

# The politics of protest art cultural studies essay



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Introduction This dissertation seeks to explore the issues surrounding the recent Pussy Riot trials in Russia. In order to undertake this exploration it will examine; the Pussy Riot trials and how they affected Russian politics and human rights; the history of art in Russia and other influential political art collectives and the use of religious iconography. The history of Feminist performance and how it paved the way for young girls to create ways of making their voices heard and points made through the power of being female; touching on the 90's Riot Grrrl movement. Sources related closely to Pussy Riot will be taken online and from newspaper articles as information on the subject is still fresh in people's minds and not yet in book form. As today in Syria or North Korea, public places were controlled, propaganda was sweeping and terror was extensive. However even in a society engrossed by fear, young individuals now create new ways to convey their restlessness, as they have in recently in the North Africa, Ukraine and the Arab world. Just like the numerous political prisoners in Russia at present, they have also learned how to use social networking along with popular culture to their advantage with websites such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter, introduced by Western societies, as instruments of defiance against the communist government and making once silent voices heard.

Chapter 1 The history and culture of Russia An understanding of the Pussy Riot Trial is inseparable from an understanding of Russian history. In particular its art has long been associated with how the nation understands itself. At one time, reflecting the glory of the czars, at another the power of Russian Orthodox Christianity, at another the emergence of modernist ideas and then a reflection of socialism under Communist ideals. Mankind has always been eager to be the strongest, largest, most powerful, fundamentally the finest in everything.

This statement is clear for Russia who is deemed the largest country in the world, although not the most powerful but one with a history of control within the nation. (James Rogers, Luis Simón, 2011) Russia manages to cover one sixth of the whole globe's land mass and has played a significant role in modern history (Alpha History). Although, in order to comprehend how a country has developed into what it is now, one must reflect at its society. A country's society reflects not only its people but also its expectations of the future and history. Many things reflect Russia's varied culture and two of the main factors are of art and the church (The Economist, 2010). Like numerous other countries, religion has definitely played an immense role in the structure of Russian society and its values towards success (Arthur Voyce, 1995). Their main place of worship is known as the Russian Orthodox Church, this holy place being around one thousand years old and in the region of half of the country's population belonging to it. This being said, the vast majority of Orthodox believers do not attend church on a regular basis (Marsh, C. 2005). Russians have also turned to various new beliefs, parties, and religious denominations. However, the Russian Orthodox Church is very much valued amongst advocates and agnostics, who see it as an icon of Russian tradition, heritage and culture. Open out the icon as the image at the core of this. Then explain how even with totally new revolutionary ideas about art, artists were still relating what they did to the icon tradition, because it was so ingrained in their history. Explain the new relationship of the artist to the state and make sure you pick out the difference between artist as individual genius (the capitalist west) and artist in service to the state, (communism). At the beginning of the 20th century in Russia, during the civil war, the innovative government largely used the arts as a means of

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advertising its ideas and aims. One of the most significant types of Russian propaganda art of that time was the influential political advertisement/poster. It is through this choice of medium and with the power of mass media in which the government called on the Russian nation to learn to read, write, lend a hand those less fortunate or in need and making it a proud and immensely successful nation, fighting for apparent freedom and justice and having passionate adoration towards their country. Soviet posters began to first appear in Russia during the Proletarian Revolution and so bringing Communist Party's slogans to the masses. A number of posters would be hand drawn; producing the posters this way would give these artists independence from the press and thus making it possible to react straight away to the most current issues as rapidly as possible. This way of producing has become an important attribute of Russian propaganda art. The posters themselves had individual characteristics: vibrant colours, clear lines with lack of small details and bold shapes, additional strength. One unconventional example of Russian propaganda art had brought around a unique phenomenon in Russian art of the early 20th century; agitation porcelain which proclaimed the ideas and ideals of the revolution and was an important propaganda weapon for the new rulers. Agitation porcelain was produced by artists such as Kazimir Malevich and Nikolai Suetin in dreary conditions, from time to time in starvation, under the management of Sergey Chekhonin. In 1923–24, they designed their globally- famous Suprematist works, which included classics of design history; Malevich's white teapot and the half-cup. Agitation porcelain immediately became enthusiastically wanted and sought after by international art collectors. However it didn't become used by the masses or art for the people. Instead of ordinary floral

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and idyllic subjects these porcelain objects embellished with symbols of the Soviet Republic. With designs such as the hammer and sickle, and slogans such as " Кто не работает, тот не ест"—" Those who don't work don't eat". - <http://learnrussian.rt.com/speak-russian/russian-propaganda-art>In the present day Soviet agitation porcelain, demonstrating Russian propaganda art; are now admired items in collections of museums not only in Russia but also overseas as well as private collections. Russian Constructivism was an influential movement that began actively producing work from the turn of the century through to the 1940s. It was formed by the Russian avant-garde, but rapidly influenced the rest of the continent. Constructivism is noted for commitment to total abstraction and a loyal recognition of modernity, where the themes were frequently geometric, use of experimentation and seldom emotional. Constructivist subjects were also reasonably minimal, where the piece is broken down to its most fundamental components. (Owen Hatherley, 4 November 2012)Finally detail Socialist Realism. Artists as propaganda machine for the state. This set of background issues supports the fact that artists have long been seen in Russia as people that should support the ruling party view and that their job is to visualise the prevailing ideas of the state. This is one of the reasons why there was such a reaction to what went on .... Chapter twoThe Rise of Feminism within the Communist movementOctober of 1917 was a breakthrough in the ' freedom of women'. For the first time the complete economic, political and sexual equality of women was put on the historic agenda. The Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky envisaged that with the development of industry and a planned nationalised economy, women would be given the opportunity to work outside of the home and, with the establishment of political democracy at all <https://assignbuster.com/the-politics-of-protest-art-cultural-studies-essay/>

levels, would be able to play a full role in all spheres of political and social life. - Women in the Soviet Union 1998 Pre-Communist Russia saw the initial stirrings of a feminist consciousness. The 'revolution' of the Soviet political system may have been established in 1917 but from the early nineteenth century up to that point, tsarist Russia had witnessed the development of many women's groups and movements. The movements were diverse in the run up to 1917 varying in directions, from women studying medicine, to women terrorists (Amy Knight, *Female Terrorists in the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party*, 1979). Intellectual women who tried to escape the stigma of set the wife and mother roles to revolutionaries that attempted to change society all in which were created with the idea that change was the future, that of which nations still fight for today, even Russia. Movements like Marxist groups that came around at the end of the century wanted to alter the entire society and presumed that women would profit along with the other oppressed. (Norma C. Noonan, Carol Nechemias, 2001) This general historical overview does not however allow for an in-depth understanding of how individual women actually coped with the dramatic changes within Russian society. However for the individuals who form 'Pussy Riot' it is their identification with other women, real women who have acted on the world stage, that has helped them come to a decision as to how to act... Case studies of individual women. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyubov\\_Popova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyubov_Popova)

Between 1917 and 1918 she sketched models for proletarian furniture, decorated (with architect Aleksander Vesnin) the Mossovet (Moscow City council) building and participated in painting a mural for the club of the Left Federation of the Professional Union of Artist-painters. Look at Goncharova, Ol'ga Rozanova, Aleksandra Ekster, Nadezhda <https://assignbuster.com/the-politics-of-protest-art-cultural-studies-essay/>

Udal'tsova, Liubov'Popova, and VararaOne Western EuropeanTwo Under communismThe linking sentence at the end of the chapter that points to how PRT shows up the differences between people acting within a western understanding inside the Russian state. Social media breaks down boundaries. Chapter threeSetting out the issuesSince Pussy Riot formed they have made numerous headlines with a series of illicit guerilla performances that included performing a piece aptly named 'Revolt in Russia' on the symbolic Red Square in January 2012. Eventually they were arrested under Russia' stern illegal protest laws, but on this occasion all eight band mates were released without charge.(<http://www.vice.com/read/A-Russian-Pussy-Riot>, Henry Langston, March 2012)The recent Pussy Riot trials in Russia have highlighted the continuing need for women to challenge authority and assert their independence within Western Society. (cite) It may appear as if women have achieved much over the last fifty years, but recent statistics (cite) have shown that as a result of the economic recession it has been women who have taken the brunt of the cuts. With un-employment amongst women aged 50 to 64 has a rising of 39% in two years compared with 5% rise for all over-16s in the UK alone (McVeigh & Helm, 2012) whether it is a student, breadwinner, daughter or carer, this is the glue that holds society together, if they write off this part of society then we as a whole are lost. Females who are at risk of the cuts are most definitely not an industry or 'interest group' they are 50% of this nation. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/jul/08/recession-hits-middle-aged-women-hardest>, Tracy McVeigh and Toby Helm , The Observer, July 8 2012)In Stalinist Eastern Europe, political parties were banned and criticism of the government was dangerous. (Cite) Just as today's North Korea or Assad's Syria, public spaces <https://assignbuster.com/the-politics-of-protest-art-cultural-studies-essay/>

were forced, propaganda was across the board and fear was extensive. Yet even in a civilization engrossed by fear, young individuals created ways to communicate their discontent, as they have recently in the Arab world and North Africa. Much like the young women of Pussy Riot in Russia, they too have also learned how the use of pop culture and the ever growing power of social media sites can be used as a means of resistance against the communist regimes. ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anne-applebaum/iron-curtain-stalin-eastern-europe\\_b\\_2167632.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anne-applebaum/iron-curtain-stalin-eastern-europe_b_2167632.html), Anne Applebaum, November 21 2012) Modern Communism was thought up and developed by a man named Karl Marx who was the brains behind creating Marxism and this is what communism, as we know it today was based upon. Karl Marx created this philosophy in the 1840s and the first communist party to come to authority was the Bolshevik Party, which gained control of Russia and created the Soviet Union. This happened in the early 20th century and so from this we can establish that communism has been around from 1910s-20s through to present day. This was when the art movement Socialist Realism was created and then, in later years, used by the communist governments to create an alliance of the people within the country. This realistic art was also used to romanticize the truth and to glorify the roles that the working class societies were playing within the country; this was to make the people feel they were personally involved with the sustained existence of the country. Communism has long been connected with Russia. Even as this country rose to a democracy, suggestions of Russia's socialist past still linger over this supposed 'forward thinking' country. Pussy Riot had made global headlines with their taped performances in controversial locations.

Yekaterina Samutsevich, 30, Maria Alyokhina, 24, and Nadezhda

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Tolokonnikova, 22, were found guilty of "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" due to the staged performance in February 2012 rallying against president Putin ahead of the country's elections in March. Pussy Riot are a feminist performance group formed of friends that embraced similar principles at anti-Putin rallies in Moscow, forming a revolution based around "punk ethics and political activism". The identities of the collective's members are hidden from the public; wear eye catching bright, colourful attire and balaclavas to their protests and events, inviting other members of the public who share the same ideals to join, disguised as well. When asked about the chosen name of the group one member named Garadzha stated; "A female sex organ, which is supposed to be receiving and shapeless, suddenly starts a radical rebellion against the cultural order, which tries to constantly define it and show its appropriate place. Sexists have certain ideas on how a woman should behave and Putin, by the way, also has got a couple thoughts on how Russians should live. Fighting against all that - that's Pussy Riot." (<http://www.vice.com/read/A-Russian-Pussy-Riot>, Henry Langston, March 2012) On February 21st, the group crossed the threshold of the altar and began singing and dancing in front of tourists and clergy at Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. They delivered approximately forty seconds of the "Punk Prayer"; "Mother of God, put Putin away" asking the Virgin Mary to drive out Russian president Vladimir Putin from the church, before being removed by security guards. Pussy Riot assured their performance in Moscow's main cathedral was not to be an anti-church demonstration, and was entirely based on criticizing President Vladimir Putin. Some see the song itself as 'Punk poetry' whilst others describe it as blasphemous. But the fact of the matter is Pussy Riot live, vote, pay their taxes in a country in which

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the Russian Orthodox Church and its deep links in structures of power have had a colossal control over their lives, politically and culturally. During the 20th century, the bodies of artists, and the public alike, were beginning to be commonly used more and more as both the entity and the subject matter, the piece itself. Bound, beaten, unclothed etc:" The body is presented in all possible guises, as the artist quite literally lives his or her art either publicly, in performances or privately, in video and photography" (Yayoi Kusama: Performing the body, Bree Richards, <http://interactive.qag.qld.gov.au/looknowseeforever/essays/performing-the-body/>) This abiding tradition of self portraiture had began to take a distinct left turn, and the influential performance artists were at pole position of this defiant movement to take art outside of the galleries and into the unconventional media, and in some cases controversial spaces -- much like Pussy Riot today, it's clear to see that performance art would have played a distinct role in their political piece. The ties between art and life itself would then be worn away, as were the ties between somewhat sensual and visual experiences amongst viewers. By establishing narratives of real life situations, their own experiences within the perspective of performance, the artists point out the extent in to which history, gender, and self are all socially assembled performances and are the leading focus to the influences of power. Before Pussy Riot, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Yekaterina Samutsevich were members of a collective named Voina (meaning War). Voina is a made up of a controversial group of Russian actionist artists that engage in radical street protest actions; Political protest art. The collective have protested against the somewhat total elimination of freedom of speech, against the violation of human rights, and against the complete liquidation of democracy that has taken place in Russia <https://assignbuster.com/the-politics-of-protest-art-cultural-studies-essay/>

in current years. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voina>)The popularity of politically engaged art tends to surge and decline, depending, of course on the current socio-political and economic climates. Commodity artists and activist artists coexist." We had sex in public and this doesn't frighten us anymore, we invaded a police station and this doesn't frighten us anymore. What more is there that can scare us? We will deal with death in the future. Soon we will be completely fearless." (<http://en.free-voina.org/>, 2012)To this day, over 200 activists have participated in Voina's artistic protest actions and at least 20 criminal investigations into the group's activities have been initiated (Free-voina.org). On Voina, curator Artur Żmijewski had said (to [gazeta.ru](http://gazeta.ru)), "The art group participates directly in politics, something no other group in Europe does. They are absolutely unique. Their actions test the durability of democracy. Their fame is linked to the fact that their actions reflect the Russian political process, the process itself is split in two: partly European yet wildly different." And has also written "The Voina group are the last of the righteous, who speak to us of how things should be, so that they may once again come true." ([http://en.gazeta.ru/news/2011/12/01/a\\_3854066.shtml](http://en.gazeta.ru/news/2011/12/01/a_3854066.shtml), Alexei Krizhevsky, Igor Karev, edited by Robert Gally, 2011)[http://24.media.tumblr.com/tumblr\\_mbh6yrMGFG1qgejhto1\\_500.jpg](http://24.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_mbh6yrMGFG1qgejhto1_500.jpg)

**A VOINA political activist in half a police uniform and half Orthodox priest's cassock accompanied by an enormous crucifix, stole from a high class supermarket in Moscow. Accompanied by the group, Mentopop walked out carrying and without paying; Five large bags with fine foods and elite alcohol. The crime was committed with the intention of showing impunity enjoyed by priests and cops in today's Russia. (<http://www.viddler.com/v/f7f0f529>, Jul 20, 2008)**

**Femen, a controversial Ukrainian feminist group have gained much interest due to their scrupulous attitude of self-proclaimed sextremism, which has become infamous for organising naked protests. Some of the prominent examples of their work are the topless protests at the 2012 Olympics in London, in hostility towards " bloody Islamist regimes" or the cutting down of a crucifix in Kiev, in support for fellow feminists, Pussy Riot just as a Moscow court was due to deliver its verdict in the case. ([http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ioannis-toutountzis/lets-all-get-naked-femen-and-muslim-women\\_b\\_2345696.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ioannis-toutountzis/lets-all-get-naked-femen-and-muslim-women_b_2345696.html), Ioannis Toutountzis, December 21 2012)<http://i.ytimg.com/vi/GXWmhQ1ZiMA/0.jpg>**

**This goal of feminism expressed by Femen and their strategies are indicative of the idea that " Western ways" of thinking are in some way essentially legitimate and greater. Their feminism however, is not a cultural paradigm that can be applied to all.**

**[http://24.media.tumblr.com/0f85a32f234ced3b9e323f5ffc7262b2/tumblr\\_mfr4fqMwC1s1ho64o1\\_500.jpg](http://24.media.tumblr.com/0f85a32f234ced3b9e323f5ffc7262b2/tumblr_mfr4fqMwC1s1ho64o1_500.jpg)[http://25.media.tumblr.com/da34446c5d0276a4e6d2fc3f7fa9a335/tumblr\\_mfv9sltWcz1qdt31o1\\_500.jpg](http://25.media.tumblr.com/da34446c5d0276a4e6d2fc3f7fa9a335/tumblr_mfv9sltWcz1qdt31o1_500.jpg)**

## **Fuck the police! FEMEN against Putin in Brussels, December 21, 2012 — with Anna Hutsol.**

The third wave of feminism began, roughly in the early 1990's, well known by its assertion on various definitions of feminism and its capability of embracing the vast variation of females. It began predominantly with groups of young women who would be too young to partake in second wave feminist activism in the 70's and 80's. This in turn was the generation that spread the belief that any girl could create and embrace her own take on feminism. It was necessary for the feminist movement to be aware of the diversity of women with the intention of gaining further equality. Because of the cutting edge mass media in the 90's, third wave contributors were also more alarmed with the cultural depiction of women and its effects at this time. The term " third-wave" can be traced back to the mid 1980's when a group of feminist activists and academics got together to produce an, at present, unpublished collection they titled *The Third Wave: Feminist Perspectives on Racism*. <http://www4.images.coolspotters.com/photos/576620/kathleen-hanna-profile.jpg>[http://www.revalvaatio.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/gills\\_et\\_all-third\\_wave\\_feminism\\_a\\_critical\\_exploration.pdf](http://www.revalvaatio.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/gills_et_all-third_wave_feminism_a_critical_exploration.pdf)

Riot Grrrl has always been a force to be reckoned with; it was an underground feminist movement which was very much united with punk music, feminism, radical politics, and a DIY aesthetic. They have adopted of self-sufficiency and use their anger as a source of power (LM Brown - 1999). Riot Grrrl activism constructed meetings, the creation of zines, artwork alike and a national network of support for females performance, whether it be musically, poetically or indeed artistically. (Turner, C. 2001)The founders of Riot Grrrl were highly

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influenced by the anti-corporate, often anarchist associated DIY (do-it-yourself) values practiced by both the lo-fi music/art scene in Olympia, WA (exemplified by the work of independent local record labels K Records and Kill Rock Stars at this time) and the local punk subculture (Estenson, L. 2012)Original Riot Grrrls prepared their commitment to this philosophy clear in a section of the now renowned " Riot Grrrl Manifesto" to which they stated, " BECAUSE we hate capitalism in all its forms and see our main goal as sharing information and staying alive, instead of making profits off being cool according to traditional standards." (Hanna, K. 1991)Although many say the movement lasted until the mid nineties, others argue that it never ended. With the recognition of Sara Marcus' s book Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution, it appears that there may be various truths to that assertion. Riot Grrrl followers also glorified flesh (Isaksen, J, 1999). Using their own bodies as artwork, they become an art form themselves. Women performed with slogans such " RAPE VICTIM" and " INCEST" adorned on their stomachs, hands, and arms; and through this demonstrating practices of shock and political art and refusing to be silent. Evidently familiarised to the theory of " male gaze," Riot Grrrl members decorated their bodies with labels such as " BITCH" and " WHORE"; in marking the body this way, they are reflecting, and hoping to adjust, the opinion men already have of women. I felt that if I wrote " slut" or " whore" or " incest victim" on my stomach, then I wouldn't just be silent... a lot of guys might be thinking this anyway when they look at my picture, so this would be like holding up a mirror to what they were thinking. (" Kathleen Hanna: Bikini Kill," 100)And there are many zines, which tell the tale of the origins of the movement (Jigsaw-1988, Girl Germs-1989, Bikini Kill-1990, SNARLA; to name a few). In 1993, according to <https://assignbuster.com/the-politics-of-protest-art-cultural-studies-essay/>

a Canadian newspaper (as mentioned in *Girls to the Front*), 40, 000 zines were published in North America alone. (2010) *Bikini Kill* itself started as a zine formed by Hanna, Kathi Wilcox and Tobi Vail, at that time they were college students in upstate Washington. Their performances and zines were female orientated; they actively encouraged women to come to the front of the audience and partake in the show. This being said, the band members, in particular Hanna, had to deal with inebriated males, who wanted to take photographs of their legs, spit on them or pursue them in other ways. But as the next quote states, the power of *Riot Grrrl* managed to travel its way overseas and influence a whole new group of European followers wanting to reach out, create and thus inspire women and know that they were not alone." Why is there something odd and unnatural about women who want to try to do something with their lives? Why are women such fucking appendages in everything? Feminism isn't over, it didn't fail, but something new must happen- *Riot Grrrl*... Next time a guy feels your ass, patronises you, slags off your body- generally treats you like shit- forget the moral high ground, forget he's been instilled with patriarchy and is a victim too; forget rationale and debate. Just deck the bastard."— 1993 issue of *Leeds and Bradford Riot Grrrls* zine." We live in a generation of apathy and ignorance. We live in towns that no-one has any respect for anymore. We live lives and abide by the rules set for us, day in and day out. Media subliminally feeds us ideas of how we should be, look like, what we should think and what our tastes should be; it's bullshit and it needs to change. The Barbie dolls we see on the front of red-top newspapers and on TV are not our sisters. They aren't our friends and they are not a force to change the sexism in this world. Male-domination has well and truly taken over the media/music/films etc. We are

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not second class citizens and we have as much right to be here as men do. This is not acceptable." But when does art become music? Pussy Riot have been described as a feminist punk rock group, a punk rock collective but members. Released member of the group Yekaterina Samutsevich told Rolling Stone:" Art has become only more complicated. Now it's done internationally, and it has great political potential. An artist is a person who is constantly analysing critical thoughts, always working out an independent opinion regarding everything. That is why art gives a breath of fresh air and a different way to protest." (Yekaterina Samutsevich, Khristina Narizhnaya, October 15 2012)By this, Samutsevich is trying to raise awareness of how the internationalisation of political thinking has been integrated within art practices and why it is so refreshing to Russian artists who have historically had to work under the threat of state repression. The problem would be being stuck with a government that doesn't want to conduct standard social politics, added to the notion that as soon as an individual shows any freedom of thought, that individual must be punished right away. Pussy riot showed their freedom of thought, and from this it had created such an aggressive reaction from the government and the religious public alike. Since the jailing of Pussy Riot the Moscow City court has banned for the second time all LGBT pride events in the Russian capital, and most shockingly, for the whole of next century. As Alekseyev, a leading politician in the ... party, states." In the nearest future we will contest the authorities' actions over the 100-year ban on gay pride events in the European Court of Human Rights. Through this we will eventually achieve that the bans are recognized as unlawful, not only for the past, but for the future gay parades in the Russian capital," (WiG, AP reports, August 17 2012)This quote highlights the fact that Russian culture is

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far out of step with contemporary Western ideas of human rights. Pussy Riot's performance of the ' Punk Prayer' included a reference to the country's victimized LGBT community with the line ' Gay pride sent to Siberia in chains'. A court in Moscow has selected four videos made by Pussy Riot (or sources closely related) as extremist, the group themselves are now being described as extremists. The Zamoskvorechye District Court in the Russian capital ruled that access to all websites hosting the videos must be restricted. In relation to the court's decision, websites that do not remove the Pussy Riot videos will face severe penalties, which include fines of up to 100, 000 Rubles (around £2000). ([http://www.theaustralian.com](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/russian-court-issues-pussy-riot-video-ban/story-e6frg6so-1226527589707).

[au/news/world/russian-court-issues-pussy-riot-video-ban/story-e6frg6so-1226527589707](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/russian-court-issues-pussy-riot-video-ban/story-e6frg6so-1226527589707), AFP, November 30 2012) On June 8, 2012, Putin signed into law a measure imposing weighty fines on citizens who organize or take part in unauthorized demonstrations, giving the Russian authorities authoritative power to clamp down on the ever growing antigovernment public protests ignited by his unlawful decision that he intended to return to the presidency and re-energized by his inauguration in May. Four days afterwards, around 10, 000 protesters gathered in central Moscow in defiance of the Kremlin ban. (The New York Times, 2013) [http://www.tracyandtheplastics.com/archive/Musclers\\_press\\_lores.jpg](http://www.tracyandtheplastics.com/archive/Musclers_press_lores.jpg)

Tracy + the Plastics is the given name of the electro pop solo project of Wynne Greenwood, a lesbian feminist video artist based in Olympia, Washington she started this project with, what she describes as " myself - and myself - and myself". She played all the roles of the band -- Nikki (keyboards), Cola (drums) and Tracy (singer). Live, Nikki and Cola would be included as imagery in a projected landscape that backs her up and fills her in. Pre-recorded music would begin to play through

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speakers. She would then begin to sing live and talk to her band mates in between songs. Nikki goes on to ask Cola why she puts socks down her pants -- to look like a dick or a third dimension? Cola would then turn to Tracy and asks for her advice. " I don't put socks down my pants" declares Tracy - Cola says that she does it to look more real." There's a history, a reality created by the interaction between the self and the image of the self. - When an individual in a marginalized group talks to a recorded image of themselves it empowers the individual to open the door to the understanding and celebration that she/he/it can be deliberate. It is an interaction with a fragmented self". By fragmented, Greenwood means a consistent individuality that's constructed from different, often contradictory, elements of culture, society, and existence that we identify with because popular culture has no complete identity to offer its audience except one that resembles the ruling class. " We can come out. And then come out again. We can rearrange our world how we want it." - (<http://www.tracyandtheplastics.com/about/about.html>, Wynne Greenwood, 2001)" Defining Miranda July is like trying to define a colour" (Chang, 2000) - when faced with the sheer range of her work - single channel video, experimental audio, multimedia performance, fanzines, riot grrrl film and videotape distribution. July is a Portland, Oregon-based artist spellbound by codes, systems, and the erroneous belief of the ordinary affected by things such as education and IQ tests, also a somewhat fascination with human interactions and relationships. She's at her finest when she manages to show systems breaking down, altering, or cleared of the substance that gives them meaning. July began to catch local attention whilst still in high school in Berkeley, MI, when she created a play (The Lifers) derived from a pen pal

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relationship with a convict in the California prison who was jailed for murdering a man who had frequently stole from his petrol station. She found him through an advert for a prisoner - pen-pal type program in the back of a magazine. July went on to move to Portland, OR, and became emerged into the Riot Grrrl scene since this appeared the place to be for DIY music and art specifically targeting women with a voice, who needed an outlet. It wasn't merely the depths of the politically activated music scene, but the ideals and aesthetics of the Riot Grrrl movement, with its emphasis on female empowerment, community, sexuality and activity, which resonated with July's work. In 1996, out of this eager hotbed of creative female community arose the Big Miss Movieola project (but legal threats from the owners of the word 'Movieola' strained July to modify the name of her project to Joanie4Jackie) a creative and incessant video chain letter. Female filmmakers and performance artists alike would produce a short film. The recorded piece would then be added to a compilation tape containing ten other female artists. The tape would then be sent back to the contributor.

[http://www.moma.org/explore/inside\\_out/inside\\_out/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/mj\\_amateurist\\_web.jpg](http://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/inside_out/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/mj_amateurist_web.jpg)" You always suspected it and now you know it's true: Girls and women are making movies everyday" - Joanie4Jackie

The president fills that role as a religious icon. Inaugurated on Bibles, you don't really think of the president as a spiritual figure. Pseudo religious role. American religion is success and winning, American people looking up to various people of various roles including athletes. American religion, the religion of winning (Russell Brand, Brand X, Episode 1) Icon means a sign. We have to rely on ourselves with spiritual principles and recognize that we can only be happy

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when we recognize the divinity between all of us and the connection between all people and we can never make ourselves happy by consuming or purchasing products, that's just transitory, temporary pleasure. We nominate cultural figures, cultural icons that has a spiritual component to them because we're spiritual creatures. It's in our nature to believe.

Religious icons are just symbols to remind us to be kind to one another. Has political power but also religious component to his duty. How we live our lives is prosperity and consuming those are our actual religions.

Consumerism is fugal to central Western life. Conclusion This dissertation sought to explore the issues surrounding the recent Pussy Riot trials in Russia and in doing so also explored issues related to the politics of protest art in our contemporary society. This complex issue involves a series of quite different understandings of the role of politics, art and women in society. It has been argued that the role of feminist emancipation in Russia took a very different path to the rest of Western society. It has also been argued that the current expansion of social media has opened out Western values to the whole world. This has meant an often conflicted view of both politics and gender, Democratic values often been unconsciously set against post Communist freedoms, women's roles being received sometimes without an awareness of how they are constructed.. explain media and hyper-reality (Baudrillard) Are the Pussy Riot aware of how the Western European and USA press use their protest?