

# Selma Selman

Selected art works 2014 - 2020

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**Mercedes Matrix**  
Performance Length: 2h 30 min  
Video Documentation Length: 10 minutes  
Printed Photos: 150cm x 100cm , 70cm x 50cm  
Krass Festival, Hamburg, Germany  
Photos by Mario Ilic, 2019



## Mercedes Matrix

Due to the ongoing economic crises of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is incredibly difficult to organize an adequate income, especially for Roma people due to the lack of education and discrimination - they live without government help.

This integration of art labor and my family's labor for survival extends into further collaborations and it is useful when the value system crashes, like Bosnian economy.

Together with my family I performed "Mercedes Matrix" where I use art as a tool for transforming the value of an act of labor and art. In this work, art becomes a tool to question the labor of my family and my labor as an artist. The same acts of labor which are performed are simultaneously executed for my own survival as well as being executed by and for the survival of my family.

The mechanism of these artworks transforms the living reality of my parents and the possible function of art, while fusing the work and reward of laborers and artists. My family transforms metal waste into a valuable resource for survival. Their everyday survival is dependent on this exact same labor, where metal and motor are sold in recycling centers.

When this labor is recycled back into the domain of art, it gains value as an artwork, and shows art's potential to transmute value just as my family transmuted the value of scrap metal as a method of commerce, proving the equal potential for transformative actions in any body.



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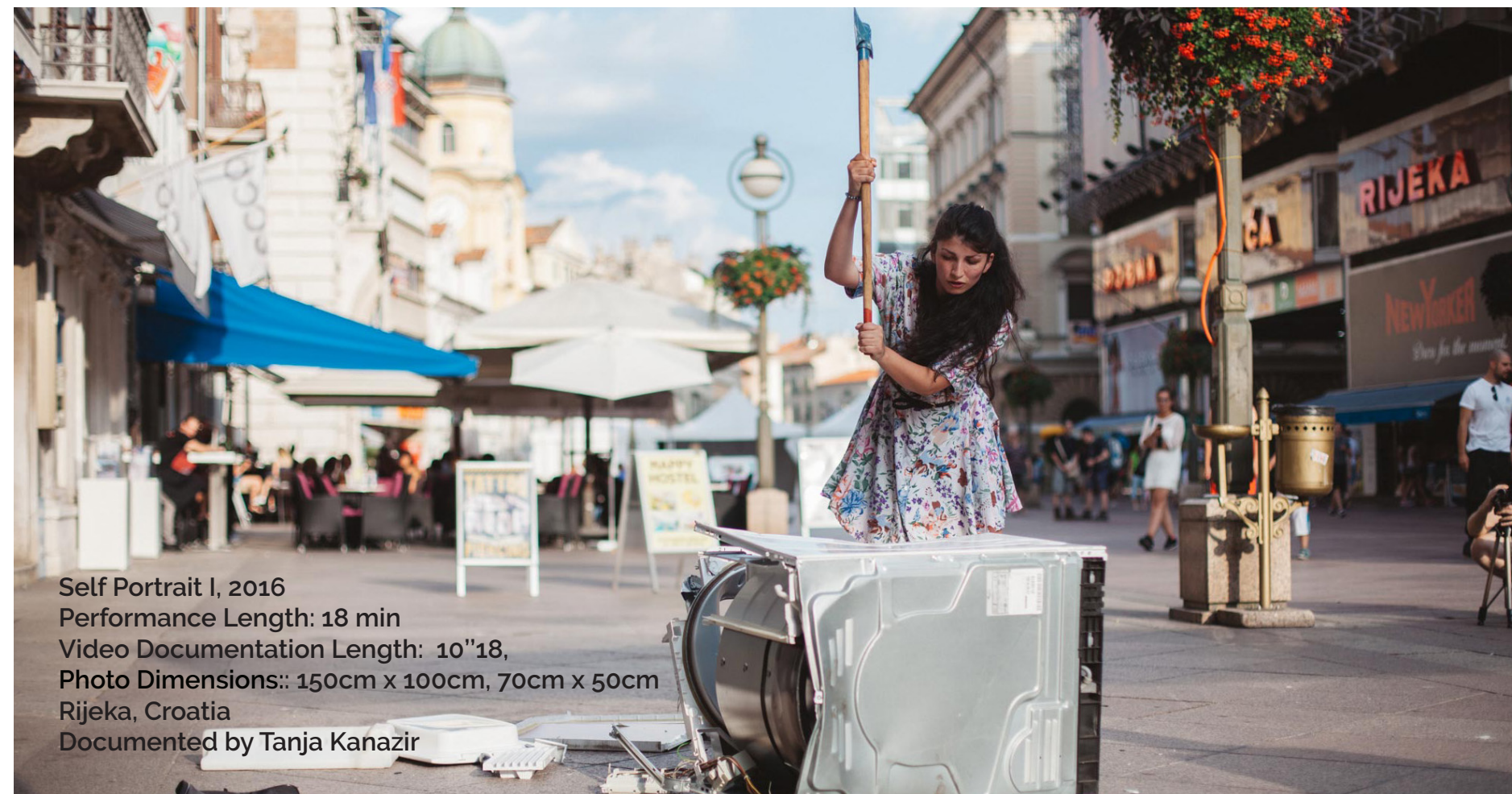
## Self-Portrait 1 and 2

"Self-Portrait 1 and 2 " are a performances where I destroy multiple vacuums, or a washing machine sorting both the valuable parts and the less valuable parts.

In addition, my family's everyday survival is dependent on this exact same labor, but the metal and motor are sold in the recycling centers.

My labor and the resulting objects are sold as performance art and sculptural production.

These earlier works visualized the destruction of a housework device that became associated with the enslaving of housewives for more than a century, but also a moment of catharsis when I could ease the inner tensions that both destroy and construct me.



Self Portrait I, 2016  
Performance Length: 18 min  
Video Documentation Length: 10"18,  
Photo Dimensions:: 150cm x 100cm, 70cm x 50cm  
Rijeka, Croatia  
Documented by Tanja Kanazir



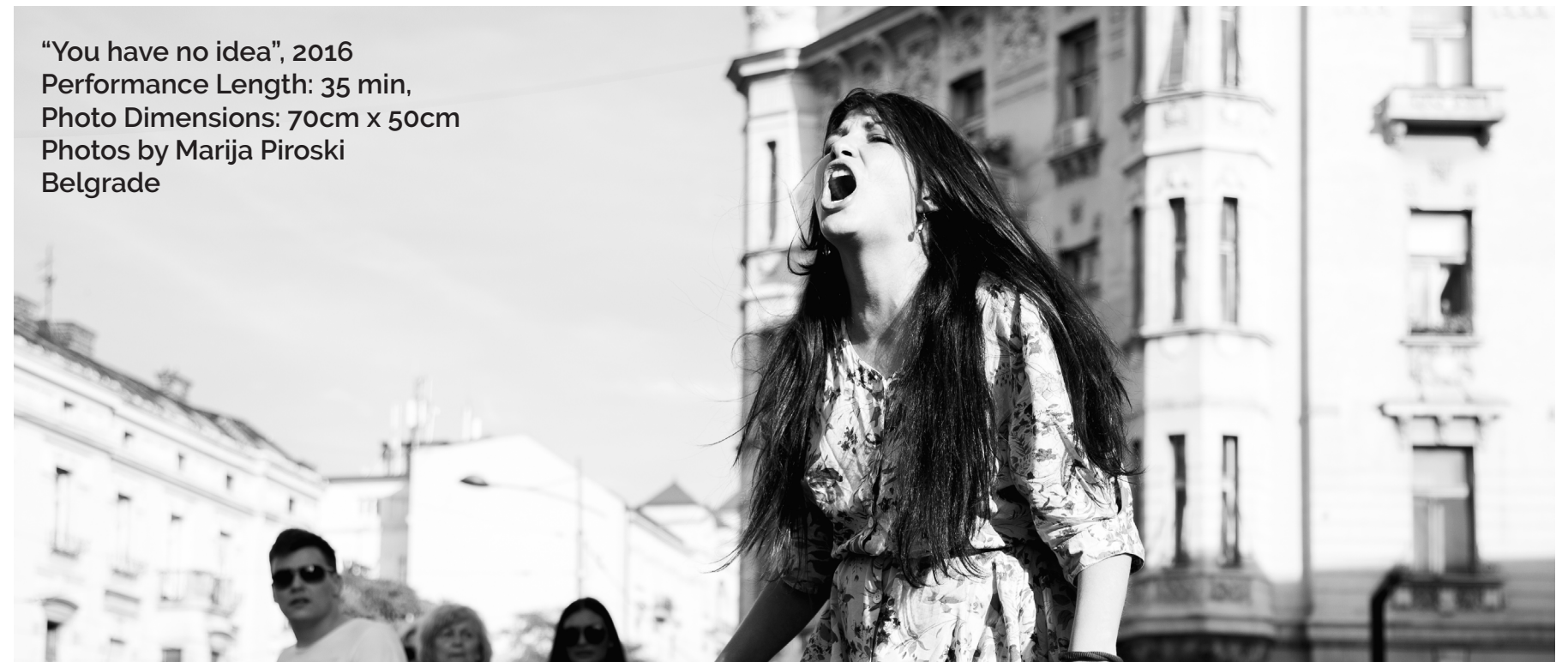
Self Portrait II, 2017  
Performance Length: 45 min  
Video Documentation Length: 13'00  
Photo Dimensions: 150cm x 100cm, 70cm x 50cm  
acb gallery, Budapest,  
photo documentation by Tibor Varga Somogyi



# You Have No Idea

In this work, I incessantly and repeatedly scream, "You have no Idea!", at the viewers. Entering the gallery space, I stand before the art crowd, restating this one basic statement about the insurmountable difference between those "in the know" and those who cannot, for whatever reason, empathize with my experience of discrimination, harassment, struggle, and burden of coming of age within a population that has been traumatized and brutalized for centuries. And yet, those "in the know," do know.

[Link to Video Documentation](#)



"You have no idea", 2016  
Performance Length: 35 min,  
Photo Dimensions: 70cm x 50cm  
Photos by Marija Piroski  
Belgrade

# Viva La Vida

Viva La Vida is a staged performance blending art historical and international cultural tropes. Using myself specifically for the camera I reference oppression, eroticism, patriarchy, femininity, as well as the physical and psychological abuse of the body. While I attack and eat the watermelon, placed between my open legs, I poetically weave cross cultural narratives and histories signifying rape, victimhood as well as emancipation.



"Viva la Vida", 2016  
Video Performance Length: 8'24"  
Photo Dimensions: 70cm x 50cm  
Camera and photo by Dinko Hosić







"Viva la Vida", 2016  
Photo Installation: 203cm x 150cm  
Carpet Installation: 300cm x 200cm



# A Pink Room of Her Own

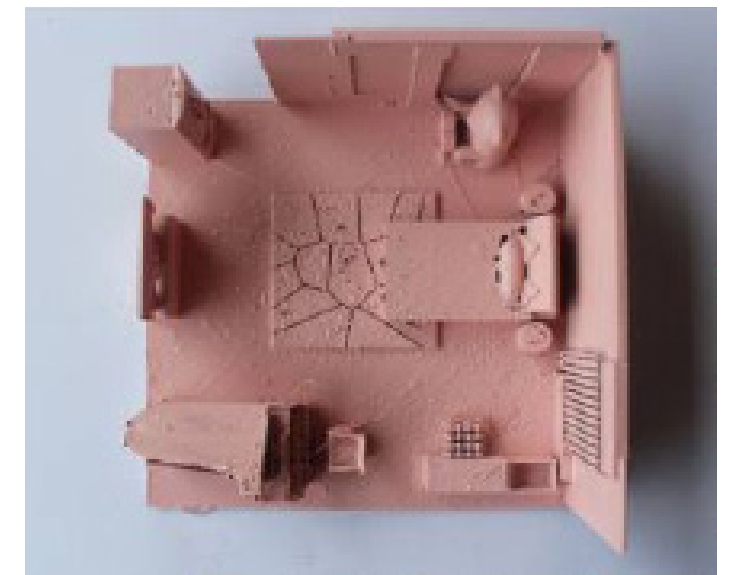
In this project, I am serving as a lens that focuses on the concrete and significant details of my mother's past, possible and actualized dreams. I worked together with my mother, reconstructing the memories of her desired rooms from the childhood that she never experienced. My mother's childhood was lost due to child marriage at age 13.

Her wish/dream was to have a girl's room. The room was created during an interview with my mother. I drew her room according to real and fictive memories of unrealized dreams and then made a 3D print. With this work, the main idea is to make the dream of my mother's lost childhood room into a reality.

In the last 40 years, my mother's life is

an example that women's rights have been and still are undervalued. This work returns authority to my mother, to a woman whose rights were taken. The long-term goal is to give support to all women who are currently going through similar issues.

The title of "A Pink Room of Her Own" comes from the book "A Room of One's Own" by Virginia Woolf. Although my mom is not writing from the same personal experiences - she personally experiences and desires the same room to live, feel intimacy and freedom.



Video, 3D Print and photos by Selma Selman 2020  
HD Video Length: 5'45", 2019



# Salt Water

The video “SALT WATER AFTER 47” relates the narrative of my mother’s first contact with the sea. She had a life-long desire to see for herself if it was really salty. just like she heard that it was.

In this video, I captured her first moment at the sea and her reaction. “AFTER 47” refers to her lack of documents when she migrated from Kosovo to Bosnia.

Culturally, the act of a woman leaving her paternal home to live with her “husband” is perceived as a marriage, whether or not it is officially recognized by the state or religious authorities.

At age thirteen, my mother was unofficially married to my father who was aged seventeen. However, the marriage was not state certified.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, my mother was left stateless. In 2014, after years of negotiating with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, she managed to obtain Bosnian citizenship.

After 47 years in total, she received her first passport. After 47 years, I helped her wish come true. I took her on a vacation to the sea.

# I Will Buy My Freedom When

-- in my ongoing project titled 'I Will Buy My Freedom When!' aims to provoke questions such as -- what does it mean to be free?-- Who can give us freedom? -- Shall I ask someone for that?

My work deals with the research of the institution of marriage, and it's economy. I am interested in the dynamics where the young girls are being married at early age and how their families are benefiting from this tradition.

My ultimate aim is to simultaneously free myself from the tradition of the marriage as well us free my parents from the strict traditional measures, and assist the future generation in collectively self-emancipating.

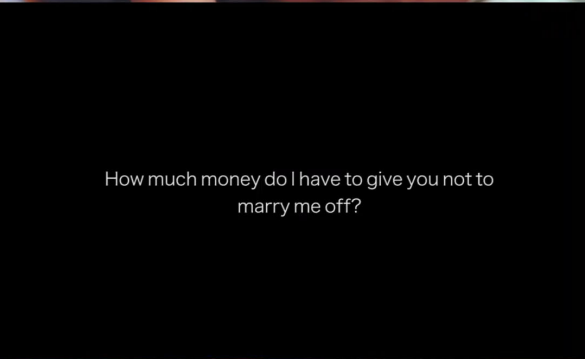
The work is composed of the main video which represent my family where I ask the simple question: How much money do I need to give you in order not to marry me off?

The advertisement directs customers to purchase my art, clothes and hair in order for me to collect 11,166 dollars and buy my freedom.

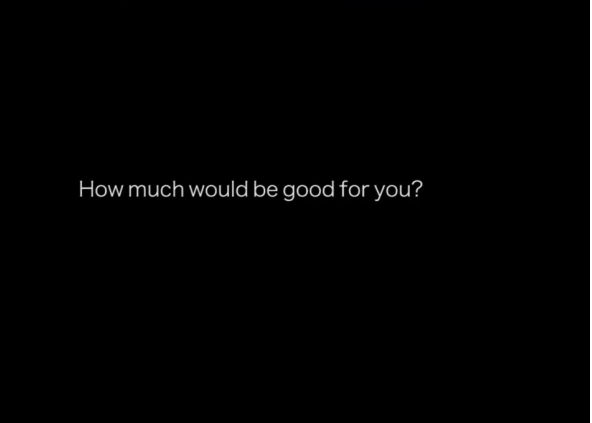


Oo, water is salty! Pju!

HD Video Length: 5'45", 2015 – 2016



How much money do I have to give you not to marry me off?



How much would be good for you?



HD Video Length: 10 Minutes. 2014 - 2018



## Iron Curtain/Mercedes 310

This work is the site specific installation, commissioned for the Biennial of Contemporary art D-O ARK Underground. The work is located in Tito's Bunker, and placed permanently in the atomic bomb shelters in Bosnia.

What is a safe place?

Bunkers are perceived as safe places because they provide protection to people hiding from the physical threat of air raids. In my life, the safest place is a Mercedes 310 because my family sustains themselves physically using this van to collect and sell iron.

The Iron Curtain was once a symbol of ideological conflict between two contesting systems. As such it not only functioned as a physical but also as a psychological barrier.

I have dismantled the psychosocial "iron curtain" stigmatizing the practices of marginalized people to symbolically open up and demand a ground for people to come together.



The work is part of the permanent collection of Biennial of Contemporary art D-O ARK Underground, Tito's Bunker, Konjic, BIH  
Photograph, installation with metal, 2014 -2015  
Photos by Alisa Burzic  
Photo documentation by Almin Zrno



## Paintings on Metal

My family has depended on converting metal waste into a resource to support the well-being of my family. After being trained in painting - I chose metal waste as my artistic medium in order to question the perceived value and relations between metal waste, technology and art.

Pursuing further research into the matter, I learned that all the metals on the surface of the Earth today emerged from apocalyptic meteor showers 200 million years ago. Every human tool comprised of metals today - from forks to phones - emerged from collisions and chemical reactions that would have wiped out the entire species.

By painting on metal and working with my family to explore its material, social and possibilities - I couple contemporary art's conceptual tools with the etymological origins of material invention in the word 'art'.

I have always had a very personal relationship with metal as my family and I have been collecting and recycling it to sustain ourselves since my childhood. My latest paintings on scrap metal portray impressions of everyday life, references to art history and text collages. Humor, wordplay and my incessant probing of the boundaries of art fuse painting and sculpture into small intimate objects.



Ongoing production since 2014  
Current number of pieces: 87  
Medium: Acrylic paint on scrap metal

Dimensions of various pieces range from:  
15cm x 15cm to 2m x 2m









Dimensions of various pieces range from:  
15cm x 15cm to 2m x 2m





## Superpositional Intersectionalism (Drawings on Paper)

The drawing series Superpositional Intersectionalism is an attempt to expose and neutralize preconceived notions of what constitutes opposites and contradictions. Composed of the term 'superposition', borrowed from quantum physics and describing the ability to be in multiple states at the same time until measured, and transforming intersectionality into an 'ism' and therefore a grand narrative of the interconnectedness of social categorizations such as race, class and gender, I actually want to oppose any possible manifestations of this self-invented term.

Visually reorganizing identities, bodies and cultures I reveal the fluidity and possibilities embedded into all relations, spaces and times. Challenging ideas of the unchangeable, impossible or un-negotiable - the artist's protagonists elude definition and remain in a surreal, dream-like reality where faces are distorted into grotesque grimaces, breasts have claws, necks grow into legs and one body becomes two or three or more.

In addition "Superpositional Intersectionalism" is a drawing series aware of the base speed - 600 kilometers per second - that everything within the Milky Way galaxy is physically travelling through the universe. This includes human bodies, geopolitical borders and the subatomic particles composing drawings.

Ongoing production from 2019  
Current number of pieces: 56

Medium: Color pencils on paper  
Dimensions of every work:  
35cm x 43cm



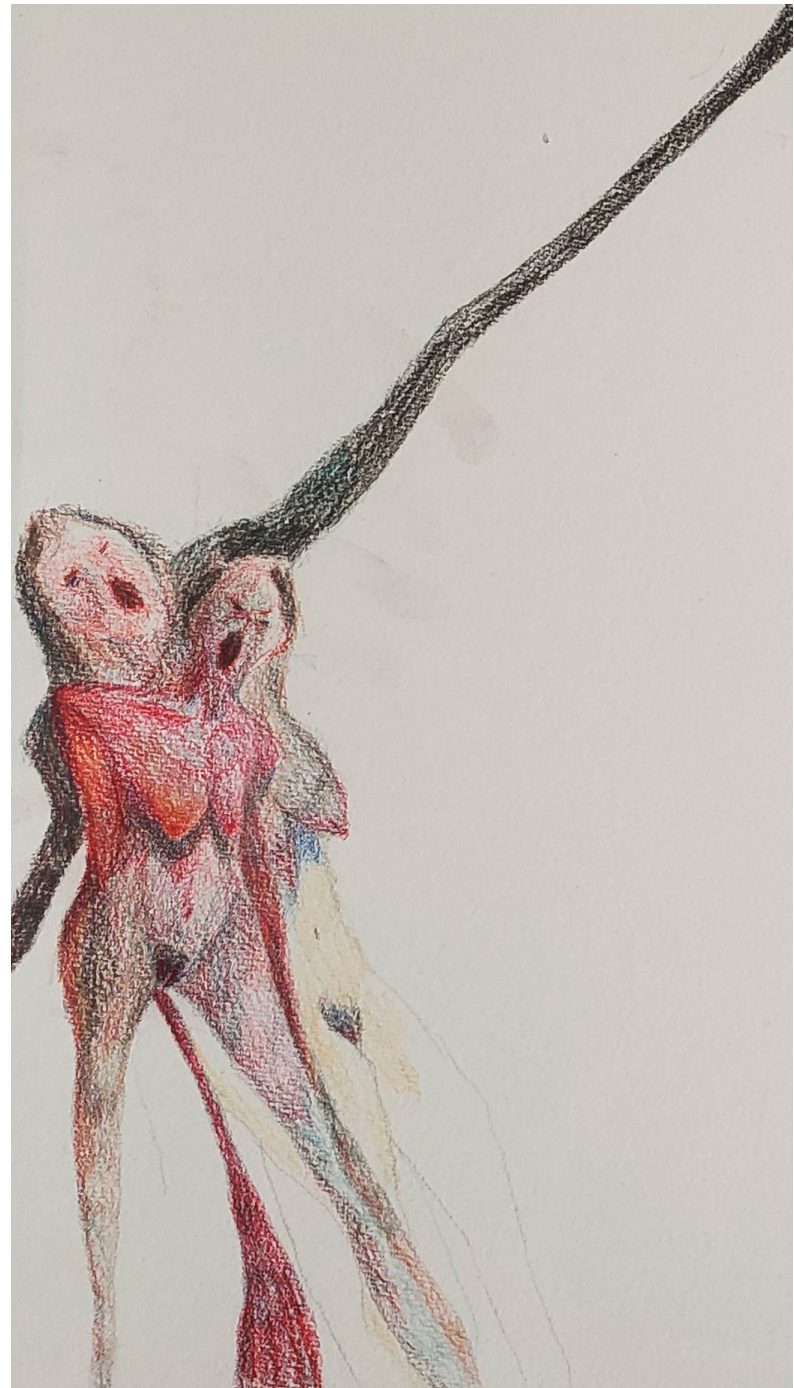
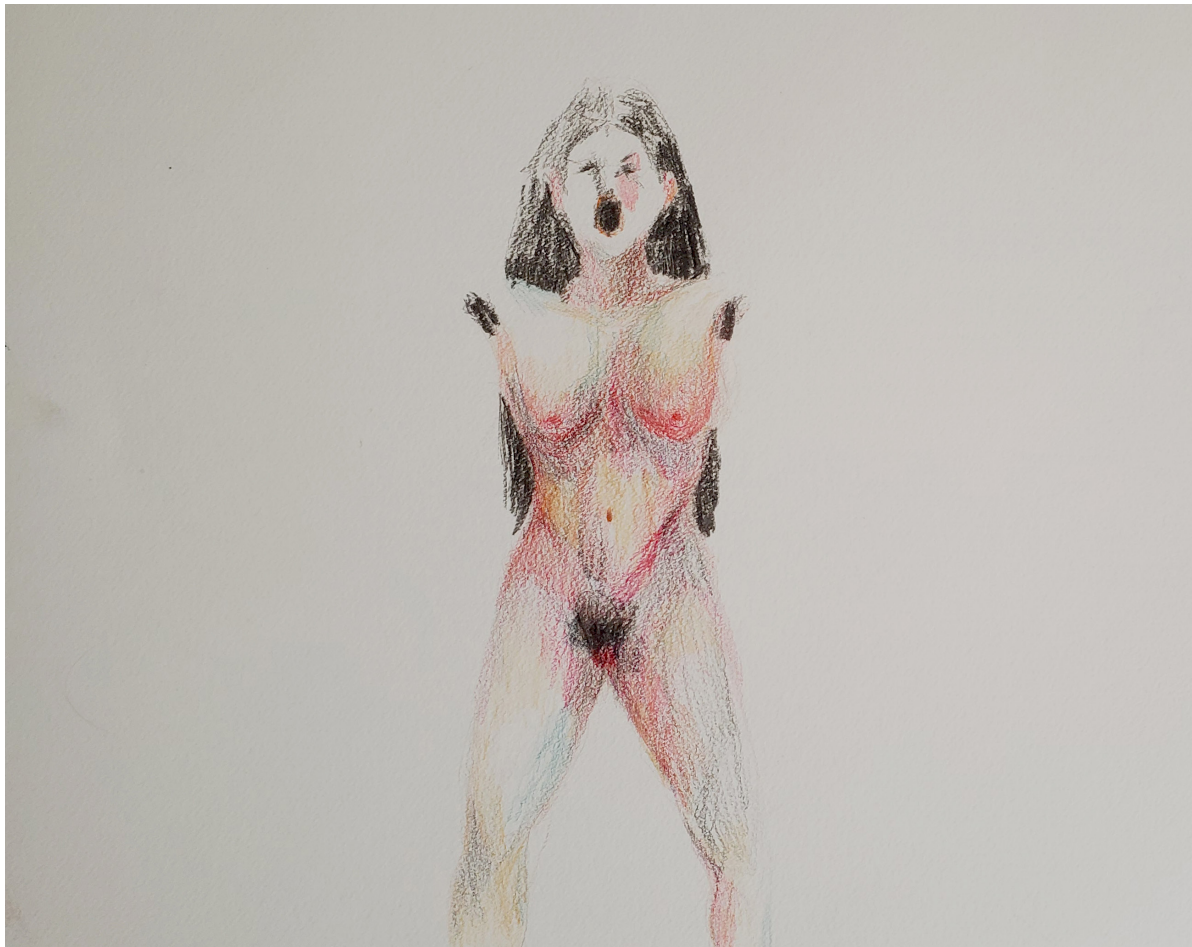














## NO SPACE

The work "NO SPACE" is superpositionally about every possible space and about all possible people. The main idea of the work is to bring the world back to thinking about the physical realities of Earth by visualizing how space and belonging are conceptualized today.

While using a virtual planet. And making my body both bigger than the Earth, and as small as your phone screen I am questioning both our conceptions of physical space and personal belonging.

Paradoxically using an image of my BIG BODY to claim that there is no space for anyone but me while performing visually that there is always more possible space on Earth than any image could possibly claim.

Many of us are affected by capitalism's images, due to capital's disorganizations of physical reality. Capitalism makes images that make physical work invisible. In response, workers, protesters and I wear high visibility neon.



Virtual Reality Performance, 360 Video  
58th Venice Biennale, FutuRoma, 2019  
Edited by Chonga Peter Lee  
Link to work: [nospaceproject.com](http://nospaceproject.com)



## Superposition

As someone who has a dual nationality, and lives as an immigrant in the USA, I am constantly faced with the effects and pressures of conflicting identities which I have begun expressing through artworks. I perform this immaterial contradiction through a performance executed live and in virtual reality. For 3 rounds, I don boxing gloves to attack, defend and coach myself simultaneously.

I fought, protected and trained myself much like the quantum atoms which can simultaneously exist anywhere.

With my body and identities - Roma, female and immigrant, I can become anything necessary as the circumstance demands. Similar to the impossible situation which I am performing, I become my own opponent, my trainer and my hero.



Superposition  
Performance 9 min, Studio Tommaseo, Trieste, ITA, 2017  
Photos by Fabrizio Giraldi