs the group of women may have. Through this platform, individuals share personal stories and problems that are not often highlighted and properly addressed.



THE RIGHT TO TRUTH

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT

ART AND FEMINISM

shorturl.at/enDQ0

THE ARTIST

Oksana Briukhovetska is a Ukrainian artist, graphic designer, and author working with topics such as corporeality, gender in culture, emancipation of women, social exclusion. She has been working as a curator with the Visual Culture Research Center (Kyiv) since 2009. Her curatorial projects include, among others, the feminist exhibitions Motherhood, What in Me is Feminine? and TEXTUS. Embroidery, Textile, Feminism. Her latest book *The Right to Truth. Conversations about Art and Feminism* was co-authored with Segolene Pruvot, a feminist activist from European Alternatives.

The Right to Truth. Conversations about Art and Feminism is the collection of interviews with female artists, curators, activists and thinkers of different generations from different countries on the current feminist art practices and activism, as well as history of feminist art and reflections about women emancipation. In 2011, the grassroots initiative Feminist Ofenzyva was formed in Kyiv and organised the Women's Workshop exhibition at the VCRC. Feminist groups were created in other cities, such as Feminist Workshop in Lviv, which still exists. The voices of some of its participants are presented in this book. Three feminist exhibitions were later held at the VCRC: *Motherhood* (2015), *What in Me is Feminine?* (2015) and *TEXTUS. Embroidery, Textile, Feminism* (2017), all curated by the artist.

OKSANA BRIUKHOVETSKA // KYIV



sHEROes

<http://book.gov.ge/en/author/benidze-salome--/97/>

SALOME BENIDZE // TBILISI



THE ARTIST

Salome Benidze is a Georgian author, poet and translator writing about women, their experiences and lives. She is actively engaged in civil activities to defend women's rights. She is well-established in the Georgian literary scene. Salome Benidze studied journalism, public relations and political science at Tbilisi State University, Vilnius University and Alexander Technological Institution of Thessaloniki. Georgian readers are well acquainted with her poetry, prose and translations. In 2012, Salome Benidze received literary award SABA for the best debut of the year, which brought her nationwide recognition.

sHEROes is as documentary photobook by Georgian photographer, Dina Oganova and Salome Benidze. It shows the experience of the women during the Russia-Georgia War of 2008: tragedy, violence, sense of insecurity, bravery, loss. It also pictures their living environment, which is relatively important for understanding of the difficulties of their lives and the results of the conflict. Men and soldiers are considered the main heroes of any war and are spoken about most, but there are women who have experienced no less pain and struggle. No one speaks about those brave women who experienced all the hardships of the war and whose deeds are less visible to society. So, this project aims to reveal the brave and strong women Georgia has.



TRAINING IN GENDER

Svitlana Garashchenko is a Ukrainian expert of Gender impact assessment. For more than 12 years, she is involved in gender equality activities and is positive that the movement and implementation of its tasks are one of the most important elements in constructing real pluralistic democracy.

THE ARTIST



SVITLANA GARASHCHENKO // KYIV

Garashchenko develops training materials on policy analysis and citizen impact assessment with regard to gender, conducts trainings for civil servants. I introduce gender component into reforms strategic planning and monitoring methodology. And, I prepare other necessary materials and information to strengthen the implementation of the gender equality policy in Ukraine.



TAMARA BERESH // KYIV

EAST=WEST: VOICES OF CITIES NARRATED BY URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY

<https://bereshtamara.wixsite.com/cityvoices>

Her experimental photoblog East=West: voices of cities narrated by urban photography emerged last year during my Master studies in the University of Vienna. The artist created it being inspired by the philosophy of female solo travelling, rarely endorsed in societies of post-socialist countries. She is challenging the traditional perspective on binary approach to male and female behaviours in society through the gendered approach to travelling. The blog features pictures from Kyiv, Yerevan, Sarajevo, Yangon, Beijing, Berlin, Rome, Brussels, Copenhagen and Vienna.

THE ARTIST

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TAMTA MELASHVILI // TBILISI



UNTOLD HERSTORIES

www.youtube.com/watch?v=urRHSSkZoD0

Untold Herstories is a documentary film about the history of Georgian feminism and its prominent figures. In the film, modern feminists speak of three public figures who stand out for their outlook and activism in the field of women's rights, such as: Barbara Jorjadze, Ekaterine Gabashvili and Kato Mikeladze. The film is directed by Salome Sagaradze. Screenplay: Tamta Melashvili. The film was created with the financial support of the Women's Fund.

THE ARTIVIST

Tamta Melashvili spent a year as a migrant in Germany, where she started writing. She concluded her degree in Gender Studies at the Central European University in Budapest. Currently living in Tbilisi, she works for women's rights and gender issues. Her short stories first appeared online on literary websites and later were included in different fiction anthologies. In 2010, Tamta's first debut work *Counting Out* was published and quickly gained success. One year later, her novel won Georgia's top Literary Award Saba.





RUNNING GAG

<http://tiinasoot.weebly.com/running-gag-2018.html>

Running Gag by Sööt/Zeyringer examines power and gender ratios in the realm of humour. Who is allowed to be funny, and who laughs at whom? On the lookout for female role models in the history of humour, Tiina Sööt and Dorothea Zeyringer examine slapstick comedies from the 1910s, shedding a light on gender and humour at a time when the role of women was undergoing major changes.

The starting point of this lecture performance is the courageous, extraordinary and witty heroines of the silent-film era in the early 20th century. While they were influential and famous during their lifetimes, they are mostly forgotten today. In the course of their research in archives, T. Sööt and D. Zeyringer discovered female pioneers of silent film who wreaked havoc in their films, dressed in men's clothes and put their bodies to highly expressive uses. Many female actors, directors, screenwriters and producers used humour as an empowerment strategy and a method to break through existing limitations. In Running Gag, the artists use historical footage, film clips, facts and personal stories to collage a fictional documentary about the ever changing relationship between gender and humour now and then.

THE ARTIST

Tiina Sööt is an Estonian performing and visual artist. She has a bachelor's degree in Ecology/Theater research (Tartu University) and MA in Performance Art (Estonian Art Academy). Together with Aet Kuusik, she works on documentary performance practice. Their performance Real Women, Real Men and Real Others sheds light on gender inequality in Estonia by telling the stories of people from different walks of life. In the sex educational performance for young audiences *How to say yes?* they examined sexual pleasure and consent.

TIINA SÖÖT // TALLINN



#THE GALLERY PROJECT

<https://verena-spilker.com/the-gallery-project-tqu/>



THE ARTIST

Verena Spilker is a queer artist from Berlin. She draws, designs, writes, teaches and organises transnational events and projects. Verena is interested in exploring the relationship of the self to the other, in exchange and in places where we can come together. She is the founder of Transnational Queer Underground (TQU) and the curator of #TheGalleryProject.



VERENA SPILKER // BERLIN

#TheGalleryProject brings together the artworks of 47 artists from 27 different countries. The exhibition was shown online on transnational-queer-underground.net as well as offline in Tallinn, Sofia, Podgorica, Prague and Berlin in 2017/2018. The collection is distinctive in its absence of a unifying theme: each work reflects a unique perspective and as a whole, refuses to present a standardized narrative. Rather, it becomes clear that being queer means something different to each artist, whether sexually, politically, or aesthetically. Each artist represented in the exhibition has developed their own strategies for coping with their lived realities and addressing (or not addressing) them in their art. The works display sex, fragility, anger, courage, hope, nihilism, strength, fear, and beauty.

YULIA LASHCHUK // WARSAW



MIGRATING BORD(H)ERS

shorturl.at/ctTVY

Migrating Bord(h)ers is a project about six Ukrainian female artists and their Otherness. They are all different, but all of them have something deeply hidden in common, borders, both physical and mental. Originally, they come from the same country but they live in 6 different countries. They are strangers here and there. They are always in between, but they are artists and activists who speak loudly about what it means to be a Ukrainian woman abroad. The artists talk about how they experience physical and mental borders in their everyday lives. The exhibition is made of sound installations based on the story of every woman is accompanied by the women's drawn representations of their borders.

THE ARTIST

Yulia Lashchuk is a Ukrainian curator and cultural manager currently living in Poland and working with topics related to female migration and artistic expression of nomadic consciousness. She did her MA studies in cultural studies and is currently working on her PhD thesis in philosophy.

TEAM



RASHA SHAABAN

National Museums of World Culture

Rasha Shaaban is a local from Alexandria (Egypt) and Gothenburg (Sweden). She is working at the World Culture Museum (one of 4 museums of world culture in Sweden) as projects manager and coordinator of the Anna Lindh Foundation network in Sweden. Rasha is a board member of the transnational organisation, European Alternatives. And she is also an alumni of the Tandem Europe programme and Bosch Alumni Network. Not to forget that she is a DJ (DJ Rush).

Currently, Rasha is managing the creative programme, Mind the Gap, which aims at facilitating intercultural dialogue, inclusion and equality through digital storytelling. In 2015-2016, I led a transnational project called WoMidan – WoMen Voices from the Square, a dialogue platform on activism for gender equality in Europe and MENA region. WoMidan released the WoMidan Declaration in November 2015 and hosted dialogue encounters with Swedish politicians.

INETE IELITE

Riga Technical University

RIGA



Inete Ielite is called original feminist by her younger colleagues. She has studied stage directing and history of arts, currently she studies e-learning technologies and smart cities. Inete is the coordinator of the Anna Lindh Foundation network in Latvia. She is also a member of Women's NGOs Cooperation Network in Latvia.

In the project she is part of, Academy of Successful European Women, they gather experience of successful women in politics, business and public sector and support sharing this expertise. Over the year, 12 mentors and mentees worked together; monthly public lectures and non-public seminars were held; new NGOs were established.



AURELIJA AUŠKALNYTĖ

Center for Equality Advancement

Aurelija Auškalnytė has a background in various fields: NGO work, human rights, psychology (master studies). She also writes movies and is a culture critic. Aurelija also manages gender equality projects in an NGO Center for Equality Advancement

In the creative project #MoterysKurusiosLietuva, Aurelija and her team aim to enhance the historical memory by introducing little known achievements in the field of gender equality throughout the centennial of restored Lithuania. 100 historical women from different fields were selected. Original artistic portraits of each of them were painted by a visual artist Akvilė Malukienė and engaging texts about the lives of those women were written by the group of creative writers. Obstacles that these women encountered because of their gender and their achievements in breaking the stereotypes were emphasized as well as historical context. The exhibition is still on display in various public spaces.

MARTA CILLERO

European Alternatives

Marta is a feminist activist working as a comms officer at the transnational organisation European Alternatives. She is originally from Spain but currently living and working in Rome. She is in charge of Talk Real programme, a nomadic political talkshow for the web and new media format piloted since Summer 2015.

In her project, Women Voices in Macedonia, the aim was to disseminate the work of women active in the civil society in Macedonia. They traveled to Skopje to speak with four women, all of them active in Macedonian society, to discuss the #ISpeakUpNow campaign and what it means to be a woman in Macedonia today.



ROME

MAŁGORZATA SKOWROŃSKA

Foundation Laboratory of Research and Social Action

Małgorzata Skowrońska is a sociologist currently employed at the Department of History and Sociology at the University of Białystok. Her scientific fields of interests include prejudice research as well as gender and cultural studies. For many years she has been devoted to organising various social and artistic events aimed at enhancing social diversity and anti-discriminatory education.

Małgorzata wrote the screenplay for "Heroína" (Heroine), a theatrical play that addresses the popularization of the relevance of women and their scientific, cultural and artistic achievements and emphasising the role of intergenerational dialogue. She wrote as well the dialogues and the songs used in the monodrama directed and played by Maria Żynel.

BIAŁYSTOK





TARTU

ANASTASIIA TURUSINOVA

University of Tartu

Anastasiia Turusinova works as a project assistant at the University of Tartu. She loves art, architecture and design from the bottom of her heart.

Her project WHOSEFVA is an online course on countering elder abuse. This course was designed to deliver training on the prevention of and response to violence against older persons and specifically older women. The course was developed by University of Tartu in the framework of the project "Working with Healthcare Organisations to Support Elderly Female Victims of Abuse (WHOSEFVA) funded by the European Commission. It contains main aspects of working with female and male elderly victims of abuse. The course has a specific focus on teaching technics to recognise and prevent violence of elderly people.

TBILISI



NINO ASATASHVILI

Taso Foundation

Nino Asatashvili has a master's degree in gender studies and bachelor's degree in psychology. She is working at Taso Foundation and has more than three years of experience as a peer educator. She is an active member of IPPF European youth network and accumulated experience as a participant of various projects, seminars and workshop activities. She has practice of working with victims of domestic violence.

Taso Foundation provides grants to support initiatives of women activists, women's groups and organisations. We act as women's memory research center (resource center with library and textual, photo and video archives). We participate in policy-making and act as an advocate for ensuring gender equality and women's rights. We prepare, publish and distribute the books including the publication of two series of TF Women's Memory (since 2004) and Feminist Library (since 2007). We support documentary making through grant-giving and producing documentaries; collaborate with other civil society organisations, media, state institutions, and participate in events of Georgian women's movement.

MARIIA TYSHCHENKO

NGO Poruch

Maria Tyshchenko is the founder and director of Poruch. She is the coordinator of policy and advocacy unit, SKL international Associate Professor of Political Economy Department of Vadim Hetman Kyiv National Economic University, and Advisor of Peoples Deputy in Ukraine.

The project Promoting Gender Equality through Forum Theater aimed at developing and exploring forum-theater as a cultural approach to addressing the issue of unequal gender distribution of leadership in Ukrainian communities and overcoming existing stereotypes in society. Team of NGO “Poruch” implemented Project “Reconciliation Support and Community Development of the Conflict-Affected Communities of the Donbas” held trainings on gender in 29 communities (Donetsk and Luhansk region).



KYIV

PHOTO BY BASEM NABHAN



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