

Jelena Damnjanović

Centre for Fine Arts Education, "Šumatovačka", Belgrade, Serbia

The Woman's Letter

Author Jelena Damnjanović's artistic opus, *The Woman's Letter*, mainly consists of works on paper: drawings and graphics. Drawings presented in this portfolio were created in the last four years of artistic creativity with the help of combined techniques of drawing material. The pieces present women's undergarments (corsets, jumpsuits, underwear) on prevalingly middle and larger-dimension formats. *Women's underwear in the artist's works* opens intimate spaces and experience of femininity, which before an observer's eye appears as research, reappraisal and communication fields. Female clothing takes special place in the author's work precisely because of its firm existential connectivity with body, which apart from its ancient role of body covering in order to protect it from the outer environmental factors also has distinctly magical function. In terms of the growth of clothing's significance in the evolution of society, the author is enticed by the high modern aesthetics of female garments in which she finds difference between beautiful and beautified object of which nature Friedrich Schiller wrote much in his letters "*On the Aesthetic Education of Man*". Female clothing commands a special place in her artistic work for it builds a firm existential connection with the body, the one that can be deciphered in respect of the fact that through out history the body has always been symbolically marked for "the attempt of transcendental spiritualization". A garment lives with a body; a body is warm, clothing on a body is warm. "Body and clothing have a long history of function and meaning alterations as well as the changes of forms in pursuit of expressing the personal, class-caste,gender, national and cultural identity and these changes raise question of the relationship between tradition and industry, aesthetics and commercialization , uniformity and individuality, autonomy of taste and heteronomy of kitsch."¹

Women's underwear exactly presents beautified intimate objects; the gentle drawing of a frill and silken bordures; transparent tulle and designed fabrics. The author's illustrations of women's underwear is read as a female letter inscription of the text into the body which calls for the new possibilities of reading and representation of femininity. In exhibited performances women's underwear is in slightly impaired forms, threadbare and worn out, absorbed and blended with the body which carries it and wants it, the female body in which the impermanent impulse of ideal of beauty

¹ Dragan Žunić, *Tradicionalna estetska kultura – telo i odevanje* (Niš: Centar za naučna istraživanja SANU i Univerziteta u Nišu, 2009), 13–14.

and sensuality is carved on. In the coloring of warm skin and the azure sky, corsets and the rest of utilitarian objects represent sophisticated fragments of gentleness that aim towards establishment of closeness between the author and an observer. The spectacles that open up before an observer cause sweetness and the mere pleasure that pops and blooms towards the quest for the intimate, that can be viewed from a wider perspective, and in the contemporary context of living in a society in which intimacy is increasingly contracted until it lightly vanishes, under the public scrutiny of social networks and virtual communication. Damnjanović's artistic works call for the new possibilities for reading and communication, through which the author explores in the field of representation of female body in which she breathes, reveals, writes and hands down for further readings.



Corset, drawing, 35x50cm, 2017



Body Lingerie
drawing, 25x35 cm,
Jelena Damnjanović
2015

Body Lingerie, drawing, 25x35 cm, 2015



Lingerie
drawing, 35x50 cm,
Jelena Damnjanović
2016

Lingerie, drawing, 35x50 cm, 2016



Corset, drawing,
50x70 cm, 2014,
Jelena Damnjanović

Corset, drawing, 50x70 cm, 2014



Corset, drawing,
50x70 cm, 2014,
Jelena Damnjanović

Corset, drawing, 50x70 cm, 2014



*Body Lingerie, drawing,
35x50 cm,
2015.*

Body Lingerie, drawing, 35x50 cm, 2015



*Lingerie, drawing,
100x70 cm, 2014,
Jelena Damnjanović*

Lingerie, drawing, 100x70 cm, 2014

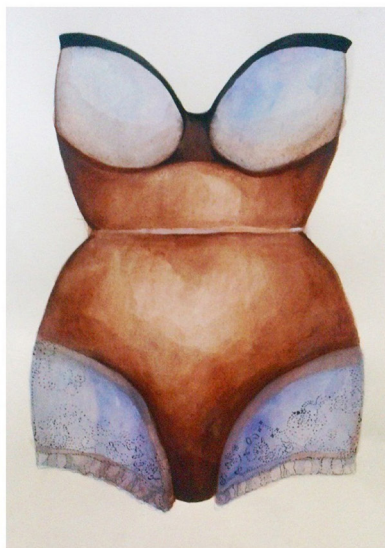


*Geometric Bra
drawing, 25x35 cm,
2015,
Jelena Damnjanovic*

Geometric Bra, drawing, 25x35, 2015; Bra Top, drawing, 40x40 cm; 2017



*Bra Top
drawing, 40x40 cm,
2017.*



*Corsets, drawings,
35x50 cm, 2012,
Jelena Damnjanović*

Corsets, drawings, 30x50 cm, 2012



*Corset, drawing,
35x50 cm, 2012,
Jelena Damnjanović*



*Female Underwear, drawing,
35x50 cm, 2012,
Jelena Damnjanović*

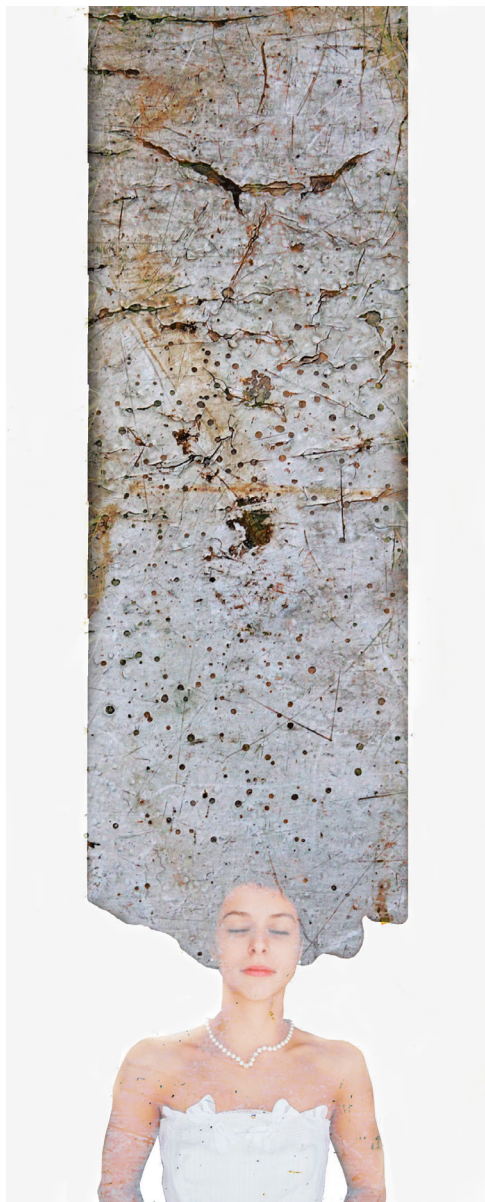
Corset, drawing, 35x50, 2012; Female Underwear, drawing, 35x50 cm, 2012



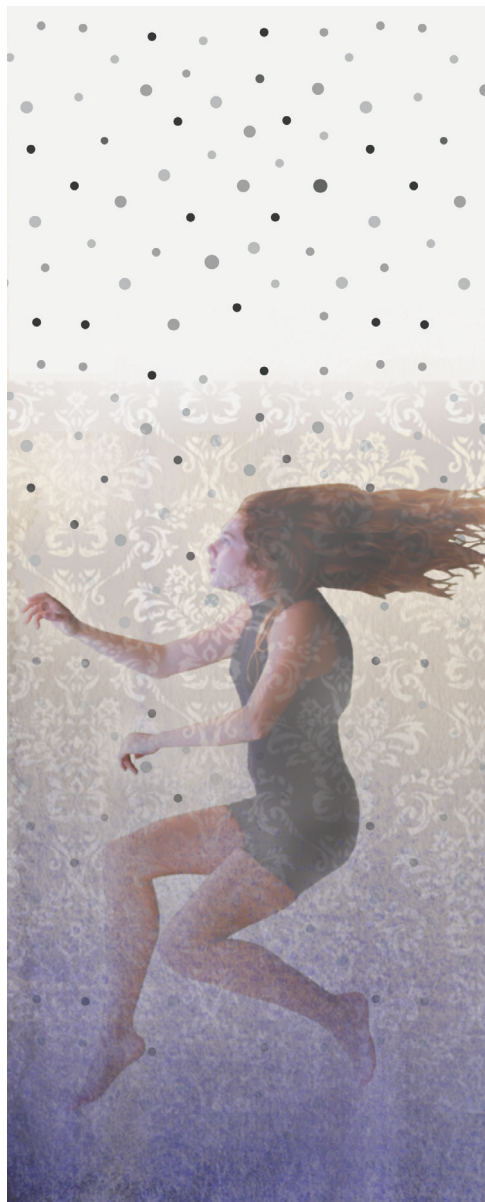
Longing, digital print, 30x30cm, 2016



Nylon Stockings, litography, 35x35 cm, 2012



Sleepy girl, digital print, 47x34cm, 2016



Watery dreams, digital print, 47x34cm, 2016