AUTUMNAL

#2 Transformation vol.1

15/01/27-17/01/27

Artist: Olga Twighlight

RL: I like the background of your call!

(Olga's screen has the word 'transformation' in white font over a black backdrop as her zoom background)

OT: This spring in Belgrade, where I currently live, I presented an immersive video installation, the picture on my background is from this. The video of this installation will be a part of the exhibition at the hARTslane space. I will be showing at your gallery "Transformation vol.1" - the first series of the planned Transformation cycle. The exhibition brings together three video projections, each showing a different stage of transformation. One takes us back to our very beginnings, another explores how fluid human identity can be, and the third looks at the birth of a new form of life. Each video has its own sound, and visitors can watch them in any order they like. This way, everyone can create their own journey through the process of transformation.

OT: Somehow they are all connected to each other, but every viewer will choose which video will be the first one they watch. I want every visitor to find their own answer to the question: Can personal experience and individual transformation influence transformation on a global scale? And if so, how? Or could it be the other way around?

RL: How long are the films?

OT: They are short videos, looped, 3-5 minutes long each.

OT: Each video has a separate name. The first video (I will call it the first, but you may choose which one) is called “Transformation of Light”. It’s a video of my audio-visual installation from Belgrade but I’ve edited and changed it a little bit for the exhibition at hARTslane. While watching the viewer may explore video which is reflected in a small vessel of water. The video is accompanied by my own original text.

OT: It is a very personal film. I explored my feelings of 4 years of immigration, losing my past life, and getting to the point of this dark well where I’m showing the video.

OT: The viewer gets in the deep well and hears nothing, but it is the feeling of like when you are dead and new life hasn’t begun yet, you are in the point when something is transforming.



Transformation, (2016), Olga Twighlight, screenshot from the video

OT: Water is the connecting symbol in all my video series. Water is a substance which can give life, and get life. The light from the projector could give some imitation of this light coming out of the dark. While it may not be possible to achieve total darkness in your gallery, we will do our best to make the space as dark as possible—this is necessary to maintain the desired atmosphere.

OT: It was cold in Serbia when I showed it, which made it more immersive.

MM: Did you work collaboratively on this piece?

OT: “Transformation of Light” has my voice and sound, there are no other voice actors. It is my deeply personal experience, and I wanted to read it by myself.

OT: While filming these three videos, I collaborated with Dorian, a transgender actor and model (who appears in the video Transformation with the fish), and Eduarda Puris, a dance performer (who appears in Transformation – The Birth with the blue egg). I also worked with my long-time collaborator, director of photography Pavel Smirnov. He was DoP of my “Transformation” video with the sea shore and the fish. I filmed all the other videos myself.

OT: The video “Transformation” stars an androgynous character, so we don’t know if it is a boy or a girl and it doesn’t matter because we see that this person is in the process of transformation, while this person is bandaged with fishes.



Transformation, The Birth, (2026), Olga Twighlight, photo by Olga Twighlight

MM: Do you use music in your films? As well as natural sounds?

OT: I always use music in my films. Music is often where my ideas begin. Sometimes a sound or a particular rhythm gives me the first image of a new work. I experiment with different ways of creating sound, from working with composers and sound designers to using digital and AI-assisted tools. What matters to me is how sound and image come together to create a particular emotional state.

OT: In the third video, featuring a blue egg (‘The Birth’), there is a ritual-like dance performed by a Female Creator — a composite figure combining two goddesses, Demeter and Eurynome. Through her magical dance, she creates a new form of life: the blue egg. The music has a dark, ritualistic rhythm.

RL: How planned are these videos? Do you improvise when you are putting it together or do you plan frame by frame?

OT: Each video is different. With *Transformation of Light*, it was a pure moment of emotion.

OT: With this ritual dance and blue egg, it was pure insight. It’s my most recent work and it’s on its final stage at the cutting line now and the premiere will be at the gallery.

OT: I filmed it this Autumn in Serbia. I was in suburbia somewhere with huge fields in the last rays of the sun falling on the fields. I just saw it as the end of something which should turn then into the beginning of something. Like in ancient Egypt, every evening was the death of the sun, and the morning was the rebirth of the sun.

OT: This idea came to me, and one of my friends who dances came to my mind. I called her the next day, and I told her ‘We will go to the fields and I will film you’.

OT: She asks: ‘What are we going to film?’ And I said “I don’t know yet, I’ll just see the image”. The core image and the main idea came to my mind, with this blue egg. And then we came to the fields and a story came to me.

RL: She was dancing, did you tell her what to do?

OT: I just told her, dance some dark gothic dance that will awaken some forces and make a new kind of life. She said, ‘Okay I will try,’

OT: Music is always a huge inspiration for me, it always gives me stories. I said, ‘Choose some music to dance to’ and she just chose some music from her iPhone.

OT: It was great! It was exactly what I had in mind — so hypnotic and atmospheric! And she did it. It was perfect. I hope you will enjoy the video.

RL: How long do they take to make?

OT: I had just one day to prepare for the filming, then one day of filming. Now I'm really enjoying the video editing process.



Olga Twighlight, photo by Pavel "Hjorvind" Kurmilev

RL: Is there anything specific that has inspired your way of filming or inspired you throughout the ages?

OT: My work is all about intuition, about liminal states, states of in-between, alternative realities, imagination and dreams. David Lynch is a big inspiration.

OT: Also, Alejandro Jodorowski, I really love his vision, especially on immigration. I watched two of his films about his childhood in migration, when he came with the family from Ukraine to Chile, to another country with a socialist regime. He showed it in his movies as a very painful experience.

OT: He was an artist and a poet; he couldn’t exist in these circles of how his father taught him to live. I like how he shows this period of transformation in such surrealistic and poetic forms, I really admire his work.

OT: Matthew Barney’s ‘The Cremaster Cycle’ is another major inspiration for my work, especially for its surreal visual language and its exploration of transformation and metamorphosis.

MM: Like applying something so surreal to something so real as displacement is really powerful.

OT: For my show in January, I have an idea to put a small vessel of water with a blue egg. First what the viewers will see when they enter the gallery will be dark water reflecting an egg. The egg and water are an unclear symbol of nothing and everything. It’s the beginning and the ending, the beginning of transformation or it’s a frozen egg from ancient times, we don’t know.

MM: Do you have plans for your opening night?

OT: I have huge plans! It’s my first exhibition in London, sure I have huge plans. On the 2nd and 3rd days I plan to pair my exhibition with some filming.

OT: I decided to make the 2nd and 3rd day special for my next project, ‘Meet your shadow”. I started this project in Serbia this year and it’s where I plan to make an audiovisual art research project. Partly, a series of interviews, but not interviews with humans, interviews with shadows!

OT: If you'd like to take part in the filming for my work ‘Meet Your Shadow’, I'll be filming at the gallery on 16 and 17 January. Everyone is welcome — just DM or email me in advance to arrange your visit!

OT: The shadow reflects my experience of my migration. It’s an immortal theme for artists! The shadow is not only mythological but also a social part of each of us. Sometimes we are a person and sometimes we are the shadow of what we are.

OT: Personal transformation is the main point of my interest. My wife is a coach, and she also will lead one evening together with me. On the 2d day of the exhibition (16/01) we plan Art Transformation — a group Practice (with Ekaterina Stetsiuk, Coach & Producer), and I will do an artist talk on metamorphosis and transformation and have conversations with people about this.

MM: Great to have live collaboration going on.

OT: ‘Meet your shadow’ came about when I became part of an art laboratory here, in Belgrade, which was dedicated to light and shadow. My part in the exhibition was interactive, where every viewer could communicate with his or her shadow. We also filmed whoever agreed to it.

OT: The piece was supported by my personal text through headphones. When people listened they saw a projection of the dark side of the moon. The text would say ‘Would you like to say hello to your shadow?’

OT: It was interesting, many people communicated with this part of themselves. It was very nice to watch how it was. When people communicated with their shadow they changed, shy people became very expressive. It was very interesting to explore. I want to make more of this.

RL: I think you’ll enjoy the natural light in hARTslane. It’s an old building and the light appears in flickers.

OT: I think we will make a good show together!

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Interviewed on: 04/11/26

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