

Shaarbek Amankul

Installation/Object/Performance/2016-2017

PUZZLE OF IDENTITY. 2005-2017

**Installation. Sculpture of Lenin praying,
100 photography. Number and Dimensions variable
Video. Duration: 07:40 min.**

Every year during the holy month of Ramadan, thousands of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan – many of whom in the past were devoted custodians of communist ideology – gather for a collective holiday prayer on the central square near the Lenin monument and the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic. Historically, the square hosted gargantuan Soviet parades glorifying socialism. Today it is a space for strictly framed religious practices. The influence of Islam is growing at an enormous speed. On one hand western civilization replaces socialist values, on the other hand traditional values and spirituality based on religion have revived. While in other Central Asian countries the statues of Lenin have been removed, in Kyrgyzstan the monuments continue to peacefully stand near the devotional as if they were silently witnessing the change of epochs. Kyrgyz people are neither nomads, nor communists or Muslims, though the integration of these constructs into their collective cultural body begins to shape their disappearing identity.



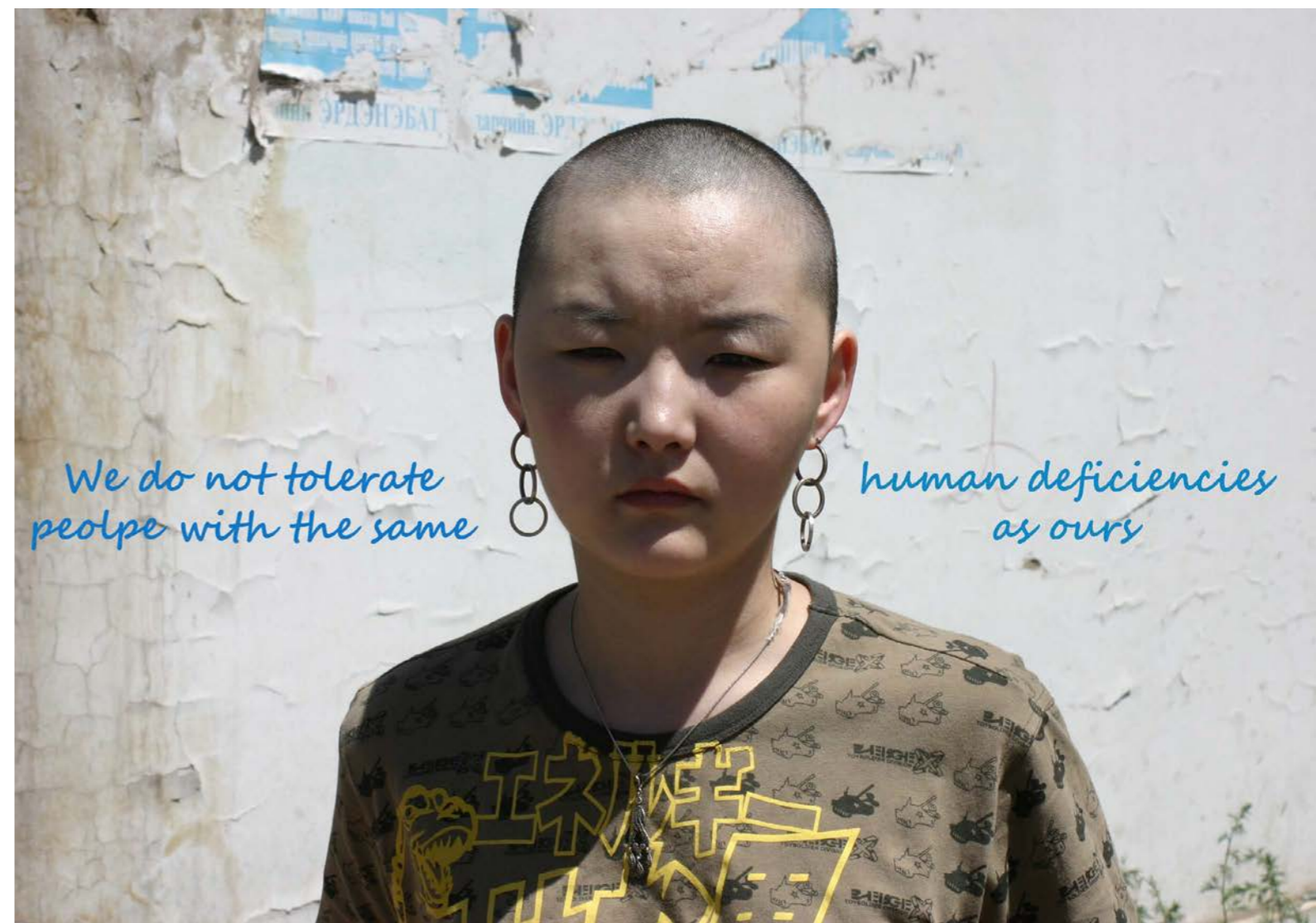


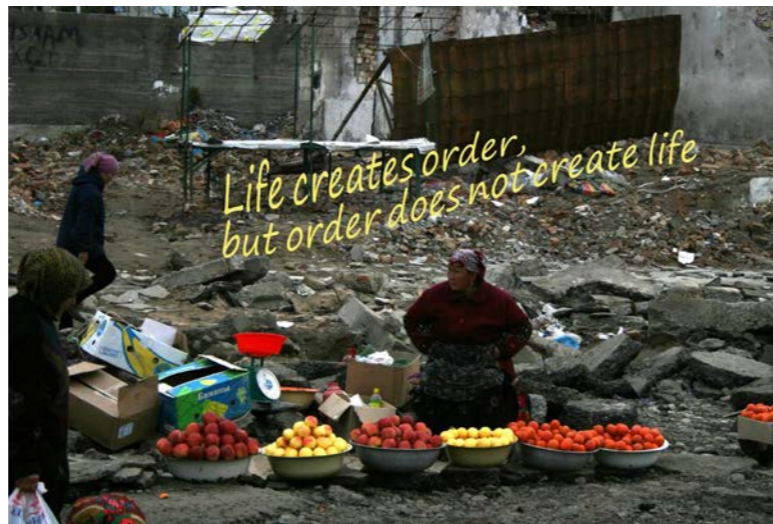


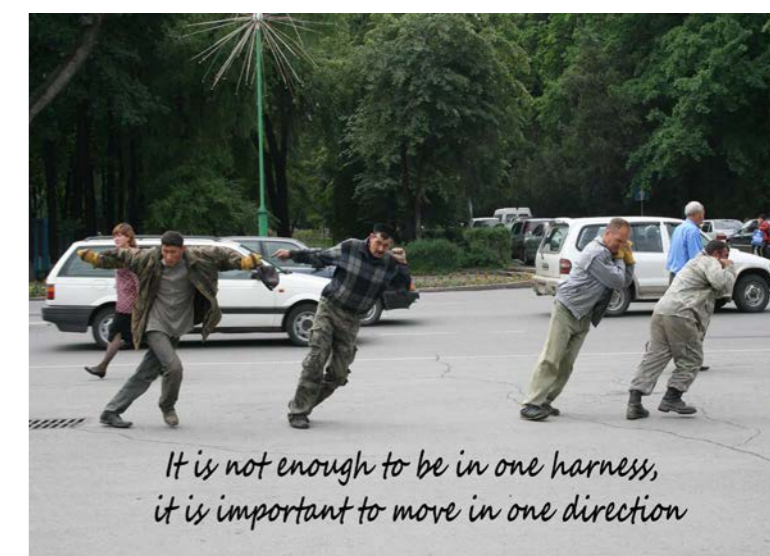
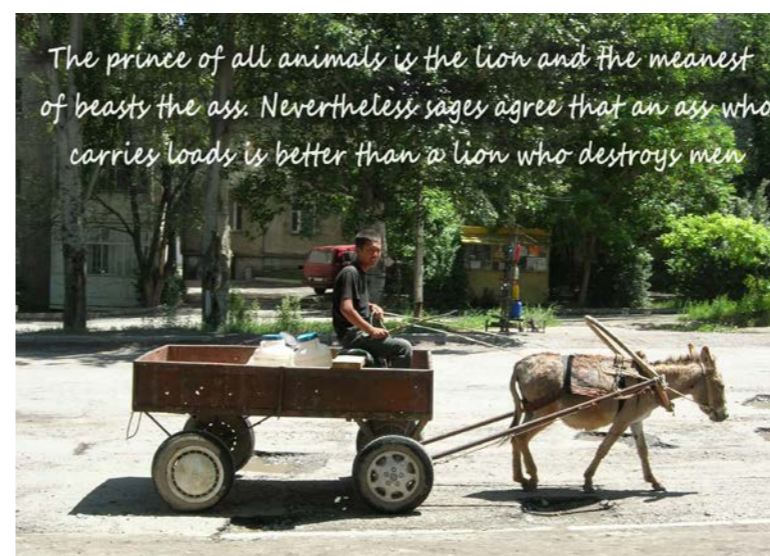


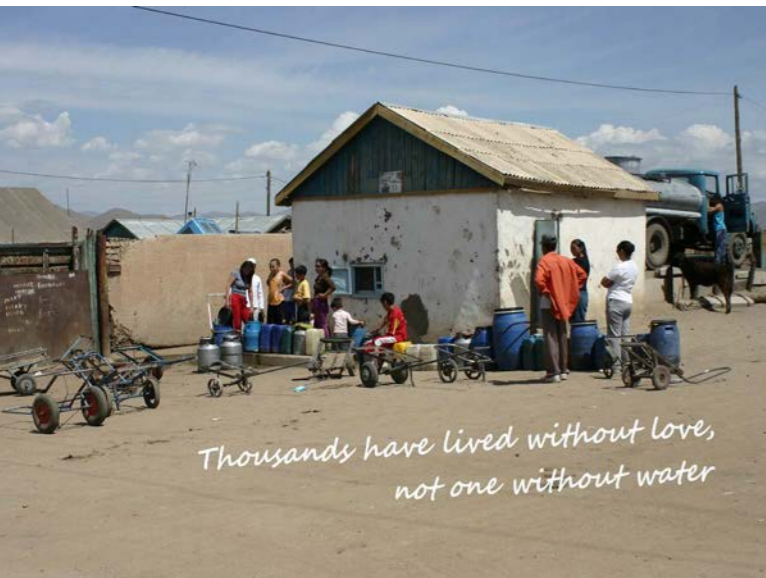
KALEIDOSCOPE OF THE LIFE. 2007-2017
Installation. Photography and Video

These photographs, created during trips through Central Asia and Mongolia over a period of years, juxtapose documentary photographs of daily life with aphorisms from famous and anonymous sources that stand in sharp contrast to the saccharine messages of Western greeting cards. This body of work questions truisms in the contingent, particular situations of local people. What have commonplaces to say about labor, eloquence, dreams, fashion, and the needs for human life outside of the so-called universal context from which they originate?









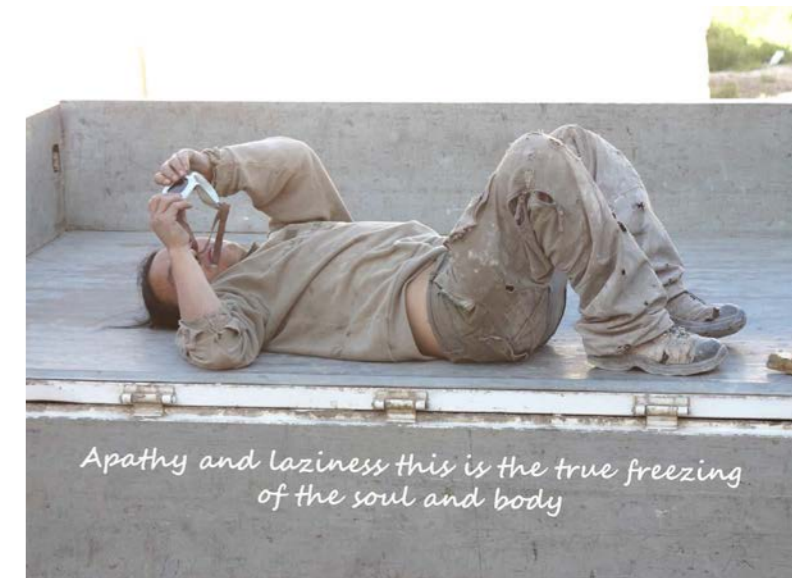
*Thousands have lived without love,
not one without water*



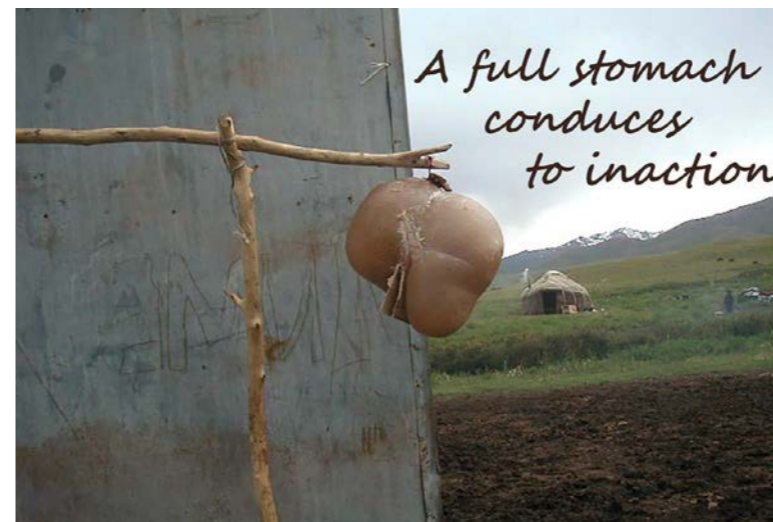
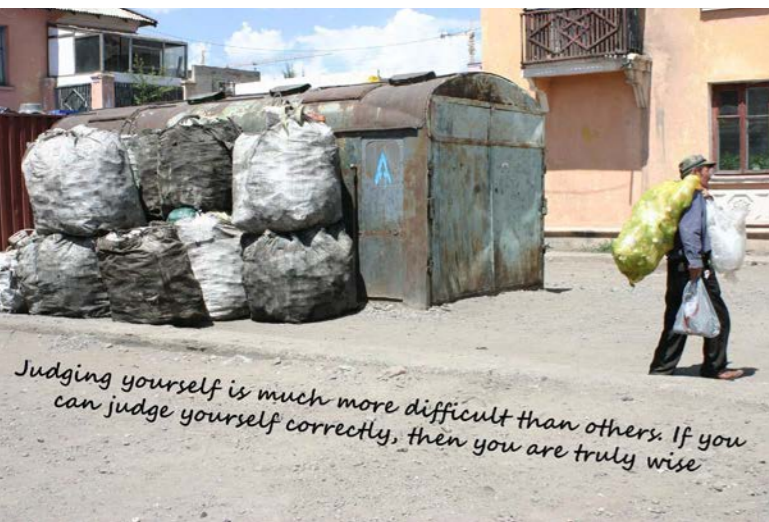
*Give a woman a pair of good shoes and
she will conquer the whole world*



*Drunkenness does not give birth to vices: it detects them
Happiness does not change morals: it emphasizes them*



*Apathy and laziness this is the true freezing
of the soul and body*



WE BUILT COMMUNISM, BUILT CAPITALISM! 2010-2017
Installation. Video. Soviet objects, video archive of parades

The arrival of communism led to a loss of freedom and material prosperity. Though living in illusory social security and stability, the "Soviet" people in practice lost their freedom. For example, artists, in most cases did not have "ideological freedom", and could only create and exhibit their art in formal exhibitions under the state's protection. Eventually, the era of communism was replaced by this era of capitalism. Though now being in a state of illusory freedom, Kyrgyzstan still has not found a practical level of social security and stability. It is obvious, by using the example of artists – that although today, having relative freedom in terms of ideology, artists are forced to pay considerable money to the state and other institutions to exhibit their artworks. When and under what conditions will our illusions end, and will we finally attain true freedom and prosperity?



СТРОИЛИ КОММУНИЗМ

ПОСТРОИЛИ КАПИТАЛИЗМ







HOSPITALITY. 2017

Installation. Sound. Nomad's carpet, skins, tablecloth, (boorsok) nomadic national traditional dish

Hospitality from century to century was a central value in the nomad's life in Central Asia. However, the inevitable change of epochs led to gradual corrosion of hospitality. In the old days, the nomad spread "the tablecloth" for his guest and shared with him the best (and often the most of what he had) with the sole intention of helping the wanderer on his hard way and deserving the blessing of the Numen World. The guest was perceived as an envoy from above as a trial or a blessing. Today, the "tablecloth" is spreading with the intention of getting paid for "guest services", and its quality is directly proportional to the amount of expected payment. The guest is perceived as a customer in a competitive market as a source of income. So a deep philosophical understanding of the nomad' life as a path to the Eternity, where everyone can be a guest and where good deeds count, was replaced by a primitive pragmatic perception of life as an eternal obtaining of money and the accumulation of material goods.



MY BROTHER IS MY ENEMY. 2015-2017

Installation. Photo/painting, 120x150cm, wolfskin 16 pieces, jakalskin 16 pieces, 300x300cm

The distinction of need from desire has always been an integral part of the nomadic worldview. The gradual loss of such discrimination was expensive for society and led to a catastrophe in the relationship between humankind and the natural world. As predator, the wolf kills other animals to satisfy his hunger. He takes from nature only as much as necessary. Nowadays, humans increasingly kill animals to satisfy their unhealthy psychological desires (lust for money, domination, splash of aggression, entertainment, etc.). Accordingly, he takes from nature as much as he wishes for his Ego, more than is necessary for physical survival. So, a social predator - a human has surpassed a natural predator - a wolf. However, the human went further - he creates laws on the protection of nature and at the same time publishes laws on the permission to hunt. The social predator has finally become entangled in himself or cynically hides his sick essence from himself.









THE BLIND. 2017
Performance

Kyrgyzstan has gone through a difficult path of searching for happiness and selfhood. Having passed through many historical ages, we still have not found an autonomous and holistic vision of ourselves: (as individuals, a people, a society, a state) and a path toward our future development. Today, such rethinking is a paramount task for society. Eternity has a special grace - it opens its veils even when we are blind and blind others. It gives freedom of choice even when we deprived ourselves and others of freedom.





ANOTHER ELEMENT OF EQUALITY! 2017
Installation. Sound. Lingerie (dambal), 21 pieces

It is necessary to observe gender equality! In politics, there is a quota for women deputies. In economics, there are not only businessmen, but businesswomen as well. In art, there are many women artists. Women's underwear for universal (Europeanized, Americanized) consciousness is fashion: the result of business and advertising. But for the assertion of final equality and complete tolerance, one more manifesto is needed: to exhibit traditional eastern women's underwear at the exhibition of contemporary art - dambal! This is not shocking; it's not the urinal of Marcel Duchamp - the artist exhibits in the museum what is openly traded in the bazaar, but no one here sees an insult to human dignity, just the basic artistic element of the bazaar gender art of a new epoch!

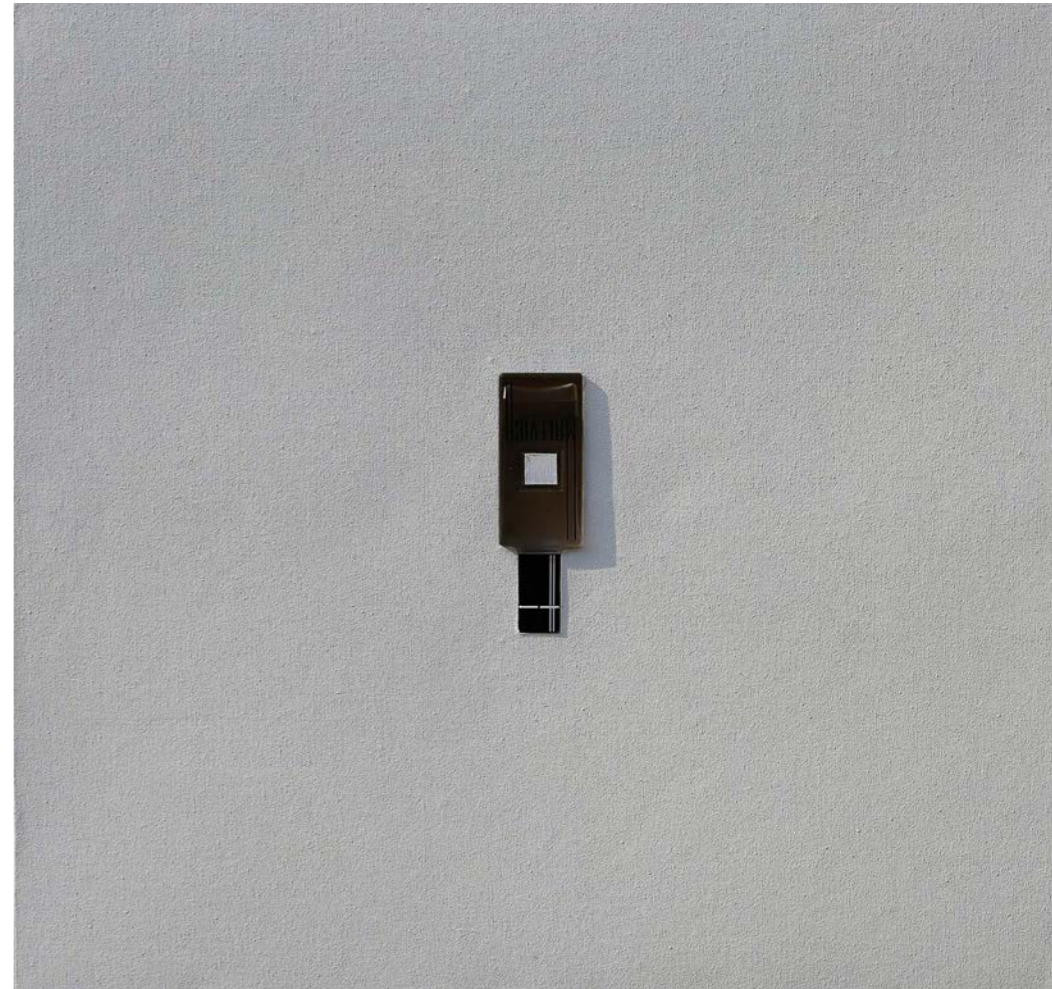
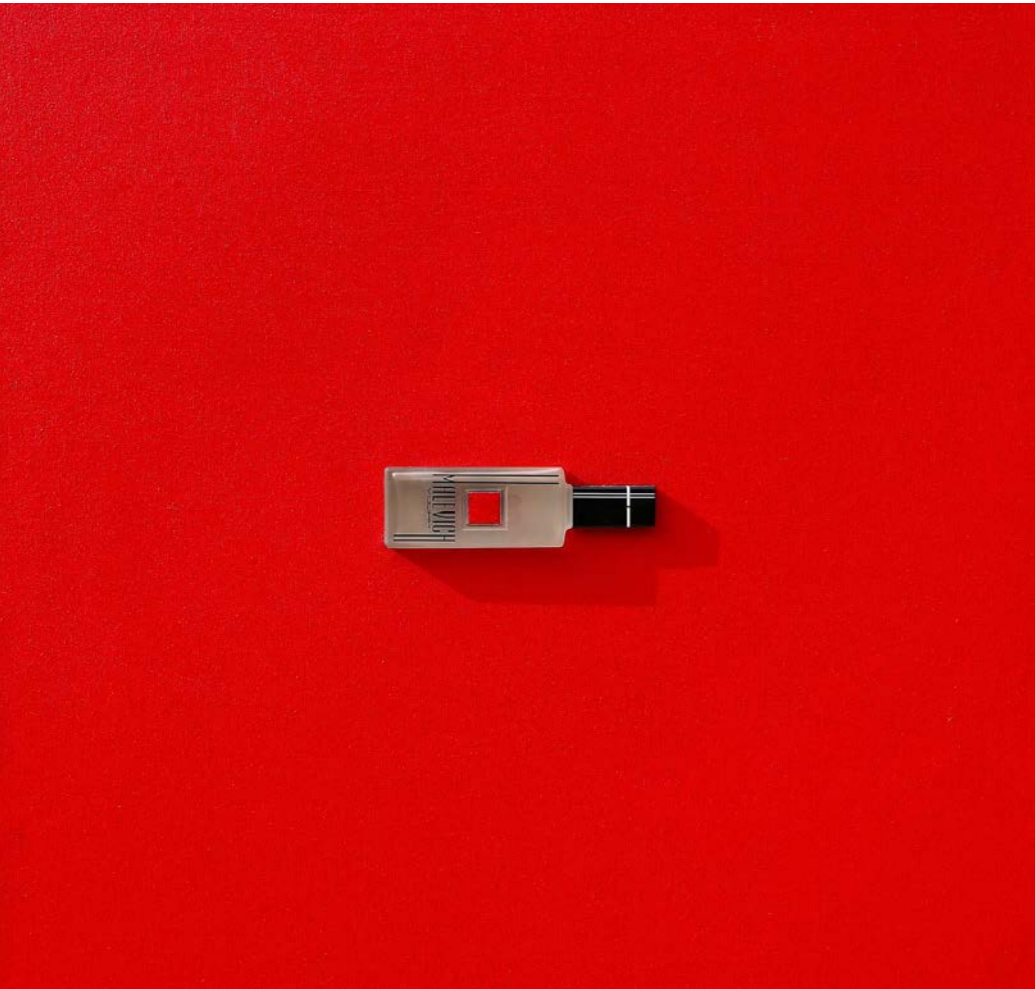




FIGHT OF THE ARTIST WITH VODKA MALEVICH! 2017
Triptych, black, red and white squares, 79,5x79,5cm
Vodka "Malevich" (240 grams)

The vodka company developed the production of a new batch of vodka called "Malevich." This is not a love of art, only business: artists traditionally drink a lot, as manufacturers are well informed. If the goods are bought well – viva Malevich! Another exploitation of the masterpiece by the world-famous brand and its enterprising businessmen. The artist saw in this process an actual idea, created a form for it, and offered a number of complex associations. Will the artist win the Vodka Malevich, and will the world find a new idea in the square? Or does vodka triumph? It remains for us only to drink for old brands...





FROM ONE BUCKET! 2017

Object. Rocker, buckets

There is always a question of choice. In the world of contemporary art, for some the question of choice includes the Venice Biennale or the Documenta Kassel. A democratic exhibition of everything done in two years? Or an elite selection of general trends over the five-year period? Is the Venice Biennale a springboard for getting into Documenta? Does an artist work for the people, with the question of prestige only secondary to him? Most likely, a man will complicate everything through false choice. A woman's answer: you have to mix all the concepts! Both, and creativity, and career! Everything together and at once. They are on their scale, traditionally balancing everything, trying to include both these events. Buckets can be different, but a well is also one!





ASTRAL NOMAD. 2016

Performance. Mountain Lake Son Kul, height 3000 meters

This performance investigates mythologies of the figure of the nomad, both in Kyrgyz culture and global ideology. How can Central Asia continue to draw from the traditional idea of the nomad so crucial to cultural history, while moving past clichés and into transformative models about contemporary identity, both in politics and in artmaking? Does breaking with old archetypes necessitate the loss of history? As one hypothesis, “Astral Nomad” suggests that in order to move forward, visions of historical identification must be critically examined as the phantoms of consciousness they are. These figures, literally burdened by traditional headwear, are dressed in the white worn by both astronauts exploring new universes and ghosts from another time or mind, their movements bound to one another in a counter-argument to the nomadic symbol of impossible autonomy.







DANCE OF THE WIND. 2016

Performance. Mountain Lake Issyk Kul, height 1600 meters

White silk acts as an index for the wind from the lake at Issyk Kul. Performed at the south shore, the wind cuts erratically but constantly, suggesting freedom of movement and thought. This freedom in the larger sense of the world, has been defined by its lack in the daily lives of nomadic people, caught in the grip of domestic precarity, with their survival depending on a handful of corrupt politicians. The performance expresses a relationship between cultural heritage and expression and natural landscape: earth and sky, winds and myths, air and water.







NOMAD. 2010-2016
Bronze, 60x55x27cm, video archive of nomads

Archaic sculpture echoes a centaur, when man and animal are inseparable. They are one and represent a single being resembling a stone balbal. For centuries, nomadic people coexisted with animals, their indispensable helpers. For epochs, their continuous ties were accompanied by harmonious relations.



OUR LOCOMOTIVE IS FLYING FORWARD. 2016
Object, TV channel, 40x50x30cm

This is a spatial artwork from everyday objects created by the artist: a mini TV, an antenna, a bust of Lenin, a roll without a film playing the role of wheels, and a case of a manual sewing machine that acts as a unifying object. All these things are from the past. The machine represents our garment industry, which over the last 25 years has gone far ahead in the process and plays a significant role in the economic development of the country. The TV is a connection with the external world, but despite all this enlightenment and the opportunities for change, Soviet education makes itself felt. The top is a market though the essence remains Soviet.





LEGEND. 2016
Sound. Tarpaulin, painting, leather, 150x150cm

In this artwork, the means of expressing an idea is a reusable raincoat tent. In the center is a square of old animal skin representing the symbol of eternity. The tarpaulin is not once used, every spot is a trace, it is also a memory. The stains of history are so deep that it cannot be washed away, you will not forget. Despite the sad context of the picture, it revives a light brown shade.