

MARIELA GEMISHEVA

Born 1975

About the Artist:

Ass. Prof. Mariela Gemisheva, PhD was born in Kazanluk, Bulgaria. She is a fashion designer and artist in the field of performance, installation and object. She teaches a course titled “Fashion Project” in the Department of Fashion at the National Art Academy in Sofia, Bulgaria. Mariela Gemisheva is famous for her numerous alternative and memorable experimental works and designs in the field of fashion and art performance. Occasionally she takes on the role of a model for the camera of Alexander Neshkov in “Self-Portrait” (2008). For her art is: “a practice, communication, a process, and unrest – a kind of dynamism where you measure your daily rhythm” (From “Self-reflection”, a talk with Vladiya Mihaylova about fashion, art and the modern woman published in: “Intelligent Life”, spring 2008).

Mariela Gemisheva is undoubtedly one of the brightest names of Bulgarian art and fashion design. In fact she is an artist using the language of fashion in contemporary art, a creator of clothes that transform into art. In her fashion shows the models are elevated to the status of walking sculptures. Through them the artist is speaking about the revolt of feminism, and about the fluctuations and the contradictions of modern femininity; she is engaging with the complex dialogue between the various social and spiritual spaces of the world today.

Mariela Gemisheva is a lead guest-designer with author’s fashion collections at international fashion forums such as Assembly Designefestival in Graz and MODEPALAST in Vienna (2005–2016). Provocation is an important element of her works while, in the words of the US curator Roger Conover (In the catalogue “In Search of Balkania”, 2002): “she is inimitable in transforming a limitation into an advantage”.

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1. *Out of Myself (Portrait with The Mory) II*, 2002

digital photo print, 150 x 103 cm

Edition: 4 + 1 AP

Ownership history: The Artist



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2. *Out of Myself*, 2002

video, DVD, 69 min

Edition: 3 + 1 AP, numbered and signed by the artist

Ownership history: The Artist



MARIELA GEMISHEVA, *Out of Myself*, 2002

About the work:

The digital print and the video proposed here are part of the *Out of Myself* series, consisting of a total of 13 digital prints and a video, documenting the process of the photo shoots. The series is Mariela Gemisheva's most representative work, capturing her understanding of fashion as art and art as fashion, both as forms and means of transformation - for their subject as well as for their public.

"It's hard to understand women... It is hard for a man as well as for women themselves... It is even harder to understand artists... Thus, to understand a female artist is doubly hard. On top of that, the artist Mariela Gemisheva is a fashion designer... And fashion is about personality expressed through clothing. The premise is that clothes are an adjustment to personality because clothes are masks. There are endless possible variations of personality through clothing. But how to express a personality that is hard to understand to begin with? The personality of a female artist of fashion design who is used to using other people to express her vision and ultimately, personality? The other people are the models in a fashion show. They are adjusting their own personalities in order to reveal the "personality" of the clothes they are presenting to the public and thus are expressing the personality of the artist who has designed the clothes... Here the equation becomes much too complicated.

To make things easier Mariela Gemisheva establishes collaborative partnership with the male gaze, personified in the artist/photographer Danail Shturbanov, in the newest project "Out of Myself". Theory says that the male gaze is an oppressive instrument of patriarchal signification even when used as a tool for identification through reflection. Here it becomes a constructive instrument for portraiture of a personality that is the process of finding out about herself. The male gaze here is not just reflecting but is constructing the personality of the "model". Not only that, Mariela has "offered" herself as a model to the male gaze of Danail Shturbanov and the male gaze is willingly imposing itself onto the submissive "model"... The creative interaction of these two partners, a voyeur and an exhibitionist (although one is never quite sure who is whom...), is molding out various characters and personalities that are marking the stages in a process of "going out of myself". And while the female partner obviously has a hunger for trying out various personalities, the male partner is having a hard time to trigger, follow and ultimately, satisfy the never-ending shifts in the female guises...

...She doesn't know but he doesn't know either and the creative tension of this reciprocal insecurity has produced a splendidly baroque group of visual works. The

video tape documenting the interactive photographing/modeling sessions of “going out of my(your)self” is as much part of the story as are the intricate make-up and hair-dressing interventions. At the end one is left convinced that “Out of Myself” becomes “out of thy-self, your-self, him/her-self” and all possible shades of interaction between the self and the other. It turns out that finding out about oneself is actually a group project, or how many people does Mariela Gemisheva need to find out who she actually is? Maybe all of us...?”

Iara Boubnova, Luchezar Boyadjiev, 2002

MARIELA GEMISHEVA, *Out of Myself*, 2002

Artwork exhibition history:

Out of myself, solo exhibition, Sofia City Art Gallery, 2002

In Search of Balkania, Neue Galerie, Graz, 2002

BLLod & Honey, Essl Collection, Vienna, 2003

Balkan Vision, AR/Ge Kunst museum, Bozen, Italy, 2003

46th October Art Salon – Art That Works, Belgrade, 2005

Altre Lilith, Frascati, Rome, 2005

Passion of Art, 35 anniversary of foundation of the Essl Collection, 2007

Flowers and Roses, Bulgarian Cultural Institute, Hamburg, 2009

Aquarium, ALMA MATER Gallery, Sofia, 2010