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ART

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MOSCOW MUSEUM
OF MODERN ART

ILMIRA BOLOTYAN IMMATERIAL LABOR

DATE
7.09 — 13.10.2019

VENUE
MMOMA, 10/1, GOGOLEVSKIY BLVD

CURATOR
OKSANA POLIAKOVA

ASSISTANT CURATORS
MEDEA MARGOSHVILI

The Moscow Museum of Modern Art presents Ilmira Bolotyan's personal project Immaterial Labor. Ten artefacts are the result of the two-years-long participatory performance by Bolotyan, which involved the artist bringing her body to perfection in pursuit of a socially established ideal of beauty.

Bolotyan mingled with model business, with the Instagram group PhytoNyashki, came face to face with adepts of plastic surgery and cosmetology, interacted with bloggers and influencers. In doing so, she tried on her own skin the ways and tools of reaching the ideal practiced in these communities. The experience she gained she converted into objects: visitors can watch a short film, motivational clips, a series of graphics, and the paperwork documenting the experiment.

The artist's Immaterial Labor consisted of copying the women's work on their looks: face and body care, fitness and all sorts of mental and health practices, sticking to rational diet, careful choice of clothes and accessories. All of this seems to bring women closer to the standards of perfection established in different communities. The desire to have perfect looks is exploited by image courses, schools of individual style, etiquette and motivation, where one women teach the other, while at the same time selling them certain products. The artistic system functions in the same way: the artist's main work is essentially immaterial and consists of interactions with the right people in the right places, process coordination, collaboration with institutions and creation of a convincing image.

Every work of Ilmira Bolotyan is not only the experience that she has got and reconsidered— it is also a way of examining the subject of diversity of identities, jobs and fashions that force people to conform to certain standards or circumstances.

For instance, the 30-minute documentary movie Immaterial Labor

(2018) shows the preparations for a runway walk. An album featuring the photo comic book How to Become a Model at the Age of 35+ with the Height of 5′4″ (2018–2019) tells a story how the artist studied at a school of professional models and — guided by colleagues employed in the industry — followed all the usual stages of pursuing a career of a model. Eventually due to objective circumstances (the author's not matching the standard requirements) the project was stopped. Photo comic book can also serve an instruction of sorts for those who want to try their luck and maybe break into modelling.

The main purpose of the project is to show through self experience, as well as the experience of other women, the functioning of the field of immaterial labor and how to exist inside that system. The works of Ilmira Bolotyan, the 'products' of her labour — inspire uneasy empathy and at the same time unobtrusively introduce the viewer into the space of contemporary art.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:
Ilmira Bolotyan is an artist, curator, PhilD degree in Philology, graduate of Anatoly Osmolovsky's Baza Institute for Contemporary Art (2011–2013) and the Free Workshops School of Contemporary Art at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2014–2015). She is a co-founder of the artist-run space Centre Red (2015–2017). Ilmira Bolotyan took part in several large international and group shows, including the Shanghai biennale (Shanghai, 2012, as part of the Haunted Moscow programme), Feminist Pencil (the parallel project of the 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Moscow, 2013), East. Deconstruction (The special project of 6th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Moscow, 2015), Red Love. Sofia Queer Forum (Sofia, 2017), Space for Art and Perfect Age, MMOMA (Moscow, 2018) and many others.

ABOUT THE CURATOR:
Oksana Poliakova is an art historian and curator; field research manager at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. Her areas of expertise include Soviet Nonconformist Art, History of international exhibition activities and Russian artistic relations with Western European Countries. Participant of the artist-run space Centre Red (2015–2018), participant of the Internship Programme for Young Curators EUNIC 2016 (Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm). Curator of such projects as Between Zero and One. Alexander Pankin and the Avant-gardes (2019, MMOMA at 25, Petrovka); Ilmira Bolotyan's solo project Date in the Museum (2017, Fragment Gallery); group exhibition Transparent Boundaries (2017, Centre Red) with the support of the Swedish Embassy in Moscow. As assistant curator took part in the realisation of Eric Bulatov's retrospective project I Live — I See (2014, Manege).