



Ulijona Odišarija

*A Pocket Of Time Into Which I Will Disappear*

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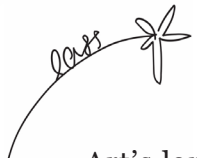
If it is useful, here is a fact: Ulijona didn't start her life as an artist by making sculpture, but through photography. She took things out of her life and held them still. Click, shudder, flash. In a way, she is still taking things and holding them still, only now she has found a way to make that stillness last.

The brief flash of the camera's shutter is prolonged. It has become elaborate. Adulthood requires complex methods. The camera's capture is turned inwards. The method is no longer based on a machine for taking something out of life but a series of procedures for creating a structure to slip inside of. The click, shudder, flash has become capacious; a pocket of time large enough for time to disappear.

What happens when time disappears? In this case, I think you forget yourself. And then remember oneself. Then forget. You become like Ulijona's Gift Bags: transparent. Maybe that is what Ulijona is up to. She is playing the game that most children excel in. Forgetting themselves. When I was a kid, I drew for hours. I was a lost person. Lost & Found. I think what defines an artist is how good they are at maintaining these elaborate schemes of childhood. The ones who survive are all schemers. They know how to load a lot of extra effort on top of necessary action, and from that surplus, let beauty emerge.

And what do they do with this beauty? Well, some of them must get jobs.

Another fact: Ulijona has a job. One of the first things she said to me when I went to visit her in her studio recently is that we are alike because we both believe we can do things of which we are neither trained nor practiced. The fact that we both work jobs unrelated to art seems to cement this delusion. You get quite good at doing whatever, when you are an artist, and you are otherwise employed. The moonlighting makes for disregard. You are always resisting something. You exist in a nether region; you are a pocket of time into which life disappears.



Art's language is built on abstractions. When I spoke to her about this show, Ulijona said to me that it was about transparency, opening to view. I think that is true, but what I think it is also about is the sheer defiance required to persist in making art.

I remember a day when Ulijona and I were standing in a charity shop. While I took a brief, empty look at the clothes, Ulijona inspected almost every item on the rails. Tired, I went to get a coffee and came back to find her with a Ralph Lauren shirt that she thought I should try, as chuffed by her find as a metal hunter who had unearthed an ancient nail.

To make art demands sustaining an attention that is replete with faith. You need soft eyes that refuse meaninglessness. In the charity shop, I had forgotten this. I was without elaborate schemes; I had given up. But by my estimation, I think Ulijona may have seen a small world.

- Cassandre Greenberg

Ulijona Odišarija is a Lithuanian-Georgian artist living between London, UK and Vilnius, Lithuania. She works in a range of mediums, predominantly sculpture, video, images, text and acts of collecting. In addition to her practice she makes music with her band Steve & Samantha and organises community clothes swaps called Outfitting.

She completed a Masters in Fine Art Media at the Slade School of Fine Art in 2016 (University College London). Her work has been presented at Montos Tattoo, Contemporary Art Centre and National Art Gallery in Vilnius, Lithuania, Morra Greco Foundation in Naples, Italy, Patara gallery in Tbilisi, Georgia, Toronto International Film Festival in Canada, Close Up Cinema, SET and Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, UK, PAKT and LIMA Foundation in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Showroom in New York, US, and online on flatness.eu, history-joy.cc and aqnb.com.

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