

Molly Surazhsky

Miss Americhka

January 7 - February 11, 2023



Lowell Ryan Projects is pleased to present *Miss Americhka* a solo exhibition by Molly Surazhsky. *Miss Americhka* depicts modes of self-portraiture and performance art through sculpture, photography, installation, and digitally printed textile-based works that explore, critique, and satirize this uniquely polarizing time in America's political landscape. The title of the exhibition is a reference to the artist's grandmother's endearing Russian-inflected nickname for America. This will be Molly Surazhsky's first exhibition with the gallery.

In the large-scale work *Dermokratizatsiya (Shitocracy)*, 2022, Surazhsky investigates the ramifications of attempting to convert a communist regime into a democracy and America's involvement in Russian politics after the fall of the U.S.S.R. At over 10 feet in height, and comprised of digitally printed sections of satin with organza ribbons melting off the surface in the shape of the American flag, the work harkens back to the 1990s. In the upper corner of the flag, where the stars represent the fifty states, Surazhsky has inserted *TIME* magazine's July 15, 1996 cover documenting the United States' intervention in the election of Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first "democratically" elected president. Below, under the cascade of red, white, and blue ribbons, images of Russia's first McDonald's being mobbed by customers, a family photo of the artist and her family posing in front of an image of Bill Clinton displayed on a storefront in Kharkov*, Ukraine, and cartoons of the hammer and sickle are included with other images referencing the political upheaval of the era. The title of the work, *Dermokratizatsiya*, is post-Soviet Russian slang that translates as shitocracy.

Central to the exhibition is *Slava Culture War!*, 2022 a gown that is displayed on a life-size model of the artist. On view in the upstairs gallery, the over 40-foot train of the gown cascades through both of the gallery's exhibition spaces flowing into the downstairs space and hung like a tapestry from the 17-foot ceiling. The gown displays numerous references including flags from the Soviet Union, USA, Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, the Pride flag, a Blue Lives Matter flag, and the flag of the Central Intelligence Agency, amongst others. A portion of Mark Fisher's infamous essay, "Exiting the Vampire Castle" is printed onto the gown's train complete with sections that the artist highlighted. The train ends with an image of Surazhsky reenacting the infamous photoshopped image of Sarah Palin wearing an American flag bikini while hoisting a rifle. Digitally collaged throughout the gown are images of various symbols, cultural and political figures, and moments that have been disseminated and refracted through the media and internet. Depictions of a young Israeli woman wearing her army uniform, Jeff Bezos posing before his space launch, Jesus wearing a MAGA hat, Michelle Obama hugging George W. Bush, Pepe the Frog, and Dr. Evil's lair are all pulled from a never-ending bank of information to be both dissected and forgotten.

With *Freudian Slip*, 2022, Surazhsky appears in a bondage-style costume while pulling back a red curtain to reveal a plethora of social justice-informed sadomasochistic phrases looming over the original architectural model of the California Institute of the Arts as presented by Roy Disney. In this textile work, the artist has photoshopped an image of Doomer Wojak's face over Disney's and swapped the book in his hands for a copy of Sigmund Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.

**Russian is the language predominantly spoken by the Jewish Ukrainian population and diaspora of the region. Out of respect for the artist's identity and ethnic background, the English translation of the city, as based on the language of her origin and spoken in her family's home, is used in this text.*



Molly Surazhsky
The Storm Has Arrived
2022
Digital print on vinyl
96h x 156w inches
MS-013 (edition of 2, 1 AP)





Molly Surazhsky
Dermokratizatsiya (Shitocracy)
2022
Digital print on duchess satin, poly organza,
cotton thread, leather, wood, and nails
135h x 117w x 62d inches
MS-002

Molly Surazhsky
Dermokratizatsiya (Shitocracy) (detail), 2022





Molly Surazhsky
*Capitalism Pits the Working Class
Against Itself; Ey! Hoh! Gabagool!*
2022
C-print, and white clips
45h x 30w inches
(edition of 7, 2 AP)
MS-008





Molly Surazhsky
I ♥ American Boys

2022

Digital print on duchess satin, cotton thread, and nails
129h x 90w x 25d inches

MS-003





Molly Surazhsky
Lifting the Iron Curtain
2022

Digital print on duchess satin, chiffon, cotton thread,
leather, wood, and nails
152h x 105w x 58d inches-
MS-001



Molly Surazhsky
Lifting the Iron Curtain (detail), 2022



Molly Surazhsky
Miss Americhka
2022
Archival pigment print and
white clips
80h x 53w inches
(edition of 3, 2 AP)
MS-007





Molly Surazhsky

Not Very Kosher

2022

Custom dresses (duchess satin, organza, and elastic bands),

foam Statue of Liberty crown, garment rack, hangers

70h x 43w x 12d inches

MS-005



Molly Surazhsky
Not Very Kosher (alternative view), 2022



Molly Surazhsky
Slava Culture War! (detail), 2022



Molly Surazhsky

Freudian Slip

2022

Digital print on duchess satin, cotton thread, and nails

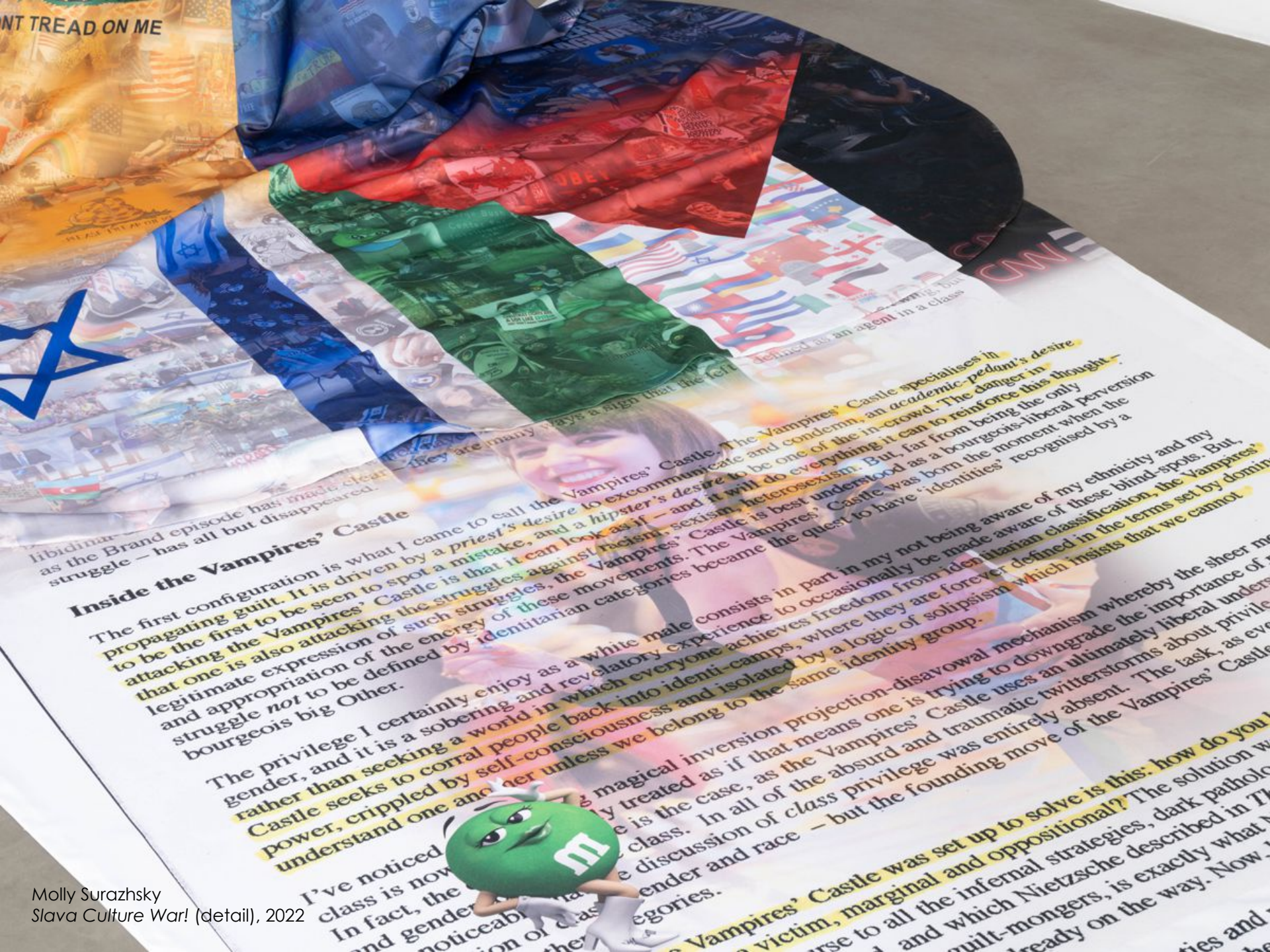
102h x 147w x 31d inches

MS-004

Abuse your
Please power on
Appropriate me, me!
baby I've been a bad
heteronormative girl,
censor Dismantle my
me baby Normalize your
Please diversify me! power structures
Decolonize me, on me!
daddy Cancel me
Critique me harder, de
At home your, gesamtku



NT TREAD ON ME



libidinal
as the Brand episode has made clear
struggle – has all but disappeared.

Inside the Vampires' Castle

The first configuration is what I came to call the Vampires' Castle. The Vampires' Castle specialises in propagating guilt. It is driven by a priest's desire to excommunicate and condemn, an academic pedant's desire to be the first to be seen to spot a mistake, and a hipster's desire to be one of the in-crowd. The danger in attacking the Vampires' Castle is that it can look as if – and it will do everything it can to reinforce this thought – that one is also attacking the struggles against racism, sexism, heterosexism. But, far from being the only legitimate expression of such struggles, the Vampires' Castle is best understood as a bourgeois-liberal perversion and appropriation of the energy of these movements. The Vampires' Castle was born the moment when the struggle not to be defined by identity categories became the quest to have 'identities' recognised by a bourgeois big Other.

The privilege I certainly enjoy as a white male consists in part in my not being aware of my ethnicity and my gender, and it is a sobering and revelatory experience to occasionally be made aware of these blind-spots. But, rather than seeking a world in which everyone achieves freedom from identity categories, the Vampires' Castle seeks to corral people back into identity camps, where they are forever defined in the terms set by dominant power, crippled by self-consciousness and isolated by a logic of solipsism which insists that we cannot understand one another unless we belong to the same identity group.

I've noticed that the Vampires' Castle is the case, as the Vampires' Castle uses an ultimately liberal understanding of class is the case, as the Vampires' Castle uses an ultimately liberal understanding of the importance of race, gender and class. In all of the absurd and traumatic twitterstorms about privilege and the discussion of class privilege was entirely absent. The task, as ever, is to understand the Vampires' Castle as a victim, marginal and oppositional? The solution was set up to solve is this: how do you reverse to all the infernal strategies, dark pathologies and which Nietzsche described in The Genealogy of Morals, is exactly what I'm ready on the way. Now I'm ready on the way. Now I'm ready on the way.

Molly Surazshky
Slava Culture War! (detail), 2022



Molly Surazhsky
Slava Culture War!
2022

Dress: digital print on duchess satin, polyester, poly crystal organza, cotton thread, and sunflower petals from Ukraine
Mannequin: fiberglass, plaster, wig, costume jewelry, and acrylic paint
71h x 80w x 500d inches
MS-006





Molly Surazhsky
Fear and Loathing in Atlantic City
2022
C-print, and white clips
40h x 27w inches
(edition of 7, 2 AP)
MS-009





Molly Surazhsky

Don't Work

2022

C-print

7 1/2h x 132w inches (12 prints each 7 1/2h x 11w inches)

(edition of 3, 1 AP)

MS-012



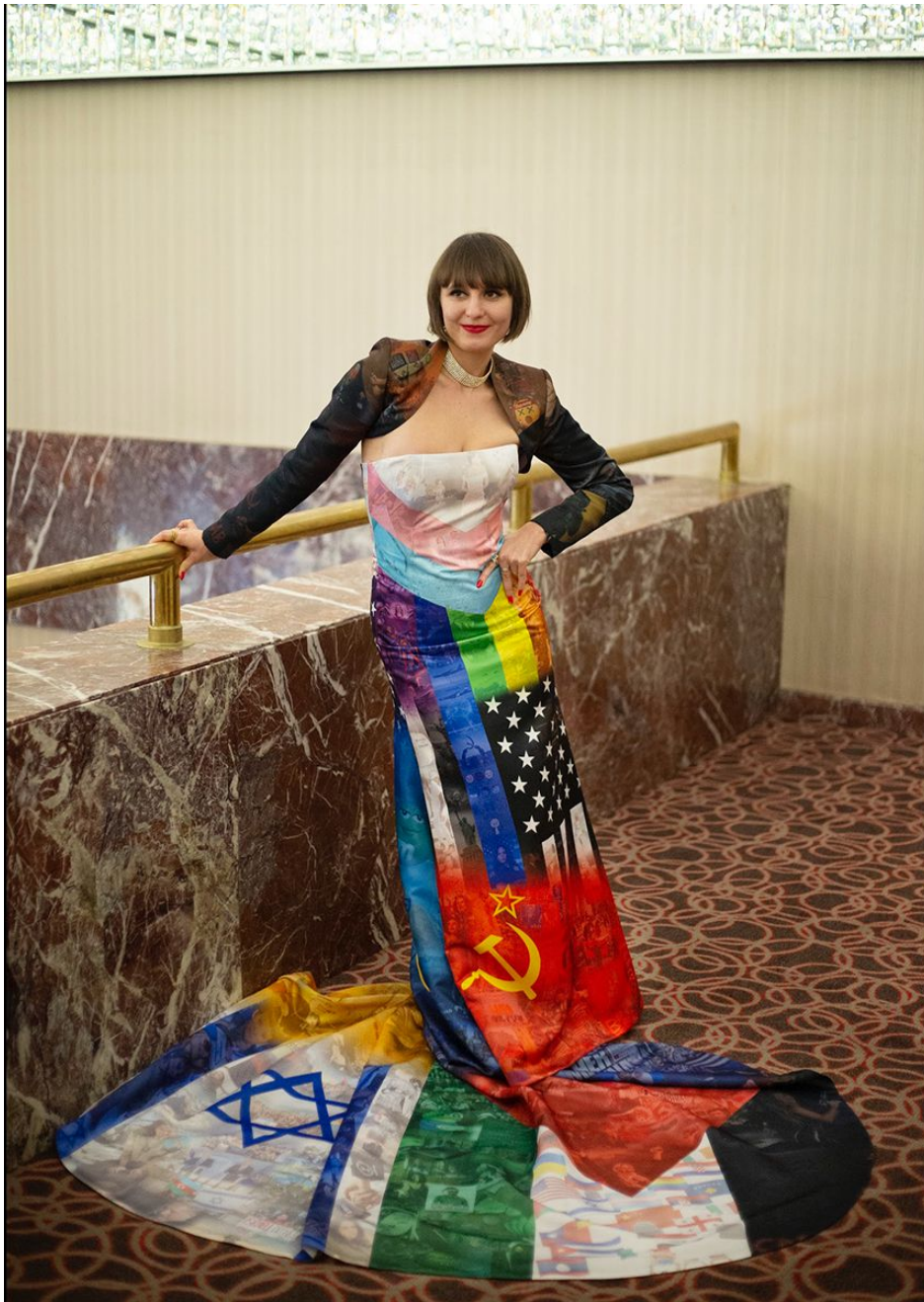
Molly Surazhsky
Don't Work (detail), 2022





Molly Surazhsky
Croupier Realism
2022
C-print, and white clips
16h x 24w inches
(edition of 12, 2 AP)
MS-010

Molly Surazhsky
Caesar's Zombie Palace
2022
C-print, and white clips
16h x 24w inches
(edition of 12, 2 AP)
MS-011



Molly Surazhsky (b. Queens, NY, 1992) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Los Angeles, CA. A child of Ukrainian émigrés, Molly Surazhsky's practice is tinged with an inherited post-Soviet cynicism and humor. This underlying attitude emerges in her ongoing studies of the corporatization of working-class lives, a critique of America's role in international affairs with Russia and the countries in the former U.S.S.R., an acknowledgment of the realities between two opposing political philosophies, capitalism and socialism, and the outcomes when a lack of balance between the two is employed on an economic, social and psychological level. Utilizing sculpture, sound, photography, textile design, and handmade garments, Surazhsky articulates detailed narratives involving themes of hypocrisy, propaganda, class, healthcare, and survival.

Surazhsky received a BFA from California Institute for the Arts, Valencia, CA (2019) and attended Mountain School of the Arts in Los Angeles, CA (2017). Recent exhibitions include *Cantos of the Sibylline Sisterhood*, ArtCenter, Pasadena, CA (2022); *The Medium is the Message: Flags and Banners*, The Wende Museum, Culver City, CA (2022); *PPE • People's Power Enhancement* (solo exhibition), Hunter Shaw Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Mashacare: Home of the Freaks, Misfits & Weirdoes* (solo exhibition), Hunter Shaw Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA (2019); *CO/LAB III*, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA (2018); and *El Acercamiento*, Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Havana, CU (2017). Molly Surazhsky's work has been discussed in publications including *Hyperallergic*, *LA Weekly*, *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*, and *KCRW*.

Molly Surazhsky in Atlantic City, NJ, 2022 wearing *Slava Culture War!*, 2022



Molly Surazhsky
Miss Americhka (detail), 2022

*Images by Yubo Dong.
Courtesy of Molly Surazhsky
and Lowell Ryan Projects.*