



Art and Technology Meet in St. Petersburg: An Interview with Five Female Artists of the CYLAND Media Art Laboratory

DARIA CHERKASHINA

CYLAND Media Art Lab St. Petersburg

Abstract: New media art is an extensive concept, which unites a number of different art forms made with the help of media technologies such as digital art, computer graphics, computer animation, virtual art, internet art, interactive art, video games, computer robotics, 3D printing, cyborg art and art as biotechnology. Media art has existed in Russia for more than twenty years and female artists were the core developers of media art in St. Petersburg. Taking the CYLAND media art laboratory as its vantage point, this interview with five artists aims to give an account of the history, key works, exhibitions and ideas in St. Petersburg media art. The artists participating in this interview are Anna Frants, Ludmila Belova, Alexandra Dementieva, Victoria Ilyushkina and Elena Gubanova. They all have exhibited their works extensively both in Russia and abroad and contributed significantly to the development of Russian media art and CYLAND's development as one of the leading media art institutions in Russia.

Keywords: media art, female artists, digital technology, computer programming, curating

New media art is an extensive concept, which unites a number of different art forms made with the help of media technologies such as digital art, computer graphics, computer animation, virtual art, internet art, interactive art, video games, computer robotics, 3D printing, cyborg art and art as biotechnology. Sometimes it involves interactive observers' participation and is thematically about technology, but not always. Many artists use computing only as a new technology, continuing to create artworks in classical forms. Media art has existed in Russia for more than twenty years, initially as an isolated idea and almost always in individual projects only.

The CYLAND media art laboratory was founded in 2007 in St. Petersburg by the initiative of a group of artists. It is one of the most active non-profit organizations developing me-

dia art in Russia and has been cooperating with the largest cultural institutions of St. Petersburg, including the State Hermitage Museum (Youth Educational Centre), the State Museum of the History of St. Petersburg, the Sergey Kuryokhin Contemporary Art Centre, Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design, Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts, Borey Art Centre, Sound Museum (GES-21), Creative Space TKACHI and others.

CYLAND organizes the annual international festival CYBERFEST (CYFEST), exhibitions of visual art, sound art, video art and educational programs. It functions as a base for media artists and hosts the first Russian online archive of video art. Through its various activities, CYLAND has made a huge impact on the development of media art in Russia. Despite the fact that St. Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia, is well-known for its classical view on art, media art has become prominent in the city in recent years.

Women artists were the core developers of media art in St. Petersburg. Taking CYLAND as its vantage point, this interview with five artists aims to give an account of the history, key works, exhibitions and ideas in St. Petersburg media art. The artists participating in the interview are Anna Frants, Ludmila Belova, Alexandra Dementieva, Victoria Ilyushkina and Elena Gubanova. They all have exhibited their works extensively both in Russia and abroad and contributed significantly to the development of Russian media art and CYLAND's role as one of the leading media art institutions in Russia.¹

Anna Frants and Marina Koldobskaya are CYLAB's founding members. For Ludmila Belova it took time to join CYLAND, but from the very beginning she kept an eye on the activities carried out in the lab. She took part in several early exhibitions and CYFESTs as a guest artist, but at some point started to be involved in the organization of the lab's projects. For Victoria Ilyushkina everything has come at the same time: immersion in video art in her creativity and her work at CYFEST. Elena Gubanova worked as CYFEST's curator in 2015–2017.

Daria Cherkashina: *First of all, I am interested to know what the idea was behind founding a media art laboratory in St. Petersburg.*

Anna Frants: The prototype of the media art lab was Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), founded by Billy Klüver in 1967 in New York. At the time of the opening of E.A.T., he worked at the Bell Telephone Laboratories and actively engaged engineers and artists to collaborate in creating works of art. We were inspired by this idea together with Marina Koldobskaya, who was the director of the Petersburg branch of NCCA² at that time, and decided to remake it and to create CYLAND Media Art Laboratory. The main annual CYLAND event is the media art festival CYBERFEST, which we are running eleven years in a row already and which is the largest art and technology festival in Eastern Europe. In these years, media art in Russia has changed immensely.

DC: *Can you please tell us about your experience of Russia's lively field of media art? How has the field developed over the years?*

¹ See biographical information of the artists at the end of the interview.

² The National Centre for Contemporary Arts (NCCA) is a leading Russian state institution specializing in contemporary art. NCCA works under the auspices and with the constant support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

Ludmila Belova: Around 2004, when the world wide web had massively expanded, artworks no longer belonged to the countries in which they were created as people started living in a global space. Artists now work freely and move across national borders; art is being exhibited on the internet, online. This is particularly important for applying new technologies in art, as new technologies put on the market—that is, those instruments with which media artists are working—are strongly tied to computer and video markets. As media artists, we monitor all the changes that take place in the digital world.

Alexandra Dementieva: I expected that the advancement of media art and interest in it would be more intensive. Considering the beginning of the 20th century and the history of Russian avant-garde art, different movies and sound experiments of Dziga Vertov and Arseny Avraamov, who created *Symphony of Factory Sirens* and many other works of this kind both in cinema and music, one could expect that the creation of different notable experimental sound objects like Theremin³ would provide a huge impulse for media art in Russia. Without doubt, the fact that the country was isolated from the world and that avant-garde always remained hidden from a broad audience, has influenced the development of media art in the 21st century.

Victoria Ilyushkina: Looking at the history of media art, I can say that initially there was a big interest in experiments with the human body, which was presented through performance. In the beginning of the 2000s, there were many works related to human body sensors, biological implants (like *Ear on Arm* by Stelarc⁴) and robots. Today's preference is for different artworks: installations, complex objects and robots. It was surprising for me that the focus in video art has moved from image to sound. Initially sound played a secondary role, but in the last ten years, sound projects have become more popular, more interesting and more in demand as well. And these are autonomous, super interesting artworks. Sound does not serve image anymore, but in many artworks sound runs the show. This has never happened before. Another new favorite thing among media artists is the use of formulas, calculations and code. Unpredictably an analytical component is becoming predominant in art, moving emotional component slightly towards the background. For example, there are artworks in which technical constructions analyze image structure and transform it into sound frequencies. Regarding video art, I find 3D-animation to be the most unpredictable vector of evolution.

DC: *How, in your opinion, has CYLAND changed the arts and media field in Russia? How has CYLAND impacted your work as an artist?*

Alexandra Dementieva: As we know, there are academic institutions in the West—in the United States and Europe—which include a number of disciplines with focus on new media or which teach entire courses on new media. These courses started to appear in the beginning of 2000s, so they have been running for almost 20 years. In Finland students can work in new media after graduation. In Russia there is still almost no evidence of teaching artists how to

³ Theremin is an early electronic musical instrument invented by emigrant inventor from the Soviet Union Léon Theremin in 1928. Editor's note.

⁴ Stelarc is an Australian performance artist who combines engineering, robotics and biomaterials on a human body. *Ear on Arm* presents a soft prosthesis ear being transplanted in the artist's forearm.

work with media technologies. There were always individuals who did something, but no one ever worked with media art on a large scale. This is why CYLAND Media Art Lab is a great opportunity for people to create works in the field of media art and learn something new. Collaboration of artists and engineers enriches and advances creativity immensely. I believe that the emergence in Saint Petersburg of such an institution, which has organized festivals and engaged Russian and foreign artists over the course of many years is a very big deal.

I myself have created several great works in collaboration with CYLAND. One of them is called *Breathless*⁵. Its developers were Alexey Grachev and Sergey Komarov. It travelled for many years after it was constructed. The high level of the work allowed it to be exposed at festivals in Brazil, Belgium and Italy and I presented it in the Parallel program of the Venice Biennale (image 1). It is very important for me that CYLAND, as a laboratory that organizes different thematic media art exhibitions, has grown into an institution that gets attention from not only Russian, but also international audiences.

Image 1. CYLAND at the Venice Biennale in 2009



Source: CYLAND

Ludmila Belova: I think that such an institution as CYLAND Media Art Laboratory is very important for the Russian art field. Here exactly the necessary ‘diffusion’ between Russian and western artists appears to happen. Anna Frants, the main initiator of this story, always travels around the world—lives in United States, Russia and in many other countries. She is a

⁵ *Breathless* is an installation consisting of three interactive objects, which can be made to radiate light. Editor’s note.

‘missionary’ of an almost new art in Russia, that is, media art, cyber art. Apart from exhibition activities, CYLAND also plays an educational role—it introduces new Russian and international artists to the public, shows new directions in art, promotes unusual works, and exhibits Russian and foreign artists together.

CYLAND has become a pioneer in a new branch of art, which, of course, initially caused a lot of annoyance within the art community, because the word ‘cyber’ was odd for the traditional apprehension of art that predominated in Russia at that time. Many people in the art community, who were used to more traditional forms of art, were afraid of this word. CYLAND shows projects created in cooperation between artists and engineers, which was unusual for the Russian traditional view, in which technical specialists and humanitarians were always separated. However, in practice, technicians and artists easily find a common ground when creating new artworks.

From the very beginning, CYFEST attracted a lot of visitors and new artists. When I joined the festival, we were traveling with exhibitions through different countries and cities, for example in Berlin, and in Venice we made collaborative projects together with the Ca’ Foscari University. There were unforgettable feelings and impressions. CYLAND exhibited in Venice Biennale and this was an opportunity for Russian artists to integrate themselves into the global process. It is a huge accomplishment of the media lab.

Victoria Ilyushkina: CYFEST was something new and unusual for me. The format of the festival itself was extraordinary, artworks exhibited and the reaction of audience. For example, at the first exhibitions at the Hermitage, people came in and could not even understand what’s going on inside. They said, ‘A rag moves on the floor... what the heck is that?’ There was a lot of lectures, master classes, at which it was possible to acquire experience working with new media. For example, a year ago the British computer artist William Latham took part in the festival and described his work with virtual reality, how he painted plants together with his team. He explained his entire method in detail and that was extraordinarily interesting to me. Latham had also covered such topics as astronomy, 3D-printing and 3D-scanning. No one before has ever made such lectures and exhibitions, there was nothing like this, especially in Saint Petersburg, and that, of course, was impressive and inspiring. Probably it was possible to see all those works somewhere on the internet and it was possible to read about them, but to see them together in one place was a unique experience.

Video screenings, at which I have worked before CYLAND, also were integrated into CYLAND’s activities. CYLAND contributed in various ways and very professionally to the organization of exhibitions and creation of media art. In Russia, media art was in a rudimentary state and was presented only in Moscow. There were individual artists in other cities but it never was presented as a united idea and was never actively, systematically promoted. I’ve never seen anything like that. In CYLAND everything was combined together: video archive, sound archive, creation of media objects, theoretical and educational basis.

Elena Gubanova: I joined the project much later, around 2011. My first work ‘Red Shift’⁶ exhibited in Venice. Ivan Govorkov and I⁷ were awarded the Kuryokhin Prize⁸ in the cate-

⁶ ‘Red Shift’ by Elena Gubanova and Ivan Govorkov is a site specific installation, see Gubanova 2011.

⁷ Elena Gubanova often works with her husband Ivan Govorkov in artist duet

⁸ Sergey Kuryokhin Award is one of the most prestigious prizes for achievements in contemporary art in Russia.

gory of ‘the best visual project’. I think the first CYLAND exhibition in a parallel program at Venice Biennale was an indispensable event for me. After that, we took part in Venice Biennale every year.

The CYFEST festival is the main project of CYLAND. It was created in Russia with the goal of integrating modern ideas in a rapidly changing world. It is very important to create a living environment for contemporary art. Unfortunately, Russian universities do not educate media artists but CYLAND attempts to deal with this problem by attracting young specialists from different spheres: artists, engineers, and other specialists. Diverse ways of thinking are presented, which makes the art environment tolerant and open to new ideas. CYLAND creates a productive environment and provides artists with new material. It is very important to give publicity to work of Russian creative professionals, their way of thinking, how they work and what they create. But the environment remains hostile: there are no such places in the city that could be adapted for contemporary art and no technical equipment for that purpose. It is unclear where this kind of art can be exhibited.

DC: *Is there any particular role that women have in media art? Do women and men have different approaches to technologically complicated ideas?*

Alexandra Dementieva: I started working with media art in Belgium in the 1990’s. During the first five or six years, I was the only woman in a team of 26 people. Men were coming into arts from the technical field. Today there are also many women in media art, but initially it was a kind of ‘male kingdom’ with negative opinions about women’s possible participation. There was a tendency to say that writing code, the ‘engineering part’ of creating an artwork, was the most important thing, while the visual part was not that interesting. Here I am talking about my experience, which is somewhat strange, because I always needed to prove that I can work with media. I think in Russia the situation was similar to that.

CYLAND almost completely consists of women, but it happened only later. Today the attitude toward media art has changed dramatically. It is clearer now what it is about. New art is first of all the artist’s idea, his/her perception of the world, and the team, engineers and programmers who help the artist to create plays a secondary role.

Victoria Ilyushkina: I am personally against dividing art into ‘male’ and ‘female’. I look at this from different perspectives. In my opinion, women are very impressionable: when they are captivated by some idea or metaphorical component, they immediately start to think it over and work on it. However, technical realization, the understanding of how the complete mechanism should function—this part is not always easy. Programs are being mastered by both men and women, but in my view, men are better at comprehending the whole picture, at getting a construction from the technical perspective.

Ludmila Belova: It is impossible not to have gender characteristics, because we are, men and women, different after all. At any rate we have different views on the same things. There are priorities, which are followed by women in choosing topics, the presentation of material, in filming itself (when we talk about video art), in installations and performances. There are still some elements of patriarchal thinking in Russia, including the image of women in art.

And this view, which is quite negative, is reflected in all of the arts, not just the media. In the west, there is no such question: who created the work, a man or a woman. I also do not divide art into ‘male’ and ‘female’ in general. To me, as a woman, it was not hard to work with media art, it was just very interesting.

Elena Gubanova: For the last CYFEST we made an open call within the framework of Art-A-Hack⁹ and, in terms of applications, we had an equal amount of male and female applicants. There is not any imbalance—both men and women have an interest in the festival. In general, the male perspective is predominant in Russian art and media, but in media art there is no predominance: as far as I know, precisely in this branch there are many women. For example, there are many more famous female video artists in Saint Petersburg than male ones. In my view, female media artists create more imaginative, gentle and personal works, while men dive into technical issues.

DC: *What was the primary impulse that directed you to media art? How does classical education fit with media in your creative process? What were the most remarkable experimental projects in your career?*

Ludmila Belova: I filmed my first art video a long time ago when I got a VHS-C video camera. I filmed a lot, it was terribly interesting to film and to watch. I tormented my viewers with kilometers of filmed tape and learned gradually. The audience’s reaction was always a signal for me. If they were getting bored, it meant I had to shorten the film. Those were the first experiences and afterwards, much later, when I got an opportunity to cooperate with engineers, who could organize technically complicated ideas, I started creating media works.

Many skills that I obtained in classical education, came in handy when I worked with media. For example, understanding composition and style perception. One of the distinguishing features of CYLAND’s projects is that they combine new technologies with academic education in art. This notably distinguishes CYLAND from exhibitions run by other similar institutions.

For an artist him/herself, the newest projects are usually the most interesting. In ‘Pastoral’, which I made for LUDA gallery in St. Petersburg and presented afterwards at CYLAND’s exhibitions, I printed on a 3D-printer for the first time. Technology and its impact on humanity as well as on the individual became the topic of all my recent works. The project ‘The Rate of Disappearance’¹⁰ describes a gradual transformation of us, as humans, into a new nature, in which we can no longer be considered homo sapiens. The next work ‘Pastoral’ is about the time when the transformation has already taken place and that new world is very different from the world we live in now and the people who live there are not really human beings (image 2). My work ‘Digit-on-a-stroll’ (image 3) took part in the latest CYFEST, which was fully dedicated to the topic of weather forecast and digital cloudiness. The theme also refers to new horizons, what awaits humanity in the future and artists’ reflection on it. This topic is now the most inspiring for me.

⁹ Art-A-Hack is one of CYFEST’s special projects. At Art-A-Hack artists, programmers and other creatives work on collaborative projects.

¹⁰ The Rate of Disappearance (2015, Art re Flex gallery, CYLAND, St.Petersburg, Russia)

Image 2. Pastoral by Ludmila Belova



Source: CYLAND

Image 3. Digit-on-a-stroll by Ludmila Belova



Source: CYLAND

Aleksandra Dementieva: I've got an interest in media art for two reasons. First, as I started to work with painting and installations, I began to think about possible interactivity. Can viewer participation stimulate a faster understanding of the idea of the author as compared to the traditional mode of reception? Second, since childhood I was always surrounded by scientists. My grandfather was a biochemist. I often spoke with him and his scientist friends and I visited his institute. Overall, science is connected to technology and with ideas that make us treat our world as art. Art and science are just two different visions of the world. When you combine them together, it becomes even more interesting. I think that new media only makes classical art richer. In my view, there is no contradiction.

I find one of my first installations the 'Mirror's Memory' to be the most experimental. I was always interested in the 'memory of the mirror' and the question whether we leave any trace in it. I wanted to materialize this trace somewhere. Trace from a fireplace is smoke and burned branches and forests. Is there also an invisible trace in the air that people leave? For this purpose, I created this installation, which is called 'Mirror's memory' (image 4). The idea was not simple in realization: it was my first installation created with a computer program and we spent six months writing code for it. You come into a dark room, stand on a brightly lit carpet and little by little begin to see yourself in a mirror's reflection, but at the same time people around start to appear, people, who were in the exhibition hall half an hour, or maybe even three days before you came in. Every time this is a meeting with ghostlike traces of people, who had already been there. This work is still important to me. I don't know what will be in the end, but today the world changes so much and it is clear that we are only in the beginning and we have no clue how we will change and whether we will exist in the form of a physical human body when we arrive at an entirely new technological level.

Image 4. Mirror's Memory by Aleksandra Dementieva. Photo courtesy CYLAND



Source: CYLAND

Victoria Ilyushkina: For me ‘media’ is just an instrument, a surface, a tool. I got interested in it when I was a student at PRO ARTE¹¹ after graduating from the Art Academy. It was interesting to experiment with a camera, to combine video fragments in different ways. I was curious to learn about installations, because in classical education it had not been studied at all. However, academic education does help. It is clear knowledge, the theory of composition, the theory of art history. When you start working with a technique, you do use this knowledge anyway, you just use other instruments, different kinds of ‘paintbrushes’.

The project ‘I Save Them’ is very important for me. On the one hand, it was a documentary, and on the other, a well thought-out conception. It was a story about real human life, nevertheless it was completely unreal in its incarnation—a story about a musician who collected old devices at dumps. He could not throw away old TV-sets, tape recorders, video cameras, record players that used to be so prestigious in the past. He created a story for each of these devices, and I presented this livable and technologically valuable story in a form of a complex total installation. In this project, I tried to reconsider the value of technical novelties, which in 10–20 years become garbage and junk no one needs. It was interesting to form it as a cosmic pyramid (image 5).

¹¹ The St Petersburg PRO ARTE Foundation for Culture and Arts is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1999. It promotes contemporary arts and culture, its main fields of activity being visual art, music, architecture, art journalism, and design.

Another important project I created together with CYLAND is my site-specific object 'The Song of a Lighthouse'. I made it at the time CYLAND cooperated with NCCA at a festival organized in Kronstadt by Marina Koldobskaya and it is one of my notable artworks. There was a functioning lighthouse, which was placed on an embankment in Kronstadt. We installed a very powerful speaker on top of it and I recorded a male voice singing songs *a capella* about the motherland and the war. When one walked on the long pier and listened to the male singing, the landscape transformed back in time.¹²

Image 5. I Save Them by Victoria Ilyushkina



Source: CYLAND

Anna Frants: For me media became new material and a means for expression. Art is always primary, and technique is only a tool to help with expression. For thirteen years, I have had a tradition of making personal exhibitions in Borey, Eastern France. The last project I presented at that exhibition and at the last CYFEST became the most important for me. Here camera work is combined in real time in a form of a complex installation, but most importantly, it all has an idea and emotional impulse. The project always changes and is refined in the process, so it is not dedicated to any particular time.

Elena Gubanova: I remember an episode from my childhood, when my father took me to an observatory, where he used to work. It looked like a giant installation: bright light, something is moving, an open roof. I think that this childhood impression had a huge impact on me.

As an artist with academic education, I can surely say that there is a difference between the creation of an artwork in multimedia and easel painting. In easel painting you are alone

¹² The project took place in Kronstadt, St.Petersburg on 21 July, 2006.

and do not depend on anyone, just stretch a canvas, stand at the window and paint for your own pleasure. In multimedia a painter is tied to so many people. In media I am attracted to variability, many ways of realizing a single idea. At CYFEST there is clear evidence of classical education influencing all our media artworks. They are built on a somewhat mandatory imagery and visual language that occur at least in our team (with Ivan Govorkov). As curator I also prefer these kinds of artworks. Especially when traveling, I see that in the field of media art there is a tendency to laboratory presentation, in which artistic representation of the project is disappearing, leaving only technical and technological representation. These projects are often created online and the process is usually more important than the result, which is placed in cloud storage. To me, as a representative of the old academic school, it is essential for an artwork to manifest the clear idea of the artist.

We work with light, shadow, breath, such things that exist without us and we adopt them, put them through us and visualize them. The projects that explore our key themes are 'Red Shift' and 'Eclipse'. 'Eclipse' is a wonderful project with a beautiful story, in which light and shadow are essential (image 5). I am an astronomer's daughter, and my husband is an esoteric. In his creative work he tends to analyze psychological aspects of human beings, and in our projects we combine all these themes. I gravitate to minimalism and generalizing cosmism, and my husband always to the horror of being. Sometimes it becomes very interesting. The story behind 'Eclipse' started a long time ago: when my father was young, he saw an eclipse in a village and this has changed his whole life—he decided to become an astronomer. He sat on the roof, while a shadow covered the ground and everything in nature was 'messed up'. This story has influenced me a lot as well and resulted in an artistic project.

Image 6. Eclipse by Elena Gubanova and Ivan Govorkov



Source: CYLAND

DC: *As we have seen in these interviews, all of the artists have very diverse ideas related to creativity and women in the art field. Many of their works have a reference to their childhood, to the Soviet era, but are represented more as feelings of the time, rather than historical events or facts. Most of the artists interviewed for this essay have classical art education, which supports them while working in the field of contemporary art. All of them have different points of view, but what unites them is the strong willingness to learn the world and to create something new.*

About the artists

LUDMILA BELOVA is an artist and curator, born in 1960 on the Kamchatka Peninsula, USSR. She graduated from the Abramtsevo Art and Industry School (Moscow, Russia). She works with video, sound, painting and photography. Belova's works have been exhibited in Europe, the United State, Russia and Asia. She was a participant in the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Russia, 2005, 2011) and she has participated in exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (Italy, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017), in the parallel program of the Manifesta 10 Biennale (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014). Her works are in the collections of Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Anna Akhmatova Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Erarta Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), The Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA), and in private collections in Switzerland, Germany and Russia. She currently lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

ALEXANDRA DEMENTIEVA is an artist and curator, born in 1960 in Moscow, USSR. She studied journalism and fine arts in Moscow (USSR) and Brussels (Belgium). Her principal interest as an artist is the use of social psychology, perception theory and behaviorism in her installations as well as the development of film narration through the point of view of a subjective camera. She has been an active participant of the CYLAND Media Art Lab since 2008. She also works as Professor at the Royal Academy of Arts (Brussels, Belgium). Dementieva received first prize for the best monochannel video at VAD Festival (Girona, Spain). She is a participant in numerous exhibitions in major Russian and international museums, including the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), the Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art (Russia), Centro de la Imagen (Mexico City, Mexico) and others. She currently lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

ANNA FRANTS is an internationally known media artist and curator. She was born in 1965 in Leningrad, USSR and she graduated from Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design (St. Petersburg, Russia) and Pratt Institute (New York, USA). Frants' interactive installations have been showcased at the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Russia), Video Guerrilha Festival (Brazil), Manifesta 10 Biennale (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014), Museum of Art and Design (New York, USA), Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany) and other major venues all over the world. Her works are in the collections of Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Art and Design (New York, USA), Sergey Kuryokhin Center for Modern Art (St. Petersburg, Russia) and Kolodzei Art

Foundation (New York, USA) as well as in numerous private collections. Frants currently lives and works in New York, USA, and St. Petersburg, Russia.

ELENA GUBANOVA is an artist and curator, born in 1960 in Ulyanovsk, USSR. She graduated from Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts. She does painting, sculpture, installations, and video. She is a Winner of Sergey Kuryokhin Award (Russia, 2012) in the category “Best Work of Visual Art” (together with Ivan Govorkov). Her works have been exhibited at major Russian and foreign venues, including the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Moscow (Moscow, Russia), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), and Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany). She participated in the Manifesta 10 Biennale Parallel Program (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014) and in several exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (Italy, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017). Since 1990, she has been working in collaboration with Ivan Govorkov. She currently lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

VICTORIA ILYUSHKINA is a media-artist and curator. She graduated from the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts, where she studied art history and theory, and then continued her studies at the New Media program of Saint Petersburg’s Pro Arte Institute. Currently she lives in there and works as curator of video programs and exhibitions for the CYLAND Media Art Lab, the Sergey Kuryokhin Award and the Videoforma international video program festival. As an artist, she has presented her work at numerous solo and group exhibitions in Russia and abroad, such as Urbi et Orbi (the 6th Moscow Biennale special project), On My Way (parallel program of the 56th International Art Exhibition in Venice), and many others.

References

Gubanova, Elena (2011) ‘Red Shift .MOV’, *YouTube*, June 19, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUm75uX1aHU> (30.10.2018).

DARIA “DAFIS” CHERKASHINA is a St. Petersburg-based curator, art critic and project manager, working with contemporary art. She earned her Master’s Degree in Art Criticism & Curatorial Studies from St. Petersburg State University and Bard College. Daria has experience in working at the Sergey Kuryokhin Modern Art Centre, Manifesta 10, and National Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA). Her current work at CYLAND media art lab is dedicated to the management of the lab’s video archive. She is also co-author of the book entitled *Korean Contemporary Art: Local Orientation* (Svoe izdatel’stvo, 2016).

[darya.cherkashina@gmail.com]