

Artist Statement

OVERVIEW

My persistent fascination with the inexhaustible diversity of the human experience drives my creative process and conceptual exploration. I oscillate between the microcosms of individual interior life, particularly the peculiarities of personal character and memory, and the macrocosms of family, culture, and society, including hierarchical structures and collective identity. Though my choice of influences and imagery transcends boundaries of space and time, my own cross-cultural existence plays a crucial role in shaping my individual perspective and aesthetic. In my work, I partner powerful narratives with a bold visual language that embraces and incorporates both traditional and experimental art forms. My broad technical expertise in painting, illustration, photography, digital practices, and ceramics allows me to articulate my conceptual frameworks with precision, nuance, and innovation.

RUSSIAN PRISON SERIES (2003–2006)

Mimi Ferzt Gallery, USA | University of Colorado Art Museum, USA | The Williamsburg Art and Historical Center, USA | Photoville, USA | Melkweg Gallery, Netherlands | Norderlicht Gallery, Netherlands | Sirius Arts Centre, Ireland | Reportage Photography Festival, Australia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, I worked closely with incarcerated teenagers as a volunteer at the Lebedeva and Kolpino prisons in St. Petersburg. My intense conversations with and observation of these young prisoners exposed the inherent connection between their predicament and the eruption of economic and social chaos after the dissolution of our country. I created my *Russian Prison Series* to reveal the parallels between incarcerated communities and the Russian Orthodox Church, which coexisted within the prison system as a distorted facsimile of society at large. In order to explore the constructs of criminality and saintliness, sin and holiness, and the power of martyrdom, I superimposed straightforward black and white portraits of the young prisoners with painted religious, political, and cultural iconography. The discordant mixture of elements functions as a revisionary commentary that forces the viewer to contemplate and question how we define, judge, and categorize the saintly and sinful.

KUNSTKAMERA (2008–2010)

Howard Yezerski Gallery, USA | Sarah Doyle Gallery, Brown University, USA | Joseph Gross Gallery, USA | Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, USA | Galerie Caprice Horn, Germany | DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, USA

Collections of oddities and rarities have an unusual power over spectators, igniting simultaneous responses of wonder and revulsion, enchantment and fear. By contrast to the carefully curated modern museum, the antique cabinet of curiosities can be overwhelming and disorienting, the chaotic result of our propensity to gather and organize objects that reflect and express our individual internality and cultural affiliations. In *Kunstkamera*, I harness the expressive potency of such collections to explore personal and collective identity and memory. In particular, I examine the protean nature of memories, which are modified, altered, corrected, and transformed in response to context. Naturally occurring alterations sparked by distance and flawed repetition are juxtaposed with malevolent erasures and *damnatio memoriae*. Rather than striving for an accurate representation of historical events, I capture the meta-history, the imagined, the could-have-beens, the glitches, the in-betweens of memories. My compositional fusion of graphic novels, illuminated manuscripts, and scroll paintings replicates in visual form a cabinet of memories, celebrating the confluences of time and space and multiple points of view that are indelibly fossilized in imperfect recollections.

REVOLUTIONS (2017–2019)

Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, USA | Howard Yezerki Gallery, USA | The University of Arizona Museum of Art, USA | Tucson Museum of Art, USA | Northern Clay Center, USA

My impulse to celebrate, challenge, and visualize the kaleidoscopic nature of the female experience takes shape in *Revolutions*, a body of work that sheds light on the dynamics of power and gender as defined by cultural norms, expectations, and obligations. In particular, I visualize the ever-changing roles of women, the complex choices they face, and the pressures that shape their perceptions of self. In this sculptural series, ceramic vessels undulate with variable images of women as compliant or insurrectionist respondents to powerful cultural assumptions. Dense depictions cover the entire surface of each piece, resulting in a three-dimensional canvas featuring interior and exterior spaces activated with vivid and provocative imagery. Specially constructed rotating pedestals animate the visual imagery to produce a whirling exposition of the complexities of sexuality, motherhood, and mortality. The viewer, engulfed by the imaginary world of the women portrayed, becomes a participant in an intense female experience that challenges dominant assumptions. Stark outlines and forceful hues, informed by Akio Takamori sculptures, Soviet propaganda posters, early Will Eisner comics, wordless woodcut novels, ancient Greek vases, and Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, embody the magical and terrifying maelstrom of female existence.

GRAVIS: MEMORY AS WEIGHT, POWER, BURDEN (2019–)

Museum of Russian Icons, USA upcoming

My fascination with memory and identity continues in *Gravis*, a large-scale sculptural installation that investigates the importance of materiality to recollection and personal narrative. Life-size portraits, juxtaposed with assemblages of artifacts, invite contemplation of the embodiment of individual experience in accumulated belongings. Assembled items, when viewed in correlation with the personal depictions, will encourage each viewer to construct a narrative built from the imagined experiences embodied in each object. The act of observation thus becomes a participatory and collaborative process that investigates the productive tension between emotional and intellectual engagement with the concepts of memory, materiality, and identity. Human figures, embellished with inventories of personal objects, represent the encoded experiences and artifacts of the dissolved Soviet Union and encapsulate the enormous impact of radical political and cultural shifts on collective memory, which is repeatedly modified, reconfigured, and woven into personal histories.