

The first thing that strikes me about Nadia Varena Marcin (NVM) is the acute personal investment of her physicality and mentality into the process of her art-making. At times, I wonder how sharply she actually cuts into her artistic personality. How painful is that, I wonder. Before a performance, her preparation seems to call out for a deadening of the person in order to produce the Other of the performance. During the performance, there is something like a dance whose precarious balance is disrupted and then lapses, falls and shows blemish. Just take a look at *Are you Lonesome Tonight* in a street life bar in Kaunas, Lithuania. It was on a crazy, delicate knife edge from start to finish, and the people in the bar demonstrated extreme volatility towards this artist who placed herself therein. Why such a sacrifice? What did it cost?

For me, her performance to mark the Opening of the Kaunas Biennial in 2009 took another turn, no less destabilizing. Taking place in a national institution of the Republic of Lithuania, where fewer and fewer people take the time to look at art, it felt to me that NVM had smacked her audience, releasing an incendiary designed to provoke thought about the shortcomings, crassness and insufficiency of cultural icons and institutions. And while some may miss the significance of the grilling and interrogation she performs, it is hard not to sit up when you observe the body of work produced in just one decade.

The Fischer Landau performance and the Grand Slam installation twisted and turned again. These were translated to me via video pixels and a Joint Photographic Experts Group reproduction. This format handles perfectly the 'fall' from the wire, the shock in the faces, the soiling of the garment and the splash on the wall. NVM is highly skilled in her careful formation of the dramatic. But, despite the ability of this format to capture certain aspects of the performance, I think that what is unrepresented in this pixelated format is the less visible forces of NVM – her own culling of feminine physicality, artistic personality and alienated cultural outsider. And for me there, in such silence and spirit(quality), is where her epiphanies emerge.

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