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Photo: Rudolf Ter-Oganezov

YOUNG STAR OF THE NEW YORK ART SETS STAGE PERFORMANCES AND SHOWS

Liz Magic Laser (and this is the real name of the artist) - star of the new young generation of the New York art scene. Her performances, which are based on real interviews and speeches of prominent American politicians vacillate between art, theater and film. Liz came to Moscow at the invitation of her old friend Sani Kantarovsky, [who] 20 years ago left Moscow, and is currently working and living between Los Angeles and New York. The artists presented their joint project, thought up specially for the exhibition *The things words and consequences*, which opens in the MMSI this Friday. The exhibition explores what is common between the actors and politicians.

Helen Verkhovskaya: I watched the rehearsal. It seemed to me that what you're doing is rather like the choreography.

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LIZ MAGIC LASER: My mother is a choreographer and I can say, I grew up in the rehearsal room. In my youth, I was fascinated by photography and started taking dance. Then I began to do for them stickers and posters. Express an action in one shot - a task that is actually very complicated. Actually need to translate movement static. I was looking for a variety of poses and gestures, but all the scripts that were born in my head, was much more interesting [than] a static photograph. I [did not have] enough freedom of movement or the time. So I gave up and took photos of the performances.

HV: And what about your Moscow performance?

LIZ: It's about communication - presents itself as a speaker, be it an actor or a politician, and as the audience responds to it. We decided to [show] these two similar situations - political speech and theater performance - in the form of a dialogue bodies. [We] selected four basic movements and postures and began to experiment with them.

Sanya Kantarovsky: Me and Liz in our own way and in our technique were working on this issue for a long time - the language of the human body. We wonder how the most simple and mundane gestures at some point turn into signs and symbols are archetypes, forming a sort of dictionary or alphabet of the human body. But with these letters, gestures we work. Two of these are unable to act - a triumph or gratitude to the public, the other two - the reaction of the audience, sincere support and helpless submission. It is not necessary to say, to enter into dialogue with each other and their position.

HV: That is, the body language is more primary than our speech?

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Sanya: Both are very important, but I think that body language is more free and rich: there are no hard and fast rules, and norms of behavior that involves our speech, no such conventions and agreements, as a courtesy, etiquette, and so on. It is more sincere. Less controlled by our mind.

Liz: While it is dominated, gestures are more hits on the emotions. I just wonder how different theatrical techniques and rhetorical techniques are used in modern politics and business to create a certain impression and emotional impact.

HV: That is, for manipulation?

Liz: That's right.

HV: In his performances, I used the Reagan quote about Gorbachev...It turns out that is the policy - this is the same theater...You keep talking, separated by commas: the politician, the actor.

LIZ: We are parallel but do not want to depress those political activities. Our goal is not to announce policy carnival...We ask the question, select the interesting points, but do not give any answers. Yes, we are interested in the language of propaganda, but we do not want to take it up.

Sanya: Art - this is the last area of freedom, where you can talk about something long and hard, but it does not say anything specific, or not insist on anything, do not give any ready-made solutions or answers. We show people what they already know, but in an unusual, interesting perspective.

HV: Then why are you appealing to "biomechanics" Meyerhold and Russian avant-garde theater in general and Agitprop? This art is thoroughly imbued with social and political propaganda. How so?

LIZ: I began to study the Meyerhold Theater in the context of the language of political propaganda, but first I wanted to know how the Soviet avant-garde theater works with the audience. As an actor and advocate to build relationships with people? What was the relationship? How to wake up a passive spectator, to engage and to provoke a reaction? This is a problem that we face today. People hide from emotions, like they wrap themselves in a blanket. Russian avant-garde sought to derail the rug in order to understand what a person thinks, to tie and even force him talk, and with it the definite opinions - ultimately to manipulate man. Modern politics did the same, using the same techniques. In my performances for *I Feel Your Pain*, I used quotes of various American politicians, including Reagan's words about Gorbachev...There is a famous story of how Reagan "courted" for Gorbachev in Geneva, it seems the conference - some pretext led him to walk, and brought in a separate guest house to talk face to face. There was lit fireplace - so intimate,

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confidential atmosphere. In these words the scenery of cooperation and understanding sound much more convincing. Similarly, the Bush line up the dialogue with Putin. But, my God, all this rhetoric comes from melodramas and romantic films - although I am enthralled by the theatricality of this action!

HV: So, maybe it's great - such intimacy in political discourse?

LIZ: Yes, it certainly is evidence of a general democratization of society. This is evident from the way journalists interact with politicians. What is being discussed was once considered impermissible.

HV: Does the work of art does not have to be accompanied by a list of recommended reading and links on the internet? You enjoy working with documentary material - specific quotations and facts. But why is such a theoretical Moscow project conditional?

Liz: All my previous works are very local - based on the local context. The audience can cheer when they find quotes political. Russian context, I do not know and do not feel so my Moscow project is more allegorical. It all built up to the level of the sign - in the end, we want to be understood. The work of art does not have to be accompanied by a list of recommended reading and links on the Internet, without the knowledge of which the project will be misunderstood. We want everyone to understand us. So we are talking about the most common and ordinary things. What could be simpler body language?

HV: And at the same time more difficult.

LIZ: Yeah. This language has not been formulated, it is subconscious. But this is the strength of its impact.

HV: But then, you as an artist manipulate.

Liz: Yeah, but I hope that my manipulation is only that, I encouraged people to think about something: its involvement in this eternal dialogue - today manipulates me, tomorrow I manipulate. The most amazing thing is that the realization that you participate in a game is not enough to get out of it. We understand that our senses play and that we all play a show, but we continue to give into provocations.

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HV: Maybe people want to manipulate them?

LIZ: Maybe. Perhaps this is a timeless scenario of social behavior. But it would be nice if all [people] act out their roles. Actor and even a third [party] are to always continue to play and understand why they are here and what they are doing at the moment. People should be included, [not] struggle with their passivity.

HV: It turns out that the whole world, [like] Shakespeare Theatre, is one big manipulation?

Liz: Or communication.

HV: It is one and the same?

LIZ: Communication - is the art of persuasion.

HV: Do you personally understand that you are involved in this massive performance [and does it] help to adjust its role?

LIZ: Yeah, it makes it possible to replay, enhance, and improve.

HV: And you are happy with their role?

LIZ: No. But I try.