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Emancipatory Trends in Ukrainian Society through the Prism of Video Art (1991–2020)

Corps défiants. Les tendances émancipatrices de la société ukrainienne à travers le prisme de l’art vidéo (1991-2020)

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PLAN

Testing the limit: from externalization of sexuality to queer culture

TEXTE

1 For Ukrainian artists, the human body has long served as a surface on which they make visible collective emancipatory changes. By the early 1970s, the loosening of social control and political repression exerted over the Soviet Union's citizens in the 1960s, allowed local nonconformists to portray the naked human body and use its sexuality as a tool for critical reflection. The depiction of the nude, non-normalized body helped artists to distance themselves from the official doctrine of Socialist Realism and acted as a tacit tactic of resistance to Soviet mechanisms of body control. This is particularly evident in the photographs of the Kharkiv group Vremya (Time, 1971–76), a predecessor of the Kharkiv School of Photography. For example, in the photographic series *Violin* (1972), the group's cofounder, Evgeniy Pavlov, depicts the interaction of tender and aestheticized naked bodies of young men in nature, which from the standpoint of Soviet morality was unacceptable since it was immediately associated with homosexuality (**fig. 1**).

1. Evgeniy Pavlov, *No. 2*, from the series *Violin*, 1972.



Silver print, 12 × 18 cm.

Courtesy Evgeniy Pavlov.

2 Later, in the unofficial art of the perestroika era and the post-Soviet art of the 1990s, the representation of the aestheticized naked body was replaced by subversive provocation, achieved through the depiction of an overly sexualized and/or androgynous body. As Ukrainian artist Nikita Kadan rightfully notes, at that time, "the body became an instrument of transgression, of overcoming the disciplinary order through the shock effect of the documentary demonstration of the corporeal or through the transformation of corporeality into a phantom, an object of eroticized hallucination."[1]

3 Ukrainian researchers have intensively studied this excessive and at times shocking use of sexualized bodies in painting and photography, usually leaving the video medium aside.[2] In an article from 2017,[3] for example, Kateryna Iakovlenko analyzes this phenomenon in paintings and photography of the Ukrainian artists associated with the Paris Commune squat in Kyiv (1990–94).[4] And, in a joint article with Halyna Hleba, Iakovlenko writes about the same trend in

Kharkiv photography.[5] Both papers completely ignore the fact that many Ukrainian artists at the beginning of the 1990s, incorporated video into their arsenal of artistic means, including some Paris Commune's painters and Kharkiv School's photographers. Solomia Savchuk and Oleksandr Soloviov, the curators of the retrospective *Flashback. Ukrainian Media Art of the 1990s* (Mystetskyi Arsenal, Kyiv, 2018) even declared that the 1990s in Ukraine passed under the sign of media art.[6] In addition, provocative bodies and/or their sexual behavior were widely and perhaps most openly featured in video works of the time.

4 Marina Gržinić argues that in the 1980s and 1990s, the challenging over-sexualized body image was common in video art throughout Eastern and Central Europe.[7] It allowed artists to effectively subvert old norms, test the limits of newfound freedoms, and interpret collective processes of sexual and political emancipation. She identifies two of the most common forms of this artistic strategy: the use of pornographic scenes and "gender-bending," or confusion between feminine and masculine.[8] In Ukraine, revealing in this respect are the video performance *Splyacha tsarivna u sklyaniy truni* (*Sleeping Princess in a Glass Coffin*) (1992) by Oleksandr Hnylytsky, featuring a masturbating woman in a glass coffin, and the video *Voices of Love* (1994) by Arsen Savadov and Georgy Senchenko, depicting sailors on a warship wearing ballet tutus.

5 At the same time, Gržinić notes that these two types of image creation of over-sexualized bodies continue to appear in today's video works by Eastern European artists, although they now carry a clear political agenda.[9] The same can be said of Ukrainian video art, where elements of pornography and "gender-bending" are the most common attributes of the works by queer artists, who use such images to fight for their rights in a rather traditional society. Yana Bachynska, Yevhen Korshunov, Oksana Kazmina, Anatoly Belov, and AntiGonna are among many working in this vein.

6 The dialogue between the transgressively shocking body representation in art practices of the 1980s and 1990s and the queer optics of the 2000s and 2010s in Ukraine was first reflected on by the artist Nikita Kadan in the exhibition *Naughty Bodies* he curated at the Kmytiv Art Museum in 2019. In his curatorial statement, Kadan argues

that today "queer is the new avant-garde," alluding to the continuity between these two groups of Ukrainian artists on the frontline in the struggle against the power mechanisms of body control.[10] Indeed, recent films *Non-binary* (2020) by Yana Bachynska, about a three-legged person, and *The Main Fortress of Sich* (2020) by Yevhen Korshunov, about the comradeships of queer Cossacks, have a striking similarity with the video works produced by Hnylytsky and Savadov and Senchenko in the early 1990s—all four contrast masturbation and/or androgyny with certain systems of body control that vary depending on the time the works were created. And even though the authors of these works refer to their productions differently as video, film, or video performance, all four lay in-between video art and film and can actually be classified as staged short films, where each frame is carefully thought out and constructed by the artist for the lens of the camera. Their comparative analysis seems very important because it can provide insight into how the Ukrainian collective body has been emancipated over the past three decades.

7 Speaking of provocatively sexualized and/or androgynous bodies, hereafter we will use the term "defiant bodies," which emphasizes the resistant nature underlying such a body image. The idea of "defiant bodies" contrasts with the concept of "docile bodies" coined by Michel Foucault. For the philosopher, the "docile body" is "something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body [from which] the machine required can be constructed."[11] In contrast, the "defiant body," as described by anthropologist Matthew Clark, is "a body, either collective or individual, which resists and refuses to be subjected to, used by, transformed in accordance with… the powers and technologies of 'normalization,' conformity and regulation in society."[12]

8 This paper argues that the "defiant bodies" depicted in the selected video works by the two groups of Ukrainian artists reflect the collective tendencies of Ukrainian society to overcome and undermine Soviet, post-Soviet, and nation-state mechanisms of "governmentality" that seek to normalize, control, and transform bodies to make them productive.[13] But how do these artists play with the combination of defiant body image and moving image to confront the power systems of normalization? What are these body control mechanisms to which they respond? How do the selected works reflect

emancipatory processes in Ukrainian society? And how does the understanding of the human body as a tool of resistance vary in the video works of these two different generations of Ukrainian artists?

Testing the limit: from externalization of sexuality to queer culture

9 To answer these questions, let us return to the context of the early 1990s, when the moving image became a new territory of freedom and experimentation for Ukrainian artists, an alternative to the long-dominant picture plane with its established authorities and hierarchies. As the Kharkiv photographer and video artist Sergey Bratkov notes, video was then seen as an innovative tool enabling an "instant" or "quick as a gunshot" artistic response to the rapidly changing sociopolitical situation.[14] The sudden turn to video by many local artists can be also attributed to the rapid development of media culture at the time. Indeed, the policy of perestroika opened the door to the gradual penetration of Western cultural and media content—Hollywood and underground films, Western advertising, and accessible pornography not only promised a life free of Soviet morality, but also influenced the imagery and subjects of art produced in Ukraine. Not only this, but also Ukrainian society was experiencing a sexual revolution, which went along with the collective separation from Soviet mechanisms of body and mind regulation as well as the growing awareness of Ukrainians as separate subjects from the larger imperial body. It is therefore not surprising that this sharp break with the long-standing system of beliefs, control, and dependence was often manifested in art through the image of a brutally sexualized or norm-breaking body.

10 This is well illustrated in Oleksandr Hnylytsky's video performance *Sleeping Princess in a Glass Coffin* (1992, 22'37"), for which he filmed his half-naked wife, Natalia Filonenko, lying in a closed transparent glass coffin. "The shoot was done in complete darkness, with only one light bulb illuminating the coffin,"[15] which helped to not only construct an illusion of a cave-like, otherworldly space, adding dramatic quality to the video, but also slightly blurred the image of

the heroine. We see the vague contours of her body in a coffin, which, because of the black background, sometimes looks as if suspended in the air. At some point, Filonenko's fingers begin to move slowly in the groin area, imitating masturbation (**fig. 2**). Due to the overall darkness of the video footage, even when the camera zooms in on the subject, her nudity and the sexual act are imagined by the viewer rather than actually seen.

2. Oleksandr Hnylytsky, *Splyacha tsarivna u sklyaniy truni* [*Sleeping Princess in a Glass Coffin*], 1992.



Video performance, analog color video, 22'37".

Courtesy Natalia Filonenko.

11 Filonenko masturbates to the tape recording of a poem written by Hnylytsky, which she reads herself. For filming, this tape was slowed down, which changed her voice, as if it belonged to an underworld demon. The poem and the video both reference Aleksandr Pushkin's *The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights* (1833).[16] But in the artist's version, as Filonenko notes, "the princess in a closed

coffin does not sleep, but languishes and masturbates."[17] Hnylytsky's text is written in the style of sexual horror: "The cold wind bends the branches, / Your beautiful corpse rots. [...] In that vagina are hidden secrets, / The secrets of future dates."[18]

12 As Iakovlenko argues, many Ukrainian artists of the time were developing their artistic identity in opposition to the image of the "Soviet man."[19] In line with this, it is telling that Hnylytsky turns to the poetry of Russian poet, playwright, and novelist of the Romantic era, Pushkin, whose oeuvre was central to the school curriculum throughout the Soviet Union. Pushkin's works, written in the imperial 19th century, extol the greatness of the Russian spirit, a sentiment that was successfully used by the Communists to create an image of a morally and physically strong and flawless Soviet man. Hnylytsky appropriates Pushkin's rhyming style to create a twisted parody of his famous fairy tale. But in the artist's version, the heroine is not an innocent virgin calmly waiting for awakening of her prince's kiss; instead, her behavior is immoral, undermining not only the Soviet ideal of man and woman, always portrayed asexual, but also the high morality and greatness of the Russian spirit, imposed on Ukrainians as a high symbolic value, which in the early 1990s felt so out of place.

13 Whereas Hnylytsky uses pornographic images to create a defiantly sexualized body, in *Voices of Love* (1994, 90'), Savadov and Senchenko employ gender confusion, mixing images of femininity and masculinity. Their video was made for the exhibition *Alchemical Surrender*, held aboard the battleship *Slavutych* in Sevastopol, Crimea (1994), and curated by Marta Kuzma during the struggle between the Russian Federation and Ukraine over the division of the Black Sea Fleet. To create this work, the artists lived on the battleship for a week and filmed its crew along with guest performers.[20] The video consists of a sequence of scenes in which the sailors perform meaningless looped actions—they rotate inside or are suspended above the drum on the cargo shaft of the ship's windlass, or collectively pull an anchor through a narrow, enclosed corridor, or meditatively spin a large prop model of a warship among themselves (**figs. 3 and 4**). The images are accompanied by unobtrusive but repetitive music intended to lull or hypnotize the viewer.

3. Arsen Savadov and Georgy Senchenko, *Voices of Love*, 1994.



Analog color video, 90'.

Courtesy Arsen Savadov and Georgy Senchenko.

4. Arsen Savadov and Georgy Senchenko, *Voices of Love*, 1994.



Analog color video, 90'.

Courtesy Arsen Savadov and Georgy Senchenko.

14 That is to say, while Hnylytsky undermines the idealized stereotype of Soviet morally stable man by portraying the "immoral" sexual act, Savadov and Senchenko achieve the same effect through the elements of feminization and travesty and the depiction of non-directive collective behavior. They subvert the Soviet ideal of a disciplined collective body at work, one that must perform productive and socially meaningful activities. The labor of sailors and ballerinas is associated with a grueling and merciless training of the body and its ultimate discipline. In *Voices of Love*, they, on the contrary, engage in aimless actions that are often meditatively looped, as if the purposefulness and energetic forward movement of Soviet times and people, as they appear in the ideas of Soviet modernity, were suddenly stuck in some liminal space. In addition, dressed in ballet tutus, the sailors' bodies radiate the tenderness and vulnerability that

were for so long hidden behind the detached ideal of the Soviet courageous and brave warrior.

15 Furthermore, the authors of *Voices of Love*, like Hnylytsky, address the theme of Soviet or Russian imperial greatness, but in their work, it is embodied in the image of a warship, in a broader sense denoting military power, which, along with the need to resist an external enemy, was the basis for awakening feelings of patriotism and national pride in the citizens of the Soviet Union. Patriotism is a love for one's motherland, which can nevertheless be based on hatred of an often-illusory enemy. Savadov and Senchenko undermine this militarist idea of hatred with the concept of love shown in the vulnerability and tenderness of the sailors' bodies and their romantic interaction with the attributes of the ship. The artists' approach correlates with the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukrainians could no longer associate themselves with Russian imperial grandeur—their own military might greatly diminished and the idea of confronting an external enemy seemed then defeated. That is, *Voices of Love* has a political grounding, hinting at the surrender of the imperial, of the military, and of the ideological in the collective consciousness of the Ukrainian people. By turning the ship into a performance set, the artists transformed it from a terrifying weapon into the same toy model as the sham warplanes and warships manipulated by sailors and performers in various scenes. The work not only desacralizes military might, national pride, and stern masculinity, but also shows how illusory the grandeur of a militaristic empire can be.

16 At the same time, these two videos are an obvious artistic reflection of the much-repressed sexuality under Socialism and Communism, different types of which finally found a way to exist.[21] As Iakovlenko and Hleba note, in Ukraine of the 1990s, "The prescribed roles for men and women were losing their clear outlines, but it was still not clear or described what the new roles were and to what extent freedoms could be followed."[22] That is, the transcendence of the corporeal normativity denotes a broader zone of social transition from old to new, in terms of values and aesthetic systems, gender and body representations.

17 However, it is obvious that the authors of these works did not consciously fight for civil and sexual rights—it was simply too early

for Ukrainian society. Savadov and Senchenko's text for *Voices of Love* does not include a word related to the LGBTQ+ community, and Hnylytsky's depiction of a masturbating woman hopelessly sealed in a glass coffin through which her actions are clearly observed is rather reminiscent of the male gaze seeking to control female desire and/or shape the image of a desiring female body. In addition, the prevailing patriarchal attitudes and unequal position of women in the artistic community associated with the Paris Commune squat have been noted by several Ukrainian researchers, including Oksana Briukhovetska and Kateryna Iakovlenko.[23] Rather, the internalization of Western prototypes and stereotypes of sexual and civil rights that were new to Ukraine required repetition and exploration, and the video seems to be a fruitful instrument that allowed artists to reproduce, visualize, and test them before they became more or less established in the public consciousness between the 2000s and 2010s.

18 While not carrying a conscious political charge, these video works of Hnylytsky and Savadov and Senchenko nonetheless had a very important political purpose. The defiant bodies, constructed in them by means of pornography, absurdity, and masquerade, allowed the artists to assert their right to create constantly ambiguous and unbalanced situations and identities.[24] This served as a very important precedent for the younger generation of Ukrainian artists of the 2000s and 2010s, who, standing on the ground of the achieved right to be beyond norms, were already positioning the sexual, the social and the personal as political, often implementing what is now known as gender and queer politics.

19 In the 2010s, a queer culture emerged in Ukraine and, accordingly, a fairly well-established community of queer artists. Oleksiy Kuchansky defines queer culture as a type of "critical practice that has emerged among those discriminated against on the basis of sexuality and gender behavior," and that is characterized by "the ability to hijack the means of controlling bodies in order to turn these means into instruments of emancipation."[25] In contrast to gay identity politics that, according to the sociologist Steven Seidman, "aims to change the status of homosexuality from a deviant to a normal identity, queer politics struggles against normalizing any identity [because] a queer perspective holds that normalizing social controls assign a moral status of normal and abnormal to virtually every sexual desire

and act."[26] How do Ukrainian queer artists in their video works undermine contemporary normalizing means of body control, including the practices constructing the image of gay and queer people as defiled and "polluted," physically and physiologically inferior, and excluding them and their representations from public life, at a time when images of the heterosexual family and the masculine warrior-hero are at the heart of national state policy?

20 In order to approach this question, let us look at two video works by Ukrainian queer artists Yevhen Korshunov and Yana Bachynska, for whom the issue of further emancipation of Ukrainian society is closely linked to the positioning of the LGBTQ+ community within it. Bachynska's *Non-binary* (2020, 5'45") depicts a three-legged human, shown from the waist down while trying to adjust to their clumsiness while performing everyday activities—shaving their three legs, putting on panties with three holes, going to the toilet, and even having a romantic dinner with their partner (**fig. 5**). The action takes place in a private old house with a kitschy and religious environment that emphasizes poverty and domestic earthiness. The story ends dramatically when the partner's leg kicks the middle leg of the three-legged personage, who then slips their middle leg into a noose to hang and kill it (**fig. 6**).

5. Yana Bachynska, *Non-binary*, 2020.



Digital color video, 5'45".

Courtesy Yana Bachynska.

6. Yana Bachynska, *Non-binary*, 2020.



Digital color video, 5'45".

Courtesy Yana Bachynska.

21 That is, Bachynska constructs a radical bodily otherness, exaggerating the stereotype of the physical inferiority of LGBTQ+ people to the point of absurdity. By embodying this stereotype, he actually reappropriates the right to define the queer body, thus turning it into "an island of autonomy," a legitimized territory under his own control.[27] The dramatic act of the suicide of the middle leg, at the same time, hints at the brutal and habitual erasure of bodily representations and behavior beyond norms. The poor and kitschy setting of the scene reflects the deafening darkness and bluntness of the normalizing instruments of power, on whose altar a sacrifice must necessarily be made. It resonates with the viewers, regardless of their sexual and gender self-identification.

22 In turn, Yevhen Korshunov's film *The Main Fortress of Sich* (2020, 11'39") depicts a young man being insultingly called "not a Cossack, but a gay" by a passerby who witnessed the protagonist masturbating in public place to a monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky (c. 1595–1656), Ukrainian military commander and Hetman of the Zaporozhian Host, who is one of the key national symbols of a fighter for Ukrainian statehood.[28] The act of masturbation in this work is

nothing less than a direct parody of the social worship of idealized male heroes, the cornerstones of the patriarchal social order with its corresponding mechanisms of bodily normalization.

23 After this incident, Korshunov's protagonist walks into a house, where he meets his fellow members of the queer community, led by an older man (**fig. 7**). Those present react with surprise to the news of the young man's insult and their leader even reads aloud excerpts from the 19th-century writings on the rules of Zaporozhian Cossack comradeship, emphasizing that their fraternal relationships were based on love and care for one another. The leader then orders everyone to change into ceremonial costumes resembling Cossack robes made of translucent and bright fabrics. The camera is fixed on each member of the camaraderie in turn, so that the beauty, sublimity, sensuality, and militancy of their bodies are conveyed in slow motion (**fig. 8**). Soon the leader announces that they are now going to take revenge with love on those who do not know or understand the history of their own people. The beautiful, sexy characters, armed with makeup and sabers, leave the house, as if considering it and themselves the main fortress of contemporary Ukrainian Sich.

7. Yevhen Korshunov, *The Main Fortress of Sich*, 2020.



Digital color video, 11'39".

Courtesy Yevhen Korshunov.

8. Yevhen Korshunov, *The Main Fortress of Sich*, 2020.



Digital color video, 11'39".

Courtesy Yevhen Korshunov.

24 As in Savadov and Senchenko's *Voices of Love*, Korshunov's film correlates love with feelings of patriotism and national pride. The artists of both works use bodily tenderness and androgyny as something very sincere and human that immediately subverts militancy and male power. But where Savadov and Senchenko's sailor-ballerinas seem to be unarmed and without purpose, ready to surrender rather than fight, Korshunov's queer Cossacks are fully armed, united by comradeship, and determined to change society with their soft power—love and sexuality. That is to say, Korshunov desecrates the stereotype of the national warrior-hero with "homosexuality," ironically undermining and mocking both the culturally exalted image of the male hero and the socially denigrated image of homosexuals.

25 What is crucial is that unlike *Sleeping Princess in a Glass Coffin* (1992) and *Voices of Love* (1994), Korshunov and Bachynska's protagonists do not perform aimless actions in some liminal spaces, but are placed in a specific context and pursue a certain goal. And while, Savadov and Senchenko, following the ideas of postmodernism and the tradition of Western experimental cinema, completely undermine the narrative, making it discontinuous, surreal, and almost un-

thinkable for the viewer, the younger artists, while still using masquerade along with absurd images and scenes, retain a clear storyline—in the form of direct speech or a sequence of visual images they voice their direct artistic appeal to the viewer. Their films are down-to-earth, personified, and full of subtle irony, which helps evoke empathy and identification with their characters, allowing the artists to effectively convey to the public the idea of non-normalized modes of existence, representations, sexuality, and queer lifestyles.

26 But what do the four video works analyzed in this article tell us about the process of emancipation that the Ukrainian collective body has gone through over the past three decades? First, by the 2020s, the focus of artists' resistance had largely shifted from Soviet normalizing and colonizing body norms to similar controlling mechanisms embedded in the nation-state ideology. Indeed, if Hnylytsky's masturbating princess is contrasted with Pushkin's imperial poetry, then Korshunov's masturbating queer Cossack is opposed to the male symbol of Ukrainian statehood. Second, there has been a revision in the representation of sexual difference. *Voices of Love* reflects on a social shift away from the fixed female and male roles in the 1990s, blending the stereotypically female representation of ballerinas with the stereotypically male representation of sailors. But almost three decades later, Bachynska creates a character that defies any gender definition. Last but not least, the defiant bodies presented in the video works of the early 1990s, although provocative and rebellious, lacked a clear political statement or position. Their subversive nature was the result of an intuitive rather than a deliberate strategy by the artists. On the contrary, the latest generation of Ukrainian video artists uses the body as a thought-out tool to help pursue anti-nationalistic goals as well as gender and queer politics. Such artistic agency corresponds to the process of Ukrainians gaining collective voice and subjectivity.

27 Altogether, this leads us to the conclusion that both the video medium and the human body have long served not only as means of reflecting change, but also as full-fledged agents of emancipatory processes. Whether they will be relevant instruments for undermining the power mechanisms of body control for the next generations of Ukrainian artists is unknown, but in the last three decades, they have clearly been at the forefront.

NOTES

1 Nikita Kadan, "'Неслухняні тіла': квір як новий авангард" ["Naughty bodies": Queer as the new avant-garde], *Support Your Art*, October 22, 2019, online (http://supportyourart.com/stories/quirkmytiv). Translation ours.

2 In this paper, the generic term "video art" refers to artists' short films and single and multi-channel videos either projected on the wall or shown on TV sets or monitor screens, and/or forming part of video or multi-media installations.

3 Kateryna Iakovlenko, "'Тело' Парижской Коммуны. Часть вторая" [The "body" of the Paris Commune. Part two], *Korydor*, March 30, 2017, online.

4 These include Oleksandr Hnylytsky, Kyrylo Protsenko, Valeria Trubina, Oleksandr Klymenko, Arsen Savadov, and Georgy Senchenko, among others.

5 Kateryna Iakovlenko, Halyna Hleba, "Місце травестії: чи був квір у харківській фотографії?" [A place of travesty: Was there a queer in Kharkiv photography?], *Support Your Art*, October 2, 2020, online (http://supportyourart.com/specialprojects/researchplatform/queer-kharkiv-school.). The researchers analyze the photographic works of Boris Mykhailov, Sergey Solonsky, Sergey Bratkov, Oleg Malevany, and Evgeniy Pavlov.

6 Oleksandr Soloviov, Solomia Savchuk, *Flashback. Ukrainian Media Art of the 1990s* (Kyiv: Mystetskyi Arsenal, 2018), p. 9.

7 Marina Gržinic, "Video in the Time of a Double, Political and Technological Transition in the Former Eastern European Context," in *Transitland. Video Art from Central and Eastern Europe: 1989–2009*, ed. Edit Andras (Budapest: Ludwig Museum of Art, 2009), p. 28.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 Kadan, "'Неслухняні тіла.'"

11 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 135.

12 Matthew Clark, "Resistance, Protest and the Production of the 'Defiant Body': Understanding Bodily Defiance through Phenomenological Engagements with Bourdieu's Theory of Practice," *Global Horizons* 1/1 (2017): p. 58.

13 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 136–37.

14 Sergey Bratkov, “Что такое постсоветский человек?” [What is a post-Soviet man?], *Colta*, June 30, 2014, online.

15 Natalia Filonenko, “У труні бачили: З чого розпочався український відеоарт” [Seen in a coffin: From where did Ukrainian video art begin], *Bird in Flight*, January 19, 2022, online (http://birdinflight.com/nathnennya-2/crytyka/20220119-v-grobu-vidali.html). Translation ours.

16 Pushkin took as his base the Russian folk tale “The Magic Mirror” and the tale “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (1812) by the German authors Brothers Grimm.

17 Filonenko, “У труні бачили.”

18 Ibid.

19 Iakovlenko, “‘Тело’ Парижской коммуны. Часть вторая.”

20 “Арсен Савадов, Георгій Сенченко. 1994. *Голоси кохання*. Мультимедійна інсталяція: відео, перформанс. Близько 90’” [Arsen Savadov, Georgiy Senchenko. 1994. *Voices of Love*. Multimedia installation: video, performance. Around 90’], Research Platform Online Tool, online (http://archive.pinchukartcentre.org/works/arsen-savadov-georgij-senchenko-1994-golo#_ftn2).

21 In Ukraine, as in many other Eastern European countries under Communism, harsh measures were imposed on homosexuals: they were punished by law, possibly imprisoned as criminals, or held in psychiatric institutions. The same could happen to a woman who flaunted her nudity in public or whose sexual activity did not correlate with the traditional values of family life.

22 Iakovlenko and Hleba, “Місце травестії.” Translation ours.

23 Oksana Briukhovetska, “Образ жертви і емансипація. Нарис про українську арт-сцену і фемінізм” [The image of victim and emancipation. An essay on the Ukrainian art scene and feminism], *Prostory* 3 (March 3, 2017): online (http://prostory.net.ua/ua/krytyka/139-obraz-zhertvy-i-eman-sypatsiia-narys-pro-ukrainsku-art-stsenu-i-feminizm); Kateryna Iakovlenko, “‘Тело’ Парижской Коммуны. Часть первая” [The “body” of the Paris Commune. Part one], *Korydor*, March 7, 2017, online.

24 Gržinic, “Video in the Time of a Double, Political and Technological Transition,” p. 28.

25 Oleksiy Kuchansky, "'Квір' мертве, хай живе 'квір'! Коментар до 'Головного критичного тексту за рік'" ["Queer" is dead, long live "queer"! Commentary on the "Main Critical Text of the Year"], *Support Your Art*, December 24, 2021, online (http://supportyourart.com/columns/kvir-mertve-haj-zhyve-kvir-komentar-do-golovnogo-krytychnogo-tekstu-za-rik). Translation ours.

26 Steven Seidman, "From Identity to Queer Politics: Shifts in the Social Logic of Normative Heterosexuality in Contemporary America," *Social Thought & Research* 24, nos. 1–2 (2001), p. 9.

27 Kuchansky, "'Квір' мертве, хай живе 'квір'!"

28 In Korshunov's film, "sich" refers to the Zaporizhian Host, the semi-autonomous Cossack proto-state that existed between the 16th and 18th centuries, including as an independent stratocratic state within the Cossack Hetmanate for over one hundred years. Khmelnytsky is known for leading an uprising against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1648–54), the suzerainty of which the Zaporozhian Host was then under. This resulted in the creation of an independent Cossack state.

RÉSUMÉS

Français

Cet article analyse quatre œuvres vidéo produites dans les années 1990 et 2020 : *Sleeping Princess in a Glass Coffin* (1992), d'Oleksandr Hnylytsky, *Voices of Love* (1994), d'Arsen Savadov et de Georgy Senchenko, *Non-binary* (2020), de Yana Bachynska, et *The Main Fortress of Sich* (2020), d'Eugen Korshunov. Ces œuvres reflètent des processus collectifs d'émancipation en construisant une image du corps défiant. La stratégie de sursexualisation, souvent obtenue par le « *gender-bending* » et par des éléments pornographiques, est explorée en relation avec les processus collectifs de libération sexuelle et nationale et la volonté de tester les limites des libertés postsoviétiques. Les œuvres analysées témoignent de la dynamique d'émancipation ukrainienne au cours des trois dernières décennies.

English

The article analyzes four video works produced in the 1990s and in 2020: *Sleeping Princess in a Glass Coffin* (1992) by Oleksandr. Hnylytsky, *Voices of Love* (1994) by Arsen Savadov and Georgy Senchenko, *Non-Binary* (2020) by Yana Bachynska, and *The Main Fortress of Sich* (2020) by Eugen Korshunov. These artworks reflect collective processes of emancipation by constructing an image of the defiant body. The strategy of over-sexualization, often achieved through "gender-bending" and elements of pornography, are explored in relation to collective processes of sexual and

national liberation and the desire to test the limits of post-Soviet freedoms. The four artworks show the dynamics of the collective Ukrainian body's emancipation over the past three decades.

INDEX

Mots-clés
corps, vidéo, sexualité, art ukrainien, genre, queer

Index géographique
Ukraine

Index chronologique
XXe siècle, XXIe siècle, années 1990, années 2000, années 2010

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