

# apexart

2020-21 INT'L Proposal  
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## ***Voicing the Silence***

**submitted by: Creative Association of Curators TOK**

**city: Moscow, Russia**

"Voicing the Silence" is an exhibition project that deals with issues of gender equality and protection of women's rights and lives on the legislative level also focusing on long-lasting intersectional discrimination of females in professional spheres including the field of art. The project idea is instigated by the recent Russian law on decriminalization of domestic violence which resulted not only in increase of family abuse across the country but led to a sharp rise of the number of incarcerated women accused of excessive self-defence. On the other hand, the exhibition also aims at bringing into public spotlight the historical achievements of females in the struggle for legislative recognition. The project curators draw their inspiration from the book "The Social Basis of the Women's Question" (1909) by influential Soviet feminist and politician Alexandra Kollontai, who proffered systematic solutions for women's economic and political independence based on gender equality. She embedded her revolutionary ideas into the institution of family and marriage by supporting new principles of labor legislation, sexual education and freedom of love. Kollontai's progressive principles were later adopted by many social democratic societies. However, more than a hundred years later we witness a major throwback in the relations between women, state and the system of justice cynically masked by return to "traditional values".

«Voicing The Silence» amplifies the legacy of Russian and international artists, who contribute to enhancing the global feminist agenda using art as a medium. The exhibition, accompanied by a public program and a library of feminist literature, unveils state mechanisms controlling women's rights and reproductive decisions while also addressing their political engagement in different countries and historical contexts.

Watercolors "Evidences" by Polina Zaslavskaya depict household tools used by men in cases of domestic abuse that are indicated in criminal investigation documents. Video by Natalia Nikulenkova focuses on the changes in the labor code of Ukraine that shifts from the list of the typically "male" professions during economic recession. Nika Dubrovsky focuses on divorced females in ex-DDR, whose pension is proportionally lower even after the unification of Germany. Sonia Kazovsky's project "Power Play: Fighting For Dead and Non-existent Spirits" is a play and a performance of cultural and sexual domination in art history. Filmmaker Masha Godovannaya addresses transformations of the institution of family from the perspective of queer theory. In her video performance and drawings Alevtina Kakhidze reflects upon reproductive legislation and technologies, social expectations, failures and social "duty" of a woman. Sarah Browne and Jesse Jones explore Irish statehood from the perspective of the female body and question illegalities of reproductive rights for women through multidisciplinary platform "In the Shadow of the State". 'And All is Yet to be Done: The Grammar of Feminist Organising' is a study conducted by Petra Bauer and Rebecca Katz Thor on early feminist movements with the focus on the 20th-century Sweden. Olesya Bessmeltseva and Philipp Venghaus showcase a silenced story of a group of Soviet feminists persecuted by the government for self-publishing a magazine about female rights in the USSR.

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