

AKSIOMA

Institute for Contemporary Art
Ljubljana

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Ljubljana, 24 September 2015

PRESS RELEASE

Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, in collaboration with the festival City of Women, presents:

Helena Velena at the 21. festival City of Women *My Body – My territory*

www.aksioma.org/helena.velena

Transgender as a Beautiful Weapon of Social Revolt

Public interview

Thursday, 8 October 2015 at 5 pm

Aksioma | Project Space, Komenskega 18, Ljubljana

Step Aside, Lady Gaga!! The Future of Our Bodies and the Japanese Paradigm

Performance

Friday, 9 October 2015 at 7 pm

The Old Power Station (Stara mestna elektrarna), 18 Slomškova St, Ljubljana

Helena Velena DJ Set

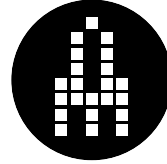
Friday, 9 October 2015 at 11 pm

Pritličje, Mestni trg 2, Ljubljana



Photos available for free download:

www.aksioma.org/press/helena.velena.zip



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Transgender as a Beautiful Weapon of Social Revolt,

Public interview

Free entrance

Contrary to ordinary belief, the word “transgender” does NOT stand for a “politically correct” version of “transsexual” but has a nature and significance of its own. It's not even necessarily a passage, a “transition” from male to female or vice-versa. Transgender on the contrary is the philosophy of creating our own identity using all materials and influences available, as a painter that has a palette of 16 million colours, the whole rainbow, not accidentally the LGBT worldwide symbol. Helena Velen was born in a male body, but didn't refuse his genitalia nor his/her attraction toward females. What she refused was the identity and behaviour that was requested by society.

In western society and in monotheist religions the strongest form of social control is through sexuality - hence also gender identity is heavily sanctioned. As a result men and women must follow unwritten but apparently unbreakable rules regarding behaviour, interests, and especially hairdos and dress codes. The existence of differently buttoned blouses or jeans for males and females is an absurdity justified only by the need to have social control respected. Helena decided to refuse all this. She wears suspenders and miniskirts but loves tanks and fighter planes, and so on with what could appear as contradictions, but are not. Because they are instead a “beautiful weapon for social revolt”, since starting by breaking the rules of social conformity, then everything can be questioned.

Public interview will be conducted by **Anja Koletnik** (Transfeminist Initiative TransAkcija). Anja Koletnik is a transfeminist queer activist and freelance academic holding an MA in Gender Studies. She is the founder of the Transfeminist Initiative TransAkcija, the first trans specific NGO in the field of transgender identities in Slovenia where her activity is focused on the support, informing, empowering and alliance of transgender people in Slovenia. Anja is a transfeminist whose activism is based on the principle that what is personal is political. As an academic, she is particularly interested in the fields of transgender studies, queer theory, embodiments and feminist new materialisms.

Step Aside, Lady Gaga!! The Future of Our Bodies and the Japanese Paradigm, Performance

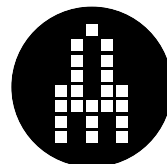
Entrance fee: €7, €5 (students and pensioners upon submission of an identity card, and self-employed in culture)

After the “free love” era of the 70s, we've gotten more and more accustomed to the concept of the virtualization of our bodies, with the result of detaching ourselves from the most important sensory experiences. Nowadays we don't have lovers, but friends on Facebook – Whatsapp, and we don't make love or sex, we chat. Also the academic circles have inadvertently managed to transform the topical concept of “cyborg,” stripping away the “naturalness” of technological real life body modification, in a “science fiction only” futuribile abstract iconisation.

At the same time (and in western culture), as far as social and cultural identities are concerned, we've been sieged by the “Spectacle Society,” part of which is the exposure to role models such as pop stars, billionaires with an out of touch life, that are instead becoming not only trendsetters, but also our “maitres a penser”. What we really need instead is to go back to explore & sense our own bodies and recreate our own identities according to our needs as free & diverse individuals.

The maps and the trip guide to this oneself rediscovery can be (VA), the philosophy of managing both extremes at the same time (in this case both male and female roles and bodies), and the Japanese Paradox, where in the most metrosexual country in the world, even street dress style has become a form of reappropriation of individuality against the conformism of work and social control ethics.

"Move aside, Lady Gaga. Everyone can be its own star!!"



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Helena Velená DJ set

Helena Velená's table turns will perform transgender DJ set.

Free entrance

Helena Velená was born in a male body in the swinging sixties in Bologna, Italy, where she was part of the psychedelic experience of the independent Radio Alice. Next comes punk and she founded I RAF PUNK and Multimedia Attack, a label that has produced about 80 records discovering and producing, among others, CCCP Fedeli alla Linea, one of the two major indie Italian groups, as well as two records of bands from Ljubljana, specifically the punk/hardcore band U.B.R. and "*Ljubav je hladnija od smrti*", the first album of the legendary Borghesia. Then she immersed herself in cyberpunk and founded Cybercore which offered various video messaging services and databases intended for different 'sexual minorities'. She was also one of the pioneers of the internet in Italy. In the 1990s, Velená formed the grounds of cybersex, presenting her famous 'overall' and definitively transitioned to Helena. She brought transgender theory to Italy, redefining its limits in terms of the philosophy of dis-identity, studying the subject both from its positive as well as negative aspect – i.e., between living in a cyber space and in "real life". She wrote a number of books, including *Dal Cybersex al Transgender*, contributed to more than twenty publications, writing on counter-culture, extreme music, alternative sexuality and technologies applied to the human body. Recently she has returned to music in various projects from free jazz to vocal experimentation, from Mississippi Delta Acoustic Blues to political electronic pop. Still, the most important new aspect of her recent activity is the developing of (VA), an hybridisation of quantum physics, social anthropology, cellular brain studies and libertarian philosophy that uses science and biochemical technology to create a new social paradigm necessary to understand why left wing politics have always been a failure, and try to modify all this for the best.

Production: Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, 2015

In collaboration with: City of Women – Association for the Promotion of Women in Culture, The Old Power Station – Elektro Ljubljana, Pritličje as part of the festival City of Women 2015



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Ljubljana

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