

PRESIDENT OF CRIMEA

Constitution

Author(s) Autonomous Republic of Xena-Maria

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This text was written initially in Russian – the author's first language from birth in a former empire. They/She emphasize(s) this fact in order to draw attention to the complex ambiguity of their/her situation, and the need to construct an authentic identity in post-imperial conditions. They/She believe(s) that the first step towards de-colonization is recognition of empire itself, and thereby to transcend and replace the terms and premises of the prior imperial language.

1. Entry

Forgotten Heaven of The New World and its Sea Worries

The rays of the morning sun shone on a red flag with a golden fringe that trembled with vibrations from the engine of the public bus 'Ikarus': a triangular banner, pinned on the windshield: a painted Lenin. He seemed to wink, smiled slyly and enigmatically at the three-year-old girl, who, with adoration and delight looked at the driver as he skilfully guided the crowded bus past traffic and potholes. Then she looked at the yellow light on the red flag, which illuminated the cunning look of the Eternal Leader. The driver, like all the passengers, listened to every word on the radio. The beauty of the sun rays completely captured the girl's gaze; but someone broke the silence, shouting aloud: *"Return the money back! Now we don't need to pay!"* Then she heard more and more similar exclamations: *"So, this money is no longer valid?!"*, *"We should not pay for the bus!"*, *"Who are we now?!"*, *"And with whom will we stay: with New World[1] or with New SS[2]?!"*, *"And what is our nationality now?"*, *"And who are we now?!"*, *"And to whom do we belong?!"* ...

A whole era of the country in which that little girl was born, yet which she had never really met, was ending. On the radio was a live broadcast of a peaceful revolution and collapse of that Old World SS[3], as one of its fiefdoms declared a long-dreamt-of independence: a New World: its first statehood in hundreds of years. Meanwhile, elsewhere that day, claiming reform into a so-called «federation» – though retaining most of its vassals without rights to complete autonomy and independence – was another state: the New SS [New Old World].

In this text, the original names of countries are renamed due to considerations of the physical and psychological safety of the author(s), heroes and readers of the text.

[1] Author(s) rename the title of own country into «Novyi Svit», which means in translation "New World", and literally – "New Light".

[2] The name "Novyi-Staryi Svit" translated into English means "New Old World", and literally "New Old Light". It is possible to meet in the text "New SS" as a short version, because of «Staryi Svit».

[3] «Staryi Svit» – translated into English means "Old World", and literally "Old Light". The abbreviated name of «Staryi Svit» is "SS", inevitably leads us to an invisible thread of identity with the same fascist SS.

So, what kind of «Old World» / «SS» are we talking about in the text, we hope everyone guessed it?

At that time, the little girl Xena was growing up on the Kerch Peninsula, on the far edge of the Crimea half-isle, in the south-east of New World. She lived in a fine big redbrick house built by her parents. The house stood on the hills of a wide Kerch steppe – nearby the edge of an old Tatar village that had been all-but destroyed by German bombs during World War II. To that place, after the war, came displaced settlers from all over the Old World «SS» in search of a better life. Here, Xena's parents and Grandma, sculpting and baking their own bricks, made their home.*1

Around their house grew roses, lilies, vineyards, a big cherry tree and peach trees; and around a porch by the windows of their spacious kitchen flourished boughs of figs and pomegranates. For Xena, the air seemed filled with a sense of paradise, an idyll that surely could never end. And beside her beautiful domain was built another house – a cottage from clay, in which a huge family of several generations lived. They were a family of repatriated Crimean Tatars who were trying to start over...

Following their return, all the neighbours learned how to live together, putting behind them their own personal histories and drama to share not only life-experiences and stories, but also building materials, plant seedlings, fruits from their gardens, and precious reserves of scarce fresh drinking water...*2

Beloved by Xena, her Grandmother was a migrant from the midmost part of New World. She had fled to the Black Sea's edge from Old World «SS» authorities who denounced her as a freethinker. And fled also from another side – from nationalist partisans, who persecuted her as a representative of Old World «SS» power.

**1. Based on the analysis of Joseph Beuys legends and his descriptions of the terrain on which his bomber plane fell and where he was picked up by local Tatar shamans, which builds a very clear picture of the territory and strong certainty that this is the same Land on which grew up the artist Maria Kulikovska. His detailed descriptions of local traditions and shamanic elements for the healing, about the materials they used in everyday life are so plausible that there is no doubt, that is truth, that Beuys biography is not a hoax of his life, but true.*

**2. Joseph Beuys did not invent his economic theory from scratch. He borrowed and adapted to the rich western society a real form of completely organic and natural interaction of people who lived in the harsh conditions of the steppe Crimea without advanced civilization and with the strong lack of fresh water on virtually barren soil. All childhood Maria Kulikovska spent in the Crimea steppes, observing and participating in the hard work of women in the fields of red ore and salt marshes, instead of black soil. And as a result of their collaborative work, the whole community could enjoy the fruits grown from their amazing gardens, constantly flowering almost without a drop of water, under the harsh sun. The artist studied real solidarity and neighbourhood reciprocity on a daily basis. The natural exchange that resulted from hard work between neighbours, cohesion and equality in the face of harsh living conditions, the desire to improve their comfort and life, regardless of nationality and religion - made everyone more human and cultural, forming an understanding of beauty at an intuitive depth level. Beuys ideas about art, culture, life, and his request to be more cautious with the resources of the planet are not fundamentally new or revolutionary, they are merely a continuation of the way of life in which the people who saved him lived.*

With her little family, her husband and newborn daughter [Xena's future mother] she jumped into a night train that transported cattle and illegal migrants without any documents somewhere to the edge of the Earth, to the end of Crimea Peninsula. Thus they went, fleeing away to an unknown nowhere – in the midmost years of a crazy 20th century.

Since they moved, the girl's grandmother has never switched into Old Worlds «SS» language, instilling the New World traditions, language and culture to her granddaughter on the colonized by «SS» land. Xena's Grandmother was a famous local shaman who saved many lives. She knew all about the power of herbs, learning this lore from her mother (who died in the 2nd World War), and refining her scientific knowledge of nature at university, where she received a proud title: "Defender of Plants and Animals". She devoted her whole life to nature. When she had been little, this Grandmother of the girl from the redbrick house dreamed of being a fashion-designer and creating beautiful clothes for people. But the Second World War came, and she had to transform all of her creativity and desire for a beauty into the help and rescue of the Green World. *3

After the war, the Kerch Peninsula lay like a crippled body with scars and trenches of blasted, abandoned tanks and crashed German planes. Such was the landscape found by Xena's grandmother with her husband and daughter. Arriving also came others from all over Old World «SS», all with the same bold and ardent humanistic ideas of solidarity and mutual assistance. So, Xena's grandma came up with the idea to plant a trail of trees along the road, 110 km long, from ancient Kerch to the heart of likewise old and colourful Theodosia, 'gateway' to the Kerch Peninsula. This act of collective healing, so that it would be not so hard to move under the blazing sun of the steppe, was for the sake of all travellers from Big Earth to the World's Edge. *4 And then, in the middle of the open courtyard of grandmother's house, on a big dining table, was always a jug of water, a loaf, and a great bowl of vegetables and fruits brought from the garden in the first morning sunrays. These refreshments were always on the table for weary travellers, and for those in need of rest, help and protection, regardless of religion, nation, hue, or social class. That is why from the earliest days of Xena's life, her grandmother taught her how important it is to respect the power of nature, to lean towards Mother Earth every day so as to receive and pass on her gifts – gifts which can not only nourish, but also heal. *5 Xena's father was the son of an exile, born in Old World «SS» colonized Siberia, from whence he fled with his future wife, to the Crimea. There they settled and remained in its almost forgotten haven, Kerch. Their story was not unusual in those parts: in their village and all the Kerch Peninsula, were barely to be found indigenous folk; all of its population had settled there from the perpetually drifting Stardust

*3. *Link to the Green Party, founded by "artist-savior-rescuer" Joseph Beuys.*

*4. *7000 Oaks by Joseph Beuys Campaign was created more than 30 years after.*

*5. *A reference to watercolors and drawings of women's bodies, bent in a bow that stretches to the land of Joseph Beuys and Maria Kulikovska.*

of an immense planet. *6

When Xena began school, buses in her idyllic village were infrequent, so very often the little girl had to get up at 5 am to walk 10 km through the snowy windy steppe to a school in the old, beautiful, but desolated town of Kerch [now, after the annexation, the school is a museum in honour of the New SS Army]. By evenings, the girl carefully spelled out her homework letters and numbers under the flickering light of candles made by her grandmother of animal fat and beeswax from her own hive. Candles were the only light source, for electricity was very often cut off for several days in a row due to lack of resources in their neglected and lonely almost-island.*7

During summer evenings when Xena did not need to go to school, she played with her best friend, who became almost her older sister – Lena, a neighbour Tatar girl, who spoke only poorly in Old World «SS» language. So they spoke in four tongues at the same time: some Tatarian, another was the official New SS language, and then in that of the New World. But of course, their main code was body language. *8

Little Xena and the Tatar girl Lena were everywhere together – from morning to night, running and playing in the steppe, collecting herbs for Xena's agronomist-shaman Grandma and her surgical-nurse-&-witch Mother. Lena's mum (from the cozy little clay house next door) often helped Xena's parents. Sometimes, if little Xena was sick, Lena's mother would treat the baby's pains with herb ointments. One day, the girl became abruptly ill and she lost her eyesight. No one knew the reason. Then the mother of the Tatar girl took on the hands of the tormented body of her neighbour's child and began whispering some spells that only she could understand, swinging from side to side, making strange but simple movements of her body, firmly pressing against her breast a small, weakened body of the child, carefully caring this baby in her soft hands and then kissing her motherly. She greased little Xena's breast with animal fat, drawing invisible crosses on her skin with her fingers. *9

**6. A reference to Maria Kulikovska performative sculpture "Star Dust" created for the 5th anniversary of the annexation of Crimea in February 2019, Mystetskyi Arsenal, Kyiv, Ukraine.*

**7. A reference to fat, wax and soap sculptures by Kulikovska and Beuys.*

**8. The body in both Beuys and Kulikovska's art is the main core about search of identity and its construction, their reflections on the injured body and how to heal it through the transformation in the society, about passion to changes without ideologies and propaganda. By both of this artists the human body itself, women in particular, is a platform for healing the cracks and faults of the society.*

**9. A reference to Beuys crosses affixed to all the bodies of his objects.*

The girl saw a terrible vision, her body was burning, and her mind was dissolving in hallucinations: she saw snakes, seething to take her, crawling around from every slit, window and doorways. Then, surgical nurse-mother-witch, together with Xena's grandmother-shaman-defender of Nature, laid around her bed and against the doors some dried rabbit-skins.*10 Reptiles both poisonous and harmless live among the steppe farmsteads, but if an animal wool (rabbit or sheep) is put at the entrance to a house, cattle stall or bed, then no snake can get to it; they are scared of wool. After two days of shamanic actions by her grandma-shaman and the mother-Tatar witch, Xena woke up completely healthy and ran happily to play with her best friend Lena and other children.

At nights, the girls gazed at the huge moon on her shimmering lunar course across an endless sea. Running around the campfire, roasting potatoes and eating grapes or sweet peaches stolen from neighbouring gardens or deserted fields of an abandoned farm; they tasted figs and juicy apricots, kindly donated by nature after shamanic bows to the Mother-Earth by Xena's grandmother. They counted the falling stars, looked for the Plough. They would climb around the landfill, collecting unusual jars and vases for cosmetics that they dreamed that they would one day try. Chewing on sweet gum, and arguing about who blew the biggest bubble, they picked up beer bottles left by tourists on the seashore, and then at the big transparent bottle bank collected money for them. For they were dreaming to buy for their families tickets to a ship that would go beyond the horizon, where is the fairytale Unseen Land. *11

They told to each other stories about relatives scattered all over Siberia, the East, Asia, New World, New SS... all over the world, and whom they had never seen, but with whom they dreamed to meet so much. They taught each other new words in their native languages, learned such different cultures and traditions. They dreamed who they would become in the future and came up with different fairy tales about their future lives, wondering what is there – beyond the horizon of their boundless blue Black Sea...

Xena was smallest, most white-skinned and fair-haired child of the third generation of dissident migrants; also she spoke perfectly the language of the colonial occupiers. Growing up around nearby streets of that old village amid a Crimean steppe somewhere at the Earth's edge were black-haired Muslim, Roma, Bulgarian, Jewish, and Greek children of different ethnic groups (over 40 nationalities lived in Crimea). Often they all ran to the end of the village, where Xena and Lena lived, to play with them their favourite game: "Sea Worries". At words of "one, two, three", while a leader counted, it was required to stop one's body in motion, showing by it some form that was to represent one of the professions, that of which each child dreamed; and the leader had to guess that profession.

*10. *Beuys tells the dead hare about art.*

*11. *Social sculpture and performance "Raft CrimeA: Migrating Parliament of All Migrants" by Maria Kulikovska.*

The smallest girl in the whole village, Xena from the beautiful red brick house, always thought the same thing – she passionately dreamed of being an artist and working as an architect and president of Crimea at the same time. She believed that she would be able to change a lot and will make adults no longer bored and they will stop leaving their peninsula in search of work and money. So finally they would stop playing the profession of others to survive, for they could simply be artists. *12 Xena really believed and was sure that there was only one profession on the Earth – the artist; all others were just a game of "Sea Worries" and the nuances of their roles in art. She wanted to draw, design and build an unusual paradise for her little peninsula and for the all people who wanted to live there.

One day, when a crowd of Tatar kids came to the street to play with Xena and Lena at "Sea Worries", again Xena showed through her body her cherished dream and goal – to remain forever an artist and architect and become a President of Crimea. However, then all the children started to laugh at her, and proclaim that she is stupid and would never become a President of Crimea, simply because Crimea was not a separate country and therefore it was impossible. And anyway no one would ever let her do it because she is "just a girl". Also, they continued to argue with little Xena, that there is no profession as an artist, and "the role of an artist is only to draw just simple, sweet, silly pictures to entertain". This little girl didn't really understand what they meant and why they were laughing at her and her ideas. She was very upset and began to argue, to convince everyone around her, that Crimea is also her *home*, and she will make it like the most beautiful Heaven, she will build for all people the most unusual houses. And after that people from all over the world will come, watch and admire the Wonder-Peninsula, and that she will create so many sculptures and paintings and drawings and she will give them to every inhabitant, so their small peninsula will become the most cultured Land in the World. She sincerely believed that when she will become a President of Crimea, there would be available delicious drinking water everywhere, flowers would bloom and electricity would be always on, and adults would stop fighting with each other and bored because of lack of money ; they will cease working just to survive, and no one would leave their common home in search of better life, and the streets will be played by many children, and everyone will be happy and then she will not need no longer to be president. And never again would this role be needed by anyone and she will remain just an artist like all the free people around...

After these words she was severely beaten...

Written by Maria near the gate of Crimean Peninsula, on the shore of the Black Sea

**12. Beuys also believed that every person was born from the beginning an artist, and this belief came to him after his injury and transformation, obtained in the steppes of Crimea.*

Caryatids of the New World's End

I am an artist; but I was trained as an architect and still, throughout my practice and difficult path as an artist, I return to architecture, invariably using skills of designing and 3-D spatial thinking obtained through my years of studying architecture, in order to present my own idea of a body – a human, female body in public space. My way as an architect, artist and performer began a long time ago, in the distant 90s, on the coast of two seas – the Black and Azov, in the Crimea steppe. I was born at the junction of epochs, when the state in which I came into being decided to start Perestroika and enter the era of capitalism and market relations, although with a still global goal – to build communism finally; but it didn't work. I have never seen that country in which I saw the light first time, it disappeared without having had time to get acquainted with me.

There was chaos and devastation around, and little understanding of why, or of what to do next. I ran away from the depression and difficult reality of the adult world around me into my own fictional realm of drawing, painting and experimenting with the body. I studied old masters' techniques, ballet, experimental dance, music, as well as lessons in ceramics and academic drawing. At the same time I began to involve myself in the study of reproductions and books about modernism and ancient art, hoping to build my own new world.

Sometimes my parents had to travel around the peninsula in search of work, and my grandmother stayed with me; I told her not to worry and I would take on the role of an adult housewife on my own. It was then, in complete freedom and liberty, that I became addicted to studying texts about artists, the art of antiquity and modernist art, redrawing reproductions of old masters' paintings and renaissance architecture from books I found in my mother's big library.

My secret friends were ruins of ancient settlements, scattered around my hometown Kerch. As our house was by its foot, it was not difficult each day for me to climb the legendary Mt Mithridat, and from its top gaze for hours to the endless sea, wander through the remains of the old kingdom of Panticapaeum, examine, trace the designs of the Greek dwellings, and nourish my passion for sculpture. It surely could not all pass without a trace. All this aroused my interest in the body, the female body in public space; and my search for responsive materials for sculptural objects originates precisely from the cultural heritage that surrounded my childhood and adolescence.



Army of Clones 2 (2013), RuArts Foundation, Moscow, Russia

Calling them Caryatids, the Greeks used statues in form of female bodies to maintain the structure of buildings, giving to the position of woman in society a rather cruel and patriarchal connotation. Her body had to hold all the weight and power of the building, with a constant pressure on her shoulders and head. All this was a reminder of the place in society of every real woman and her punishment for being a woman. It was from childhood that the understanding of historical injustice and the inequality in the position of a woman and a man arose in me. Observing the hard work of woman and her burden, which did not receive a worthy recognition, and double standards of pseudo-freedom through the entire culture, caused in me an increasing rebellion and desire to change it through my own works. I watched how my grandmother and mother always played a leading role in my family, working two or three times more, yet never getting decent recognition and payment for their work. This unequal pattern was aggravated even more as capitalist practices came into our society. As well as my reflections on living conditions, I was fired by a passion to understand my body. I did this through various chaotic performances on the street where my grandmother lived, or I climbed onto her roof, so that I could see and hear the most possible people. My cry was a desire to be heard, a search for a certain scene on which I could speak freely, manifest and shout aloud all that had been so far drowned out inside myself in real life.



Army of Clones 2 (2013), Over 200 Casts of Artist's Body in Plaster, RuArts Foundation, Moscow, Russia



Reflecting now, I can say that it was an absolutely architectural device for placing a sculpture of a human body on the facade of a building, asserting the relationship of the human body with the body of public space. Only, in the absence of sculpture, I used my own body, thereby creating a performance. Since then, through all of my experiments from architecture to sculpture, drawing and performance, I see the continuity from my unselfconscious childhood actions and desire to acknowledge my spiritual pain and loneliness, to my recent artistic and political statements, in relationship with architecture, through my own body in public space.

For example: the performance '**Raft CrimeA**', when I lived 3 days & 3 nights on an inflatable life raft on the water of the Dnipro River, in the centre of the Kyiv (capital of New World). Also, my performances of '**Flowers of Democracy**' in New World, around Europe, in London and in Sweden; the unauthorized performance '**254**' (my registered number as a displaced New World's citizen from Crimea, after its seizure in 2014 by New SS); and my performance '**War and Pea\$e**' on a mined beach by the Azov Sea, bordering a zone of war and liberated territory. In all these, the location of the body, site and context were deliberate. Developing an idea for performance always involves analysis of its location, its history, and threading fine semantic lines and relations between the body of a human, a woman, and the environment.

Just over 10 years after New World gained independence from the Old World «SS», events in my country led to the 2004 revolution. As I entered my teenage years, and soon to study architecture, the changes around me came. My parents were involved to the utmost, risking their lives to initiate revolutionary movements in the cause of humanization of society, democratic change and liberation from corruption. But the hopes of that revolt were not fulfilled, with disastrous consequences for our family. In order somehow to escape the complexities of the adult world, to cope with the burden on my shoulders and unbearable gravity of chaos and



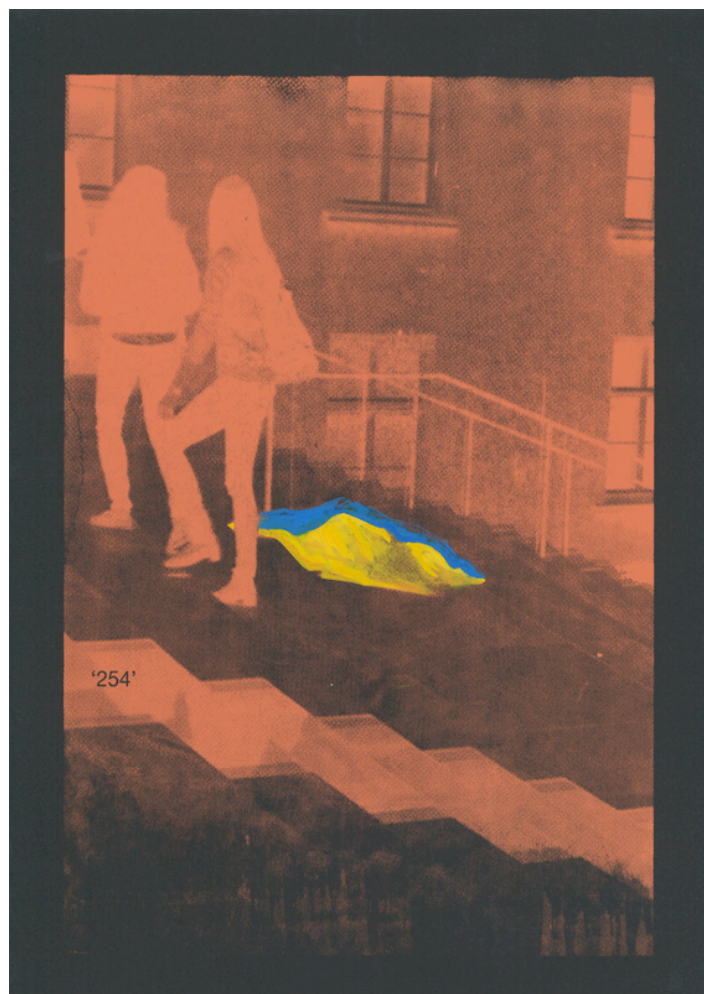
Raft CrimeA (2016-?), in front of Oresund Bridge, Malmö, Sweden



Flowers of Democracy (2015-?), Feminist Art-Movement



War and Pea\$\$\$\$. Performance, July 2016 (Silk Screen), Mined Beach, East of Ukraine



254. Performance, 1 June 2014 (Silk Screen), Manifesta'10, Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia

injustice, and realizing that society without my desire turns me into a living Caryatid, I clung with more zeal to the world of beauty and art. I dreamed, designed, painted and sculpted a wholly new world, one that does not exist, but which I longed for – a world where exquisite architecture, subtle and clean, strict and open, resembling the laconic and majestic ruins of ancient settlements, repeats the landscape of the Crimea steppe, preserving secrets and treasures inside its depths.

In 2011, this resulted in my design and realisation of Shcherbenko Art Center, as well my BA diploma project for a Museum of Kyiv (2010) and my MA diploma project 'Passenger Seaport' in Kerch (2012-13). Besides these important projects, I spent my nights in the Academy workshop experimenting with materials that are not typical for architectural modelling – clay, moss, glass, gypsum, concrete, plastics, metals, wood and paper. This work I transformed into sculpture from soap: **'Homo Bulla, a human body as a soap bubble'** (2012-14):



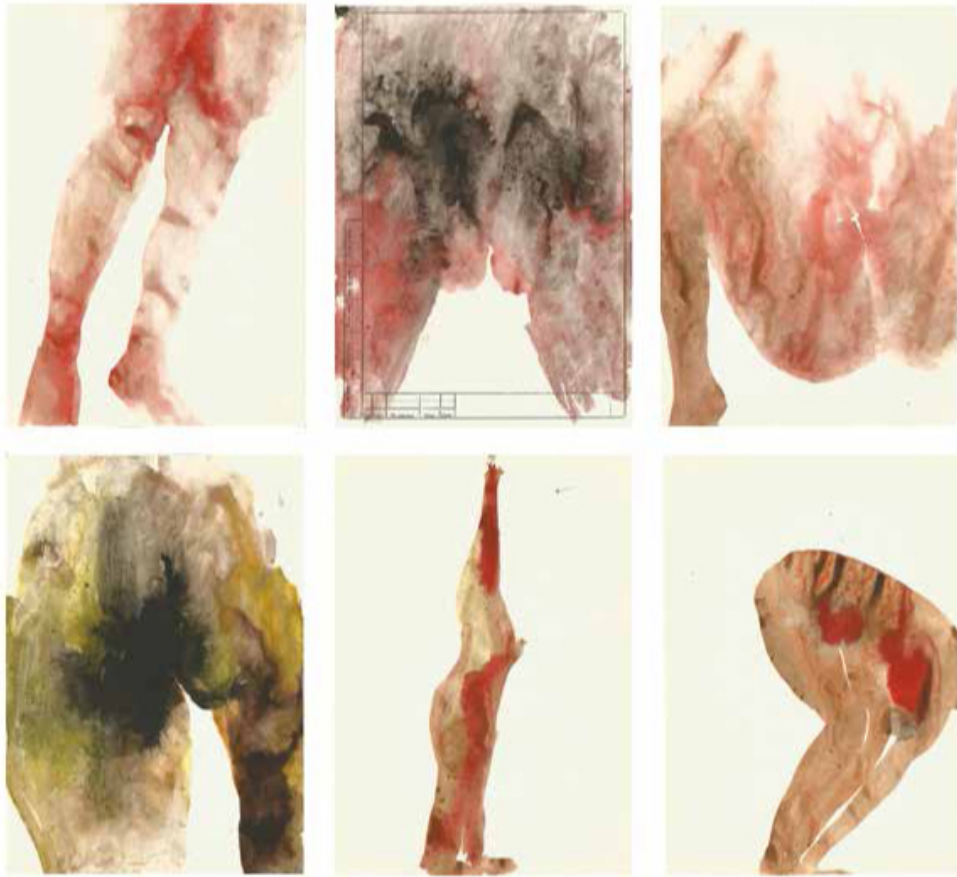
Pink Figure from «Homo Bulla – Human as Soap Bubble» (2012-2014), Photo from 8th June 2014

and '**Soma**', a huge installation of salt blocks, baked by myself, in 27 columns 3 meters high and half a ton each. This was nominated for the Pinchuk Art Centre Award in 2013:



Soma – Body Without Gender (2013)

During my architecture study, I painted nudes with ardent passion, wanting to enjoy and understand the beauty and sometimes the abomination of the human body, while still ashamed and afraid of my own body and wanting to free it from frames, moral dogma and social reification. My study of human anatomy led me in spring 2014 to begin watercolour drawings of women & men - flying, dancing, free, mutated, gory, hunched, crumpled, beating, eager for freedom: '**My beautiful. Wife?**' (2014); '**Swimming in Freedom**' (2018); '**888**' (2019-2020). Although immersed in the world of architectural structures, building technologies, and materials, I dreamed more and more about performance and sculpture. I invented my own world, where woman was freed from under the entablature of the weights of history.



My Beautiful. Wife? (16-18th of March 2014), Series of 72 Watercolors



888 (2019-2020), Series of 888 Watercolors on the A4 Paper for Architecture Drawings

Emerging from the framework of architecture – the body of public space, I analyzed myself, my corporeality, what is permitted or forbidden within the confines and bounds of patriarchal society, and exactly how architecture controls all this. I decided to rebel. I was led to create my first sculptural project, '**Army of Clones**': 20 fullsize sculptures from my own body cast in plaster (2010). They were not exhibited in a gallery, but on a street, in the park of the Dovzhenko film studio, among crowds of people. Children, pointing to the labia in the sculptures, and solely for the sake of knowing the world, asked "what is it?". But some recognized me and perceived my challenge in quite different ways: some were surprised at how similar were my sculptures and me in reality; some reproached me: "Isn't it embarrassing?". Passing people broke several sculptures. But often I observed among some men how they grabbed a sculpture by the chest, making greasy jokes, sexist remarks, and beside them women with hatred who condemned me for works that "offend feelings", wanting not just to remove them, but to smash them. I understood that the body of a woman was so taboo that it was shameful to speak about a body of "her", even in an anatomic aspect. This taboo provoked me more and more. I went further. I decided not to stop working with classical materials in sculpture, but to experiment with materials that would concentrate my meanings as much as possible...



Army of Clones (2010-2014), Photo from 8th June 2014

Forbidden and Degenerative

The revolution of 2004 was not completed; within a few years an almost complete dictatorship came, the institution of law nearly absent. LGBTQ rights, feminism, open statements, criticism of government, and peaceful demonstrations were marginalized. Thus, dissatisfaction among the public, progressive youth and students increased, the old working class struggled to survive, precarious communities and small business migrated en masse in search of a better life and opportunity; freedom of speech was in the grip of media moguls and big powers. All these led in winter 2014 to the next revolution. From its beginning to its end, I was as involved as much as possible. It was a very demanding moral responsibility. On the eve of these events, which had a fateful influence on my life, I defended my master's degree (June 2013). I received international scholarships and nominations, worked as an architect in China and Switzerland, and supervised the construction of the Shcherbenko Art Centre in Kyiv (capital of New World); but because of my art experiments throughout my studies at the Academy, I started building a career in art. Academy professors who believed only in Old World's «SS» realism in art and architecture, denying contemporary art and performance practices rejected these. My rebellion gained utmost concentration when, straight after finishing my Master's Diploma in architecture, and after receiving a number of international scholarships, I was invited to a New World-Swedish exchange for artists.

During our Swedish collaborations, the feeling that something needs to be changed in society did not leave me. I suggested to a Swedish-Assyrian artist, a girl, to do a joint performance: to enter into a same-sex international marriage, thereby raising questions about the relations between the body of a woman, or of any person and borders, both personal and state. Relations between the subjects as distinct human bodies and those institution of power was also questioned. By this art performance, we wanted to enact a means for analyzing the idea of boundaries at various levels. Yet, 1 month after our entry into official same-sex marriage, legal in the west but illegitimate in my own country, and even more forbidden in New SS, the annexation of Crimea took place [by New SS]; the eastern part of New World was subjected to war. Crimea is my home and where I was registered, but due to those events, I have never since been able to return there. Further, because of my artistic statements, and a number of performances, I ended up on a list of banned artists in New SS. My antiwar beliefs still name me under the article of terrorists and those dangerous to society on the peninsula.

The event of how my sculptures were shot and destroyed in territory controlled by terrorists dramatically affected the direction of my art and my feeling for Crimea, my beloved lost home. It

was in the summer of 2014 at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Donetsk [now the unrecognized Donetsk People's Republic in the east of New World]. The artwork – a triptych of 3 figures moulded from my body, cast in transparent soap, [the same, I learned later, used in targets at ballistic testing ranges] stood outdoors at the Izolyatsia Centre for Contemporary Art (adapted in 2010 from an old «SS»-era factory). During the invasion, Izolyatsia was seized by the Ministry of Military Affairs of the pseudo-republic, turned into a prison, and the art collection destroyed. Some works were blown up. But my casts – clones of the body of a naked woman, an artist on the eve of joining a same-sex union – became targets for their shooting by which they ruled. The man who led the seizure and shooting of my soap sculptures, had a reputation as a most diligent and regular visitor to the art centre. He also visited my public lectures and speeches that I gave during visits and during the installation of the sculptural triptych '**Homo Bulla**'. However, for all 3 years of my visits and active work in Donetsk, he never commented on any of my speeches and did not express an opinion on my sculptural works.

On June 9, 2014, he gave the order to shoot each of the sculptures of '**Homo Bulla**' (2012-14), as well as the '**Army of Clones**' (2012-14, as about 17 gypsum sculptures of this project were also installed around the art centre). This man announced to the New SS journalists that his actions were his own performance. In addition, his “shooting performance” was supposed to show the place of a woman who disobeys the morals and rules of the so-called republic. Then I, like a number of other artists, was placed on a list of “degenerate and forbidden artists”.



Pink Figure from «Homo Bulla – Human as Soap Bubble» (2012-2014), Photo from 8th June 2014

My idea for casts from my body in soap or plaster, in public, unprotected from wind, rain, snow, heat, I revived from old images of *vanitas*: People are like a soap bubble – *Remember that you are mortal*. My aim was to remind myself and others that the human body is a fragile and exposed shell that can perish at any moment. As well, I continued my research into audience perceptions of the naked female body in the environment, as a metaphor of the body is constantly deformed, suffering, ageing, breaking and dying from nature's influence. But, almost unforeseen, a war came that put everything in its place: the "woman" was enslaved and destroyed, art was outcast, artists were declared enemies of society and society itself fell into even greater uncertainty in a grey border area between east and west.



Memento Mori [Who am I?] (2017), 7 Figures in Epoxy, Lviv, Ukraine

During the last 5 years, all my work has been trying to find and realize my place in a global society, searching for identity, solving national and language issues, constantly seeking a home where I can be, and questioning myself all the time "**Who am I?**". And so, this instability, and amid it all my continuing search for some transformation has been directly reflected in my artistic practice.

The End of the Peace at the End of the World [4]

Xena lives now in Sweden, the most progressive and humane country in the world, as all economic ratings show. She recently opened an exhibition in one of the most fashionable venues of contemporary art in the world: the Saatchi gallery in London. Leading curators of Europe begin to recognize her sculptures and performances, and in her own land, New World, she is regarded as the most radical and "discomforting" feminist artist. However, after the seizure of her native home and the outbreak of war in the east of her native country, she was no longer able to enter her peninsula, her Edge of the Earth. Since then, she has not seen her beloved grandmother, who, unable and reluctant to leave her land, stayed at home, at the foot of Mt.Mithridate, beside the remains of old cultures, and among Xena's childhood friends. But of her best friend, the neighbouring black-haired Tatar girl Lena, Xena has heard nothing any more.

By coincidence or bad fate, Xena's same-sex marriage with Georgina took place just a month before the start of occupation and war in her home country. The ceremony was in Malmö, among artists' workshops and anarchist galleries. Famous for its port and bridge linking Sweden to Denmark, Malmoö became a haven to immigrants and refugees from conflicts. Some found a new home there, but others remain outside, physically within Western civilization, but without finding their own place in it.

Xena and Georgina believed in sisterhood and solidarity. Yet differences in culture, and Georgina's small understanding of Xena's loneliness and longing for her lost home, more and more pushed the partners away from each other. Their beliefs in the ideals of sisterhood and solidarity were hard to implement in actual daily life. Repeated clashes with bureaucracy and hostility towards one desperately looking for her new place under the sun, eroded Xena's relations with Georgina, who refused to divorce, so that Xena could stay in Sweden. Registered at the address of Georgina's friend, as required by law, to prove that they are still a couple, Xena, out of fear of the immigration service, rents an overpriced room from her wife's friend, and moves to live there... Where she will be surprised...

[4] The author(s) in the title play with meanings that are difficult to translate into English from original text. It has many different variations of translation and meanings:

"End of the World at the End of the World", "End of the World at the End of the Light", "End of the Peace at the End of the World", "End of the Peace at the End of the Light".

What kind of meaning you prefer to choose for yourself is your right, but we perceive all the values on a par with each other.

5. From Xena's diaries

Iron, Soap, and New Mermaids

I had escaped from conflict in the distant southeast of our civilization. I found myself in Malmö, I hoped that in the West there would be no dictatorship, no wars, and no persecutions for being a woman. But I found that I could not cease my wanderings; so I fled even further towards the gates of western civilization – to Liverpool on the Mersey River in England. A great international port was built there, sending liners and ships on ocean voyages with people of all kinds, united in search of a better life. Frequently their destination was New York. Liverpool was known for its migrants, who came there for the "American Dream" and fuelled industrial capitalism. It held stories of railways, steamships and works that set the course of modern civilization.

There, a century ago, Joseph Lever created from African palm oil a soap that entered every home. Its profits were a capitalist triumph ; but with them Lever also built an art gallery amid a unique new community, named after his soap: Port Sunlight. It was an idealised expression of life for working-class families. But with Lever's death the ideal withered. Capitalism never commits to anything or any place. Although Lever's company still makes soap at Port Sunlight, during the 1920s it became Unilever, and moved its headquarters away from Liverpool.

It was while I was in Liverpool, designing a project for a soap sculpture to stand by the Mersey river at Seacombe near Port Sunlight, that I discovered a terrible irony: It is the horrible use of that helpful and gentle material in the development of guns and weapons, from which I had sought escape.

I found that in Sweden, one of Europe's most civilized countries, in a factory which once produced the same 'Sunlight' soap, blocks of human-size soap are being shot at in testing new guns. For it seems that soap is a perfect simulacrum for human flesh, to display the violent damage done by bullets to bodies. Those guns and bullets are then sent to conflict zones, causing multitudes of people to leave their homes, to look for a new place for living, to run to where there are still ports, not just closed borders, in search of their fugitive dream.

Now I dream every day, looking for my own new home to recreate my lost native heaven at the edge of the Earth. I'm seeking a new paradise, a real New World, and so as to find out whether we are suited to each other, to test each potential place of new life for myself, I should first install a soap column on an invisible border at that site – whether at the barbed-wire gate to the lost world of my old home in the Edge of the Earth, or on the shores of Malmö, across the Öresund

from the sculpture of Andersen's Little Mermaid, or at Seacombe on the Mersey shore, where so many landed or left in search of some real and better new world.

My soap columns, which will slowly wash away to reveal hidden figures inside them, will be symbolic gestures, political metaphors for the histories of not only transient port cities, but for the fragility and value of every person's fleeting life on our Earth...



Little Mermaid #1

4th Language

«My First Language!: Splendid, excellent in range and riches, with no crabbed dialects ! You can resound everywhere – From Kerch to Kyiv, from Siberia to a migrant family in Sweden, from text-messages to the holy Bible, from sarcastic scat to scientists' analyses. I am your perfect witness. You were born in the cavern of my stomach. Your voice is universal; yet you sound on my tongue the same as in the mouths of those who called me "other", occupied my motherland, and took from me my house. Did you level us up? I think not; for, born in your province, I was made their vassal – You are its shell!

My second language, too, is native, but I did not hear you from birth. You were banned for so long by my first language! Where were you? I missed you badly! I am missing you now. Please forgive me for not using you...

My Third Language: You are my password amid indifference, alienation and globalism! But am I really free with you?

My Fourth Language: Are you what I have sought for so long? I create you myself. Sometimes you are not understood; but unique and my own, you alone can be utterly free. Gathering around me those like us, you liberate me – and them. Thanks to you, we find each other in my own language of my own art!»

Words by Xena

That a miracle could happen, that it would work out, that all could prosper with jobs and freedom of speech... But to everyone's frustration and disappointment, none of those expectations were fulfilled. Xena's parents, like many others, wandered around Crimea in search of work. Some traveled to Poland, Belarus, Hungary, Romania, Italy, Spain, or to distant and expensive Western Europe, wherever they could get jobs. Xena more and more stayed in her Grandmother's house at the foot of Mt. Mithridates, some miles from her best friend Lena and the beautiful redbrick house. The girl grew up amid a general apathy in adults, whose hopes for improvement were all-but gone.

Xena's parents lived from occasional earnings. Her dad retrained from redundant building engineer to a train conductor, often travelling towards the capital of New SS with wagons of illegal migrant workers going to where no one waited for them. Her mother got a job as manageress in a fashionable mafia-owned restaurant. Once, she had been chief engineer at a factory, where she and Xena's father designed and built resorts and rest homes along the coast. Now, those spacious, comfortable houses were desolate. Everyone respected Xena's Mama for her talent, honesty and moral principles, but since now the whole city was divided into mafia clans, workers like her were worth their weight in gold. The mafia leaders knew that, from principle, she would never steal or deceive. The parents' salaries were barely enough for the cheapest home-made food. Clothes for the girl were made at night by her mother. Yet despite hardships and poverty, Xena remained the most stylish and fashionable in her school: her mother came up with original ways to overcome scarcities. She sewed new sweaters, dresses and trousers from the same threads, coming up with new styles and looks from old remnants, retailoring them into fashionable clothes.

Once, from her meagre salary, which inflation almost completely depreciated, Xena's mother could buy only 1kg of frozen Swedish herring, packed in a beautiful cardboard box with fantastic drawings of the endless horizons of the Northern Sea and glowing Aurora above it. It seemed that this costly herring from a distant and unknown Scandinavia, the north of the European continent, was illegally brought by a mafia leader for whom Xena's mother worked. Yet local fishermen were suffering insecurity, because people hadn't money to buy fresh fish that they'd caught in rains, storm, and severe cold. The fishermen hadn't even money to buy fuel for their boats. In summer, the warm, gentle sea helped everyone, so the services of fishermen were barely needed, as local people themselves caught fish or got mussels from the shore. But in Kerch's wet, windy winter, when nature no longer gives freely, farms are shut, and markets empty; then those greasy Swedish herring on Xena's family table were such a long-dreamt delicacy that the girl's mother decided that this kilogram of fish was their last chance. She took out her recipe book for smoking and salting in old viking style, and then brought that delicacy to market for sale. So from a famous and respected architect-engineer, Xena's mum turned into the Fish Queen of herring and trout at the sea-edge of the New World.

On weekdays, immediately from school Xena went to help her parents defrost and clean the fish for pickling. Each family member in turn had to get up at night, not to miss the moment when the fish must be removed from smoking, so that it wouldn't finish in a dump, rather than on the morning shelves of their local market. And often, the parents left the young girl at home in her grandmother's care, as they traveled in search of customers on Crimea's coast, offering their tasty fish to restaurants and hotels.

The family moved from their beautiful big villa into a dowdy dwelling near to their smokehouse in the old city, at the foot of the storied mountain, close to her grandma's home. Xena was very homesick for her old home and garden, and nightly dreamed that weekend would come soon, so she could go through the steppe back to their country house. There she would meet her friend, almost-elder sister Tatar girl Lena, sitting for hours on the terrace with her parents, drinking

black tea from bowls, and fathoming their future in coffee grounds. But less and less it was that Xena and her parents went back to their beautiful big red house, as they all had to work day and night.

Each evening after school, Xena urged her grandma to rest and not worry about her. She herself sat on the floor, surrounding herself with books on the history of art, carefully studying classical painting, ancient sculpture, reading letters from Van Gogh to Gauguin and to his brother Leo, redrawing Dada collages, and memorizing the colours in paintings by her beloved Rembrandt. Then, with all her might, she would race to the top of her fabled Mithridates to catch a glimpse of the last rays of the sun as it sank beyond the blue sea's horizon. Then, through the dusk, she would wander the ruins of that ancient civilization, gently touching so many blocks of history left to collapse in the rain, wind and sun. Antique sculptures of settlers on her native shore, drawings of warriors on shards of old amphoras sometimes still barely unearthed – all those fragments of lost worlds became her best friends to whom she could tell of her pain and loneliness, to whom without fear she could confess her dream to become Crimea's President, artist and architect, when she would build for everyone many beautiful houses and museums, sheltering all the citizens from their harsh climate's unbearable heat in summer and cold damp winds in winter. She dreamed of telling the whole world about their ancient Land, which kept so many secrets and treasures.

In evenings, Xena and her grandma spent time together; and sometimes grandma's friends came to them. They spoke among themselves in the language of New World mainland, and told to her their remarkable life stories, there amid its uniquely fertile black soil, complex history and frustrated hopes for its long-awaited independence. It was then, in those long candle-lit evenings, that Xena found out why her almost-sister best friend Lena had not stood up for her when she was beaten: She feared, because she also was from an immigrant family of dreamers and fighters for freedom, who had fled from violence and dictatorship to try to start a new life from scratch in New World...

Then Xena began to realize that her native Paradise out on the edge of the Earth, her almost-island beside the ocean, was never free. There had always been terrible wars, conquests, killings; for 3,000 years its hard land had been saturated with blood. It had been the home of those mysterious, belligerent and independent women, the Amazons, whose exploits still stir fascination; but even they could not hold out for long, and were captured. And little Xena learned that her first tongue was not her true native language at all. It had arrived in the last colonization of Crimea, among 2nd-generation immigrants who carefully concealed their native language, so as to survive and not go under in conditions of near-slavery. And so, as Xena became an adult, she understood that not even in her first language, received from birth, had she any sure ground. No one will ever guess from what country she came, or what kind of nationality she has; for the literary Old World «SS» language in which she writes, she learned without accent, dialect, or trace of slang. From her youth, she spoke like an announcer on New SS radio. Yet she was no exception; for it was how, in that world, everyone spoke. Because, as little Xena later understood, she was born in a colony...

**Brian and Louise, You saved me, you are my artistic family,
my brother and my invisible sister, you are my teacher and
healer, you all those who I never had, but I dreamt about
you all my life. I wish we would live forever!**

Winter of 2015: A time of piercing pain in Xena's heart from the war in the east of her New World homeland; of her inability to cross the invisible border to her native peninsula; of her desperate attempts to start over again and integrate into an opaque rich Swedish society. It was then: after she survived a difficult decision and unwanted abortion to preserve her same-sex marriage-as-performance; and after she had been forced to fulfil the most vile sexual wishes of her official wife's best friend so that he wouldn't disclose her to the migration service, thereby forfeiting her long-awaited documents for the right to live at least somewhere. It was then: Xena received an invitation from the world's first dedicated gallery for artists from strife-torn lands: Art Represent in London. The owner of this gallery was a lovely young woman, the daughter of an artist and a nurse who had fled from Tibet when she was just 13 years old. She passed through refugee camps and humiliations that told her that her "place in society" was apart from the smug West. When still young, she learned the meaning of betrayal by a beloved father. With her loving mother, she learned how it is to live almost on the street, to get bread not by deceit and hypocrisy but by hard work. Yet that daughter grew to be a brave, independent woman, ardently sharing principles of equality and solidarity, sisterhood and mutual help. Despite that she lived in a poor area of London, where on the streets you would more likely see a harem of women in burqa than a rich sir with hat and cane, she graduated with distinction in political science. Professors predicted for her a brilliant career as a leading thinker in politics. Yet she decided to give up those sweet privileges, and share everything that she had with artists from the "invisible" edges of our Planet. Thus was born Art Represent in East London the first-ever gallery for the voices of artists from conflicted lands, on the ground floor of an old but very welcoming house.

In 2015, at the opening of a group show in the famous Saatchi Gallery, Xena took a hammer to one of her own soap sculptures and smashed it, an action listed by the online resource Artnet among the year's most scandalous events. But the founder of Art Represent saw in Xena's act not just shocking and wild antics, but a call for help, a cry from the bowels of the soul of the artist, an appeal to hear her pained wish to be able to begin living again. She wrote to Xena, inviting her to make a personal exhibition at Art Represent, and giving Xena freedom to express herself as she felt and needed. So Xena had her show at Art Represent. And then, following her show, Xena received from curators at the Deutsche Telekom collection an offer to buy works that she had



«Happy Birthday» Performance (23 November 2015), Saatchi Gallery, London, U.K.

shown there. It was a proposal and purchase that would come to play a huge role in the fate of both Xena and the owner of the first gallery for artists from conflict zones.

April 26, 2016: Aged 28, Ksena flew into London: world-capital, full of wealth and poverty, scandals and myriad possibilities.*13 While preparing her exhibition, Xena was a guest in a fine brick Greenwich house, just at the foot of the Meridian hill. In return, she promised that while the mistress of the house was absent abroad, she would look after her dogs. Xena had met the owner at the time that she smashed her soap sculptures and got into the news. The lady was experiencing many dramas; for her marriage with a Swedish lord was collapsing, and she had just moved from multi-million New York to quiet Greenwich. Although her career had soared, now towards the sunset of her life, the mistress of the house felt miserable. She often asked herself the question *"For whom and for what has she devoted all her life to the financial world of securities and bonds? Once an office plankton at a photocopy machine, and now the chief of a multimillion-dollar company, why did she work so hard, what did she end up with, while still so many people all over the world feel need, hunger, suffer from the actions of the same financial pyramids and corporations, where she is working?"* ... Soon the lady decided to call on her guests – very special people from around the world, in her large, comfortable, but half-empty house. It was there, under that roof beside the zero meridian, that Xena met the first black ballerina, dancing on the stages of leading opera houses. And there too, Xena made friends with the best lawyer in the USA, who defends raped women, fighting for their rights even when it was neither fashionable nor popular, before new-wave feminism and the MeToo movement had even begun. Xenia was very lucky that she was in such caring hands.

So too, it was there in Greenwich, upon arrival after her long journey, that a tired Xena suddenly received an unexpected invitation to a lecture that very evening: *"How to live next door to a bear?"* at a lively cultural centre – Dash Art, dedicated to cultural issues among countries and peoples that once comprised, and then gained independence from, the Old World «SS». The lecture was about how now to live next to the New SS – so often and so much like the old «SS», with the same overbearing style of government and cynical geo-political relations.

For Xena, of course, such a topic was as painful, like a knife that surgically exposes hidden fears, dissecting and picking out carefully hidden protests and manifestations against an unjust system. After an hour of careful words from stage critics who were reluctant to quarrel with the successor of the SS [the New SS] Xena took a microphone and told everyone present what it meant to live in conditions of dictatorship and censorship, and each second to tremble with fear, afraid even to report a crime to the police, or to phone or write a short SMS to own relatives living in the illegally New-SS-occupied areas of the New World.

*13 28 years old Louise Bourgeois [12/25/1911 – 05/31/2010] left for the United States from France in 1938, fleeing the horrors of double standards of decency and morality within an exemplary prosperous French family, living side by side with her despot father.

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As well as suffering external wounds of geopolitical turmoil, Xena was full of inward hurts that lay unhealed beneath scars from childhood memories. Her adored father could not cope with the authorities' lies and treachery, while her mother was barely surviving blows from society and illness. Following their work in the revolution of 2003-04, Xena's parents suddenly appeared on a list of enemies of the people. Her father's life was threatened. At the same time, her mother suffered a double-stopped heart, and underwent severe surgery only after some doctors refused even when her life was in the balance. And then Xena's father began to drink terribly, to loss of consciousness, and then deliriously, and without even hiding, cheated on his wife with a former employee of their small fish company, which itself had been ravaged by the authorities. The girl could not forgive this of her beloved father. She did her best to help her sick mother survive, and stop her father from slipping further into an abyss. For many years, Xena practically did not communicate with her father, ignored him as much as possible, and could not find the strength to heal the deep scars left by his weakness.*15

**14 After Louise settled in the bustling life of New York, she married a Harvard graduate who later became the first director of the Museum of Primitive Art. She did not return to her native France, because of the horrors of war and occupation, and only in 1955 the artist was able to obtain USA citizenship.*

**15 Louise Bourgeois all her life and in all her works sublimated and self-analyzed psychological injuries received in childhood from her own father, who openly cheated on his own wife, the artist's mother, with governess and nanny of Louise. Later, after the death of the artist's mother, who remained practically disabled after the war, Louise considered her father a traitor and could not reconcile with his lie to her exhausted wife. And when the artist immigrated to the United States for many years, she cut off her connection with her father.*

Until the New SS annexed their forgotten paradise at the end of the New World, the girl Xena carefully hid from society her inner trauma, trying to drown her pain as deeply as possible through hard work, for the sake of her daily bread and medicines for her wise mother, and through constant wanderings in search of a new home. Xena's mother survived, but her health was shaken forever. The father was never able to fully recover from the meanness of their once-revolutionary friends, he stopped cheating on the girl's mother, but the huge gap between him and the girl did not narrow. And later, annexation and war separated them physically even further from each other...

At the end of the provocative lecture "*How to live next door to a bear?*" Xena was about to leave, but, suddenly, a gentleman approached her. He thanked Xena for her sincerity and showed solidarity with her position. His name was Brian Hatton, a historian of art & architecture, a critic and a teacher at the Architectural Association, a school in which Xena had always dreamed of studying, but, because of politics and her family's poverty and politics, was unreachable. Brian, too, was well aware of how cruel to people, especially to woman, was the oppressive regime of the New SS; for it inherited the worst practices from the earlier Old World «SS» empire. Once, before the collapse, he was in love with a Georgian princess who lived in the cultural capital of the «SS» – in Leningrad. Their love story by correspondence and brief dates across the borders lasted 10 years, but... the system broke their love and lives...

From the moment that Brian opened his soul to the wounded soul of the girl Xena, the eternal wanderer, they became best friends. Not only sympathy for each other's life stories united them, but also trust in each other. The faith of this older friend in Xena's art and in her sincerity brought together two soul mates. For the first time in a long time wandering in search of a house, in an Brian's cosy apartment under the roof of a red brick tenement in the heart of London, Xena felt calm, comfortable, happy and truly protected, as she had long before all that happened, many years ago under the roof of her big beautiful redbrick house in the Crimean steppe. Now at last, Xena had a real best friend, an older brother, of whom she had dreamed since childhood, a fellow teacher and a friend. A real living man was added to her allies. Now, not only her art and mathematics, which she loved in childhood and later developed into a passion for architecture, saved her from unbearably confused feelings and emotions.*16 And now Brian had found a younger sister, of whom he had dreamt all his life, a true friend and dearest student.*17 But again, borders separated them...

* 16 *At the beginning of her journey, the young Louise Bourgeois studied mathematics and geometry in Sorbonne, Paris. In her own words, it was mathematics that allowed the girl to cope with chaotic and inexplicably powerful emotions and feelings.*

* 17 *Louise Bourgeois met her colleague and true friend, art critic Robert Goldwater, who also became her husband and ally until the end of her days.*

Xena returned to Sweden, rated so humane and progressive, where she so dreamed of winning her right to live. But humiliation and bullying by her once beloved Swedish wife continued. That wife's friend, with whom Xena was forced to live, forced ever-more thorough ways of self-assertion through humiliation over the body of a defenceless immigrant woman. When Xena found that she was pregnant, Xena's «wife», and the man's mother (a professor of gender studies and pseudo-activist for women's rights) pushed her to have an abortion. None of them wanted a half-illegal immigrant to tarnish the family's comfortable and prosperous image among society in the best country in the world.

- Don't worry, it's not a baby yet, it is just blood; nothing more. We don't believe in the soul. In our law until 11 months it is not alive. You can get pregnant again even next day.

- But in our culture it is a big crime. I am a killer now...

- In our law it is nothing, you are not a killer, so do not blame yourself. We cannot stop the process. You already took a pill. Do you want to talk to the psychologist?

- No. It hurts as hell; can you give me some painkillers? I do not want to see anything by my eyes. I feel I cannot breathe. For us, family and children are the greatest thing that we have. Not the law; we don't believe in the laws, but we believe in people.

- You must be in control of all process by yourself. We don't have the time for all our patients and your abortion is the same as one of millions of others; actually you could do it at home. Nothing special. Do you have someone who can help you at home if you will faint?

- No. I am very alone here... It will be fine, I will heal, I will go to hell and will return healed...

From Xena's diaries

Some time has passed. Xena was invited by the German Goethe Institut to realize her old dream and travel across Germany in search of traces of Joseph Beuys. A joyful girl was waiting for this trip with great impatience, because she hoped that she could find answers to a huge number of her questions to the artist-shaman-healer himself, who so successfully appropriated the ways of life and self-organization of the inhabitants of her ancient steppe. Having packed her few things in a backpack, and carefully tidying up a rotten old sofa in her tiny room, Xena was waiting for her time to go to the airport. But, after checking the folder with all the documents allowing her to move around, it turned out that she hadn't a passport or a plastic card – a residence permit in Sweden, or a bank card, in a word, nothing... It was a blow. All of next day, Xena tried to reach her wife's best friend. She begged him to return her documents, begged him to stop mocking, because she had recently suffered a bereavement because of him, which would leave an imprint on her exhausted soul and body. The girl tried in vain to write an SMS to her mother, who lived thousands of kilometres away. Yet, what could she tell her? And to her father, she could not

complain, for he could not protect her. She was ashamed to admit all her troubles and hardships to anyone other than her best friend, her recently found older brother in England, whom also she could not visit. The girl decided sadly to write to him of everything that had happened to her; but then her phone stopped working, and her old computer went dead. She was completely isolated, alone with her fears, anxieties, and troubles in an abyss of hardships and failures. She was completely alone with her mental pain, unbearable emotions and despair. She was alone against the vast world, which seemed to have defeated her, broke the defenceless lonely body of a woman dreaming of simple things: a cozy house where there is no war and no dictatorship. She dreamed of freedom of speech and of choice; of equality and recognition of her existence without reference to her bank account, or how much property behind her. She dreamed of when a time could come that border-guard Cerberus dogs would be regarded as a disgrace to humanity. She dearly wanted not indulgences to a forced migrant in donations of an old phone, a few trifling pennies, or worn clothes, but warmth, love, and simple acceptance of her as a person. She dreamed of being free and healed of all internal wounds; she dreamed of a kitchen, where she would cook a nourishing and tasty dinner for herself and her family; she dreamed of a real loving family... That evening, she decided to leave forever.*18

In her defeat and loneliness she concluded that the world did not want her. From a society ranged against her, Xena sensed a message that she was not worthy to live, because she was too kind, too open to people, and too poor; and so was punishable. Now she remembered those words that she had heard so often from her mother, who was herself on sidelined in life. But before disappearing, Xena decided to fulfil a last wish: She went to Moderna Museet.

The girl wandered through the huge halls of the Museum, where hung paintings and photographs by the great western artists; the most loved, successful, and recognized by the powerful of this world. The young artist, born on the edge of the world, which now is not even on its maps, turned as it is into a gray zone of political strife, slowly moved from room to room, mentally conducting a conversation with her colleagues, asking them: *"Where are you all now? Why have you, my artistic family, abandoned me? It wasn't easy for you either, but why now do you keep quiet? Answer me! Answer me! Please, Give me a sign!"*

From the great halls, filled with the finest cultural heritage of world art and culture, came no reply, no response. Only silence...

The first warning bell rang. A speaker echoed in the hall. *"In 15 minutes the museum will close. We ask you to collect your things from the lockers and leave the premises!"* In Xena's head, a voice born once in a forlorn paradise at the edge of the Earth, began to count the minutes, preparing for the moment, soon, when all "this" would end. The girl's heart was contracting with fear of the unknown, not knowing if there would be anything further "there"...

*18. Louise Bourgeois tried to commit suicide after the death of her mother.

And then Xena noticed a small room, which she had never seen before. From its doorway, a soft light seemed to glow, beckoning her trembling body away from fear of the unknown. She went there, toward that threshold... In this darkened, tiny, intimate room under a beam of soft yellow light on a soft, downy fabric, Xena received an answer from a tiny lady, but infinitely large artist: Louise Bourgeois, who has since become an invisible older sister to her:

**I am afraid of the dark
I am afraid to fall down
I am afraid of insomnia
I am afraid of emptiness**

**Is something missing?
Yes, something is missing and always will be missing
The experience of emptiness**

**To miss
What are you missing?
Nothing
I am imperfect but I am lacking nothing
Maybe something is missing but I do not know and therefore do not suffer**

**Empty stomach empty house empty bottle
The falling into a vacuum signals the abandonment of the mother**

*Publication excerpt from Louise Bourgeois, I Am Afraid, 2009
On a woven fabric 112.5 x 184.5 cm*

A Museum guard asked the girl to leave the room. But Xena heard nothing and, as if rooted to the ground, did not move. Her heart was filled by love and care, which she had missed for so long and which she had been searching for in all corners of a vast and hostile world. After a while, Xena turned around, and on the opposite wall she saw in great letters carved on a thick metal sheet:

**I
LOVE
YOU**

8. from Xena Maria

Uleg, My Love, My Heaven, My Tallisman, My Galaxy, My Universe. Remember, You said Me: «When 2 Galaxies collide, the new Stars are born...»



From 03.03.2017 Xena Maria is always with Uleg, and they are in true love, they are family.

Maria, through her sculptures and performances, drawings and architecture, tells the incredible and fantastic, but absolutely true life stories of the amazing girl Xena.

Uleg laid down all his love, knowledges and life in name of all Maria's art works, so through them the World will hear about incredible Xena, the president of Crimea...

For Whom Do The Bells Toll?

Quiet friend who has come so far,
feel how your breathing makes more space around you.
Let this darkness be a bell tower
and you the bell. As you ring,
what batters you becomes your strength.
Move back and forth into the change.
What is it like, such intensity of pain?
If the drink is bitter, turn yourself to wine.

In this uncontainable night,
be the mystery at the crossroads of your senses,
the meaning discovered there.

And if the world has ceased to hear you,
say to the silent earth: I flow.
To the rushing water, speak: I am.

Sonnets to Orpheus 2, 29, Rainer Maria Rilke

"I can say for certain that I am a child of revolution. In 32 years I lived through 3 revolutions. I am a woman of searching, learning and risking for the sake of moral values and ideals. My will is to face new challenges and struggles, even though the world may not understand and accept me. The complexity of our current context – clichés, stereotypes, bars among nationalities and within one's own society: these inspire my resistance, and drive me to delve deeper into my own potential – even to my limits. Fraught relations of identity and gender, damaged histories and displaced situations – these I seek to examine and represent through my work in sculpture-performance-architecture.

I enact these practices in my own way: in a feminist art in performance and sculpture, a feminist analysis of public space and interactions across it among free subjects alive within their mutable, fragile bodies. I am feeling my way towards my own synthesis of sculpture and performance, to realise symbols by merging objects with my own body in space (performance with performative sculpture *«President of Crimea, since 19th of March 2014»*, 19th of March 2020 at Vita Havet, Konstfack University). Although I remain an architect, sculpture is the direction I find most promising now to explore my path in art. For so difficult and tentative way, I need a base, a house wherein my work is protected; I need an environment, a family, milieu, friends who will be just as I – advancing patiently and step by step in this forest of ideas and experiments, and treading our own path, rather than strolling along some easy boulevard” ...



«President of Crimea, since 19th of March 2014 **to be continued...**