

Lorena Kalaja

Artist Statement

I am interested in the individual's relationship with the environment, specifically with social, political structures, systems, and architectural spaces.

In my studio practice, I seek to materialize the essence of my physical and spiritual life experiences via the use of video, multimedia installations, photography and other mediums, searching for their inner symbolic and universal meanings.

Biography

Lorena Kalaja was born in Tirana, Albania. She has graduated from Academy of Fine Arts in Tirana and completed her masters in fine arts at Herbert H. Lehman College in New York. She lives and works in New York. She was assistant curator of current exhibitions on 2015-2016 at Islip Art Museum, NY. Over her career she has participated in numerous exhibitions of her work which includes, video, multimedia installations, photography and other mediums.

She has exhibited at:

- Autostrada Biennale International Contemporary Art Biennale, Prizren, Kosovo
- "Silent Auction" Long Island Museum, Stony Brook, New York
- "Chaosmiques" at the Galerie d'art contemporain, Auvers-sur Oise, France
- "Artistic Visions" Slide Slam Artists, Long Island Museum, Stony Brook, New York
- "Slide Slam 3" Long Island Museum, Stony Brook, New York
- "The BIG Potato" Ripe Art Gallery, Huntington, New York
- "BYO Festival" – 24 Hours Participatory Arts, Middle Island, New York
- Annual Exhibition "Private Viewing: For Your Eyes Only" Islip Art Museum, East Islip, New York
- "I am Up Late" Islip Art Museum, East Islip, New York
- "Lip Release Party" The Velvet Lounge, East Setauket, New York
- "Alternative Historic Photography Experiments" Islip Art Museum, East Islip, New York
- "Pop-Up Art exhibition" 4th Annual Arts Event, Williamsburg, New York
- "Last Dance", Arts Renaissance - Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York
- "Thesis Show" Lehman College Art Gallery Bronx, New York
- "Pop Up Art Exhibition", Living Gallery, Manhattan, New York
- "Best of Seniors Show" (Selected for the exhibition Billboard) FAP Gallery Academy of Arts - Tirana, Albania
- "Speed of Light", Photo Exhibition at Piramida - Tirana, Albania
- "Albania is Moving" Photo Exhibition at Piramida - Tirana, Albania
- "Tirana Transfer", Badischer-Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
- "Student exhibition" Kunsthochschule, Kassel, Germany (Video)

"Evolution"

From American dream into a worker bee.

2020, Photography, 36" x 30"



Potato Queen

This piece was inspired by the renaissance era. The picture which was taken during my pregnancy was purposely depicted not only to show the glow that a woman has during this period of time but also to emphasize the extra purpose that nature bares on a woman. The necklace if observed carefully is created with pearls and potatoes to symbolize the weight of the daily responsibilities women have, completing and beautifying their image...

2016, Photography, 36" x24"



One, endless repetition...

2015, 7 channels video Installation,

Video one, on left: projection, 2' 23" Color, sound, on loop.

Video two, on right: projection, 1' 00" continuously on play. Color, sound.

Five monitors, video, 1' 00" each, continuously on play. Color, sound.

This work reflects experiences and challenges that almost any woman faces everyday as she tries to balance her personal and professional life in an almost unbearable rhythm, trying to fulfill a never-ending list of duties.

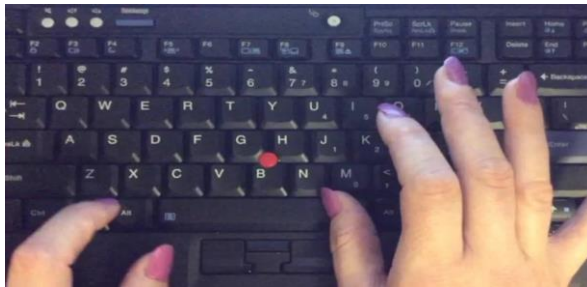
The videos I have created explore the repetitive nature of everyday activities often associated with a woman's domestic life in a suburban environment. Conceived as a video installation, this work is realized via two projected videos which stand side by side of each other and five monitors which run in an endless loop. In the first video is filmed myself while visibly pregnant, walking through a seemingly quiet and peaceful domestic environment which gets disrupted by the breaking of dishes, cups and silverware as they get thrown off the table in revolt-like way against this never-ending routine. The second projection contains three repetitive round motions, associated also with every day like chores.



For private view – Not for circulation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjsGy3TxMyw&feature=youtu.be>



"One, endless repetition..."

This work reflect my experiences and challenges that almost any woman faces everyday as she tries to balance her personal and professional life in an almost unbearable rhythm, trying to fulfill an endless list of duties. Maybe a new balance needs to be found?

One, endless repetition...

2016, Video and multimedia installation, color, sound

The work reflects experiences and challenges that every woman faces every day when trying to balance her personal and professional life. The pressure to fulfill a never-ending list of "duties" and expectations that society has towards women. In this video is filmed myself while visibly pregnant, walking through a seemingly quiet and peaceful domestic environment which gets disrupted by the breaking of dishes, cups and silverware as they get thrown off the table in revolt-like way against this never-ending routine. Is originally a video installation of two projected videos which stand side by side and five monitors that run in an endless loop. It was built to be experienced from a further distance than the one we see right here. So here I am working towards simplifying the message for a very close more personal point of view. The essence of the work is at the center of attention and you can find the original materials used on the video such as the table cloth etc., somehow come to life at the bottom of the work as if to remind us that even though the work seems to depict a quiet and peaceful domestic environment somehow a revolt that can break things easily is on the other side of the balance.

For private view – Not for circulation



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Untitled

2016, Wet plate collodion photography.

Donated at Islip Art Museum, NY, permanent collection.

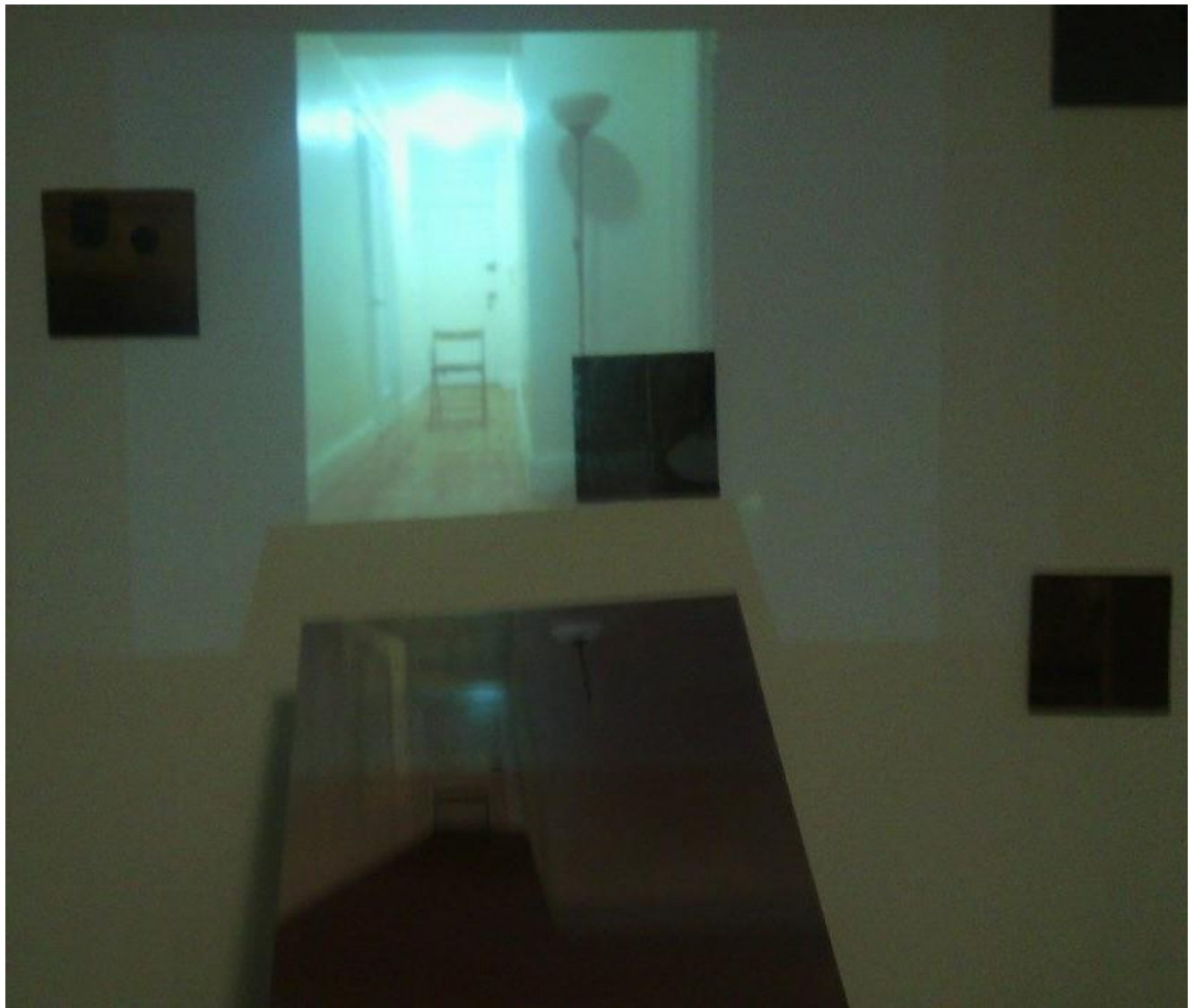


For private view – Not for circulation

Pending

2014, Multimedia Installation. Photography projected on four paintings 8x8 inch, center piece 20"x20", oil on wood panel.

In private collection



Surveillance

2014, 04' 16" color, sound

The development of technology is making everyone's life less private, which in many ways brings discomfort and restricts individual freedoms. The video included in this project introduces the reaction and the confrontation that someone has with a strangers' camera. The pressure of being recorded is very clear and visibly uncomfortable.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CXOCHmreLw&feature=youtu.be>

Surveillance

2014, Serial of paintings, acrylic on wood panel, 8"x8" each.

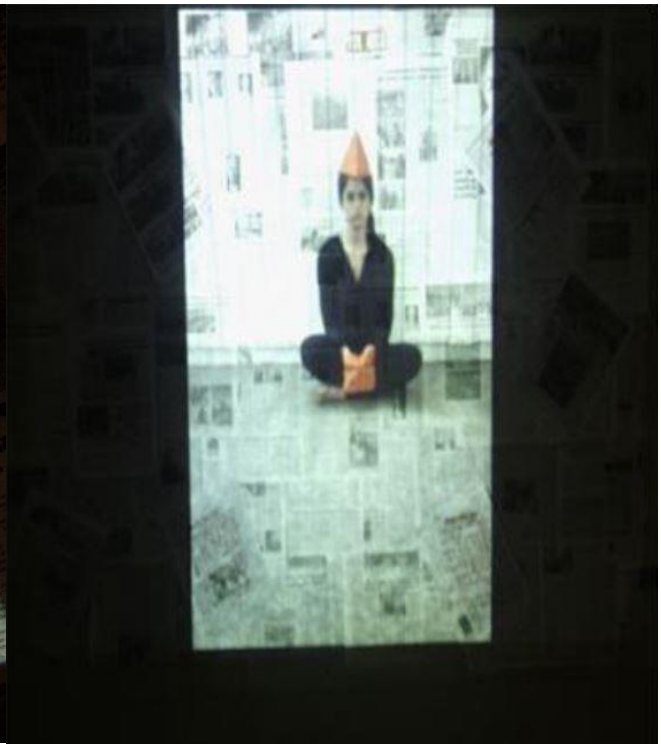
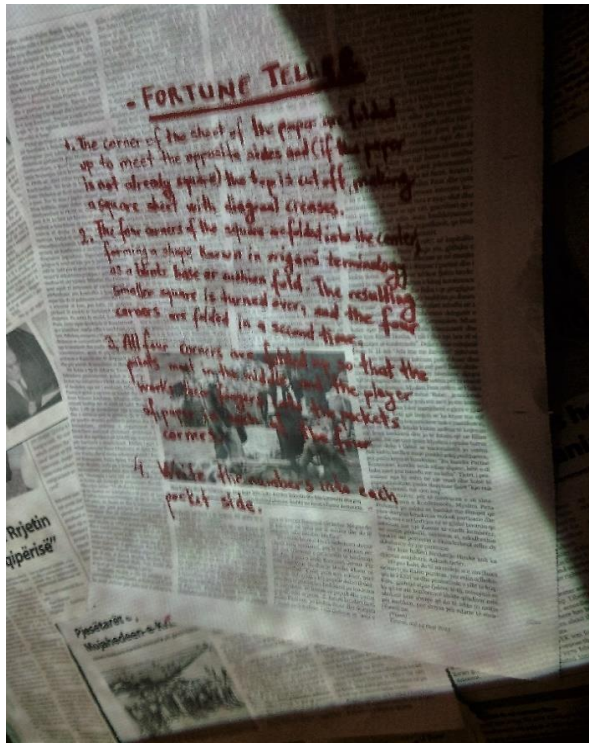


Propaganda

Video, multimedia installation, 2014, 01' 09", sound, color, instruction how to make fortune teller, fortune teller.

This video installation is based on childhood memories, playing with the most popular fortune teller toy for children in Albania, during the communist era. So much wasted paper, time and lives.

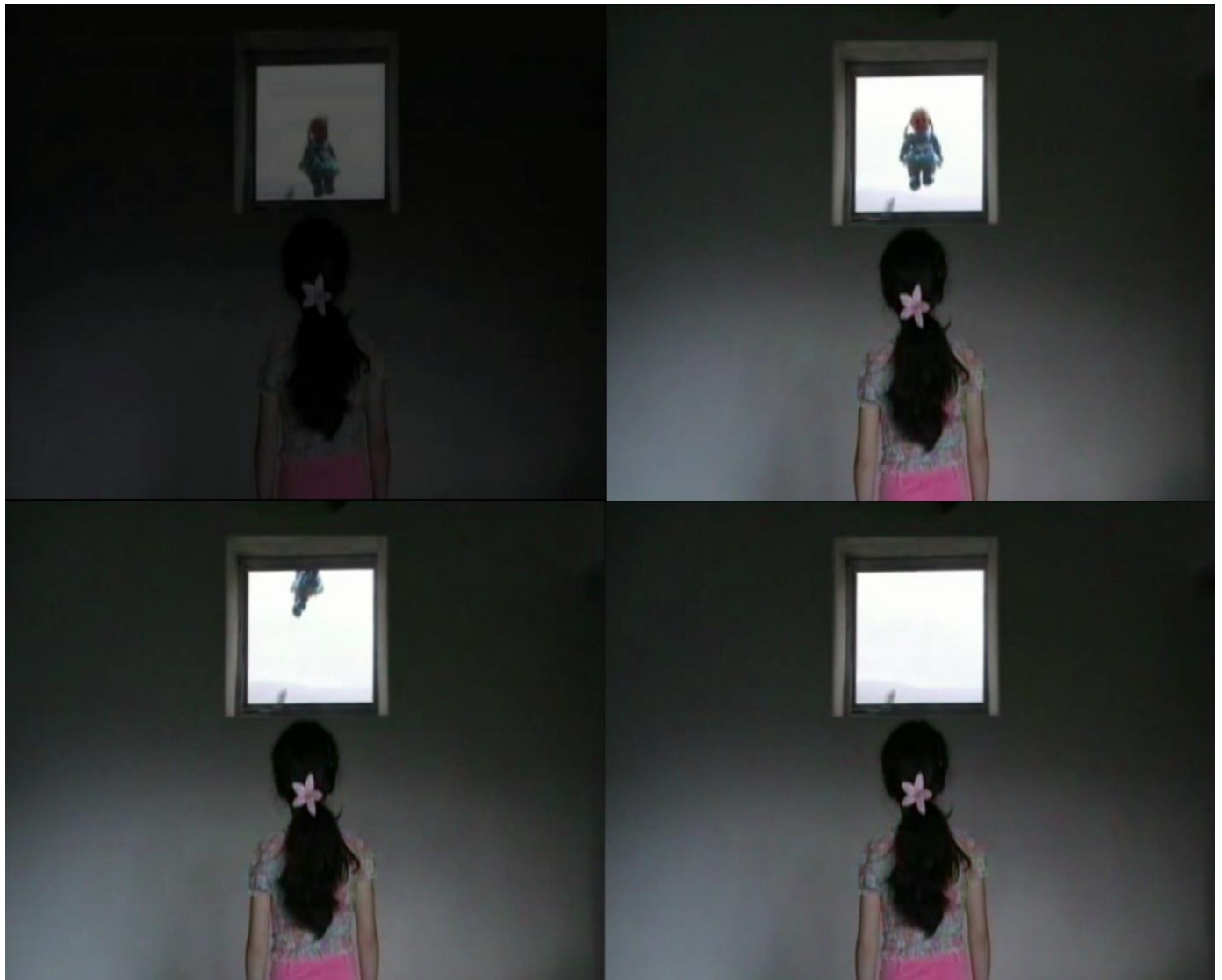




Departure

Video, 2006, 01' 03, color, sound

We constantly feel the sadness associated with loneliness. In this case the most valuable object of the little girl's attention, a doll disappears leaving her alone in a completely empty room. This hollow and haunting feeling is related directly with emigration, something I have experienced personally.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIQKrFW0HOY&feature=youtu.be>

Halo

Video, 2004, 02' 22", color, sound

Treats the social phenomena that humans experience when they first introduce themselves to others. In the beginning of this video a mystic like figure appears drawing attention and interest to be examined even further. This appearance tries to materialize as a mysterious angel of some sort offering the best that it can as more light settles in. Unfortunately the more light we shed on her the more visible the human becomes until the halo disappears completely leaving us with nothing else but reality.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=op6x2x-7Pro&feature=youtu.be>