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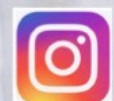
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mage: ARTWORK 30 x 30 cm oil at canvas by **Marina Solnzeva** (Berlin artist) foto: by © Marina Polovinkina imagofeminae # XXXII spring 2022

LifeStyle

"EMOTIONAL LIBERATION"

by **MARINA SOLNZEWA**
(Berlin Artist)

Edited by: Marina Solnzeva &
Dipl.-Psych. Paiman Maria Davarifard



Marina was born in 1993 in Strunino (Vladimir Oblast), Russia, where she studied in a local art school. 2017 she moved to Berlin where she did her Master Thesis in political science. Currently she is doing her PhD in Humboldt University of Berlin with focus on the right of protest in authoritarian states. 2019 Marina studied at the course on Modern Art & Ideas at the The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), where she looked at art through a variety of themes: Places & Spaces, Art & Identity, Transforming Everyday Objects, Art & Society. 2020 Marina's artwork was exhibited in Zurich during SWISSARTEXPO and 2022 during Venice Biennale Artbox Expo. Marina organized two personal exhibitions in Berlin, participated in multiple local art festivals and events and created an art space during private CindyCat Festival. She is also creating digital NFT art, writing literature short stories and giving public readings.



image: Marina Solnzewa- imagofeminae # XXXII spring 2022. foto © by Marina Solnzewa

Emotional Liberation or a concept of Xyj

Oh, why exactly penises?

This is actually just a form, a method of posing questions about our society, not answering them. In some way this is a protest, not aggressive, but a colorful one, in bright colors with vivid patterns, in flowers. By encountering this kind of art, what is interesting is not the picture itself, but the very moment of an interaction between a person and an artwork. What questions are popping inside of one's mind, when a person faces an artwork like this? This is what really matters.



And actually, this is more about the word, than the form.

There is a certain difference

between “penis” in western culture and the word “xyj” for the Russian speakers. “Xyj” (spelling huy, meaning “penis” or “dick”) is often a taboo topic in authoritarian societies and a simple swear word, inappropriate in any soiree with well-behaved people. From a Russian-speaking perspective, there are still no suitable words to describe sex and sexual body parts. When speaking about sex, we either fall into cold medical terms, euphemisms, unnecessary kitschy metaphors, or simple swearing. Or sometimes we use anglicisms, just because the Russian language is very conservative, even clumsy when it comes to talking about sex. No wonder there is a lack of sexual education in conservative societies, if we can not even talk openly about sexual topics, without shame, getting red flashes, or giggling. In this sense my artworks are about emotional and societal liberation. After seeing my art, we all can break the

ice and start talking about sex. Because,



Image: Marina Solnizewa (Berlin artist) *foto: by © Marina Polovinkina with her artwork in background, at her atelier in Berlin, imagofeminae spring 2022

what can be better than talking about penises and art at a good party with a group of friends?

Wait, is “Xyj” a swear word?

Right. In the Russian language or other Slavic languages there is a wide variety of swear phrases with the word “xyj” and their derivatives, which describe some sort of disagreement or discontent, putting it mildly. In this way this is also a reference and a tool of questioning the usual and comfortable processes in the society.

Is it Feminist Art?

I simply don't know. For me feminism is simple: If a woman wants to paint penises, she can do it.

However, I do know one thing: This is not about men or women. This is more about synergy and unity. For example, to some viewers, my art penises resemble a figure of a woman. This is so because in each person there is a feminine and a masculine part. I am constantly asking myself – how emotionally free should be a person to hang a picture of a penis on the wall in a living room? And this is irrespective of gender.

In the end this is all about having a good laugh...



I am aware that in some way this is a part of the naïve art

movement. I personally see it as such. However, for me this also means self-irony about myself as an artist.

When I started painting this series, I told myself: “Marina, if you paint a craw, and it does not turn out well, for example, it is neither beautiful nor realistic, it won't work out. But if you paint a dickpick, and it turns out to be total bullshit, it does not matter”. This thought was very liberating and eliminated a lot of psychological blocks and self-doubts very quickly. So, for me this was mostly about freedom, freedom of choosing any color, of doing what you like, freedom of self-expression. Freedom of choosing myself.

In the end, there is nothing more liberating than a good laugh.

...and about combining incompatible things.

I do generally believe in the idea that every person is genuinely multi-talented and can combine different talents. Physics and music. Political Science and art. Geography and jewelry. However, our modern society is very much focused on the effectiveness of every person as a part of social and economic chains and demands from one to choose a specialty, a focus, or even a devotion. This was exactly my personal conflict for many years trying to choose between political science and art. And exactly at the moment when I allowed myself to do both, I could find the source of my creativity.

With my art I am trying to question this narrow mind setting and would like to promote the idea that absolutely every person can be creative and emotionally free. As a child.

Because our body is the most natural thing...

Let's be honest, a penis is the first thing that children and teenagers are painting on the side of school blocks, under the



image: Marina Solnzewa (Berlin artist) at her atelier in Berlin. *imagofeminae* spring 2022. # XXXII foto: by © Marina Polovinkina.

tables or in a public toilet. Because this is the sign of the very first desire to leave something behind, and also to protest (because adults won't approve a behavior like this, for sure). For kids this is totally normal, natural, and, of course, funny, to paint a dick on the backside of a school notebook. And only later, when we grow up this topic becomes a taboo topic, and even socially inappropriate. And still they are everywhere as a part of folk art. Dickpicks - this is what people are painting on the walls. And that is why it is interesting to bring it on canvas. If you happened to have an internal creative block, the first thing you should do is to return to the state of a child when you start drawing dicks in notebooks. To awaken your inner child. Because children's drawings are a real act of pure creativity. Even dickpicks.

... but not always free.

This is a common practice to ban the naked human body in an authoritarian society - female parts, male parts, or common nudity. Well-known examples of such censorship are the cases of Yulia Tsvetkova in Russia (an artist, painting vaginas, who got charges of disseminating pornography based on her artwork) or of Ren Hang (Chinese photographer, making nude photos and banned in China). From this point of view, my artworks can also be seen as a part of social liberation. With my background in political science, I cannot ignore the political and societal topics. A picture is just another way of questioning some issues around us. You can do it with words, on papers, at conferences. Or you can do it through art. Sometimes with an artwork you can say even more than with a thousand smart words. Sure, it is provocative. However, I think that the time, when the only function of art was just to be beautiful, is already in the past. **That is why my artworks are mostly not about sex. They are about society.**





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image: Marina Solnzewa (Berlin artist) with her cat IRIS at her atelier in Berlin. imagofeminae spring 2022 foto: by © Marina Polovinkina

