

The Man's World is born of Women's bodies; the same bodies that Man and his World are trying relentlessly to subjugate, dominate, hunt and destroy. Mother is a Bitch, isn't she?

Eugster II Belgrade is poised to present a new (female) body of works by artist Šejla Kamerić, *Mother is a Bitch* opening April 2nd 2022. The show is accompanied by a conversation between the artist and Berlin-based curator Adriana Trunca about witches, about sex, about self-termination, about collective radical imagination, domesticity, drugs and capitalism. And in true reclaim-manner, the conversation will not be linear, but circular, as time is not linear, but cyclical. Different parts of the written piece will be found across a wide array of platforms, marking networks and connections and opening portals for whomever dares to enter.

Where is your body now, Šejla?

In a spasm, in pain. Trying to set itself free, to relax. It seeks attention, but it wants to be left alone. It is contradictory. The body does not stand still. It fights, and it gives in. It endures pain, and it feels joy. Never in one place and never accepted.

(The answer is written at 2am, in bed, in Sarajevo.)

Your body, and our female bodies by extrapolation, are occupying the gallery's walls as part of Mother is a Bitch (April – June 2022). The photographs in the show are impressive, both in size and in content. You seem to be playing with contradictory dynamics: quasi-naked and vulnerable, yet monumental and commanding. What do you see when you look at them, at the images and at the women they represent?

I see womankind but also mankind. Duality. Sexuality. Advertisement and ideology. The need to know, to learn. A different approach to our well-being. A hidden history of women that I would like to reveal. I'm showing a woman. Showing what is behind, covered, dressed up, decorated, and made up. Showing what is in the corner facing the wall. Erratic and emotional. Irrational. Romantic and tragic. Daring. Funny. Hysterical. Different perspectives. Without them, we are in linear time, in tracks that do not lead us forward or reflect a true state of mind of an individual.

I see and want to show self-acceptance.

A woman and a broom, a tandem already absorbed by pop culture implying the presence of a witch. Could you please share some of your research and knowledge about the topic?

This theme is woven into every woman. It's, in fact, an inherited trauma we carry. We are taught to live with some knowledge of survival. The start of the research was not clearly defined. I was focusing on myself. I was reading *A History of Sexual Customs* (Eine Weltgeschichte der Sexualität) by Richard Lewinsohn, and before that *The History of Sexuality* by Michel Foucault. Both books were written by men just as history is written by the victors. Women were burned so that books on sexuality could be written by men. But getting back to the broom — I got interested in how the broom is mentioned, i.e., not mentioned in books. Not only in Foucault and Lewinsohn's writings on the history of sexuality but in others as well. In those written long

before and those that deal directly with "witches".

The books *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Witch's Hammer, the theological work of the Dominicans Henrich Institoris and Jacob Sprenger, published in 1486) and the *Compendium Maleficarum* (Francesco Maria Guazzo, published in Milan, Italy in 1608) are in fact guides to hatred of women. And yes, everything is always about, and goes back to sexuality. The broom is a symbol but also a practical object in the household. It is handy.

Before it becomes a magical object for transport-flying, it is static. A woman must ride a broom first. While riding, she levitates. When a woman takes flight, she is sinful. She must be burned. The woman is, of course, naked. She is in a skirt and without underwear. Once again, the woman is in a skirt and without underwear. Why is the woman in a skirt? With a broom = Why like that? Why is everything like that?

When you ask questions, you begin to understand. That's the moment you start yelling, calling out to your mother and keep asking... OHHHH, mother why? Why is everything like that? Why was I born a woman?

It's infinitely fascinating. I also love how women are witches and men are sorcerers; even in this situation where magic is deemed heretic, there's still a sexist approach.

The fact that you mention men writing about sexuality like they're all knowledgeable makes me think of the history of hysteria and the misogyny in science. And to take it further, revolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis, who argued that life is a consequence of symbiosis rather than of random mutations in a masculine war of survival of the fittest (to put it very simply), had been long contested and rejected by her male colleagues before the world came to realise the magnitude of her findings. Now her theories are widely regarded as marking the modern renaissance of the study of free-living cells. In an interview (...) Margulis said Gaia is a Tough Bitch. I'm curious what relationship tough and bitch have in your own artistic language.

to be continued

Mother is a Bitch
Šejla Kamerić @ Eugster Belgrade (April 2022)

Šejla Kamerić (born 1976 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) is a visual artist whose practice involves film, photography, objects, drawings and installations. She has received widespread acclaim for the poignant intimacy and social commentary that have become the main elements of her work. Taking up the subjects that arise from non-linear historical narratives, as well as personal histories, Kamerić places her focus on the politics of memory, modes of resistance in human life and consequential idiosyncrasies of women's struggle. By insisting on empathy as the founding communicative mechanism between herself, her subjects and spectators, Kamerić warns of, and at the same time creates, powerful political statements.

Kamerić's works are part of numerous international art collections, such as TATE Modern in London, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville in Paris, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Vehbi Koç Foundation Contemporary Art Collection, Istanbul, MACBA Barcelona, Contemporary art museum in Zagreb, Kontakt Collection in Austria, ArtTelekom in Germany, etc.

Adriana Tranca is a curator, researcher, and writer who completed a BA in Linguistics and one in Art History at the University of Bucharest and an MFA in Curating at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is currently Curator at E-WERK Luckenwalde, the world's first arts institution powered by its own production of CO2 neutral energy (Kunststrom). At E-WERK Adriana has collaborated in curating POWER NIGHTS: Being Mothers together with Lucia Pietroiusti, Katharina Worf and Helen Turner. (www.kunststrom.com) Adriana's main preoccupation is to find feminist new ways to examine and understand our visible and invisible contexts; and very importantly, to identify strategies to organize in inclusive, transformative, and non-hierarchical manners.

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The gallery is open on Saturdays and can also be visited by appointment, via email

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