

OF A LIFE/TIME



WILLPOWER (СИЛА ВОЛИ), OLGA FRANTSKEVICH, 2015

25.11.2018 – 10.02.2019



The Gallery of **Everything** presents **Of A Life/Time**, a discourse on memory and identity featuring two unusual makers whose practices centre around notions of thread.

Of A Life/Time is the first international exhibition of contemporary tapestries by Belarusian artist and storyteller, **Olga Frantskevich**. Exhibiting for the first time outside the eastern bloc, **Frantskevich** authors hand-woven episodes which recall a childhood of conflict through reminiscence and dream.

A sense of urgency pervades the self-propelled practice. Today, as she enters her ninth decade, **Frantskevich** reclaims an intensely personal history for the collective memory – not with the pen, but with the needle.

In dialogue with this tactile materiality are the diagram/drawings from the everyday discipline of **Ezekiel Messou**.

From his atelier in Benin, **Messou** has evolved an encyclopaedic inventory of repair. Portraits of sewing machines, draughted with ballpoint and lead, form this informal opus of difference and repetition – identity-stamped with pride, and for all to see.

To contact The Gallery of **Everything** about available artworks, please contact ge@gallevary.com

ARTISTS

OLGA FRANTSKEVICH B 1937 (VITEBSK, BYELORUSSIA)

Born in the former USSR in 1937, Olga **Frantskevich** was a child of war, living under German occupation until the age of seven. Taught by her grandmother how to sew, and lacking in paper to draw, she began to embroider on sackcloth she found at the farm where she worked to support her family and younger siblings.

In her eight decade, **Frantskevich** turned again to her family's legacy of embroidery to capture her memories and the history of the war, exhibiting her works to the public for the first time in 2007.

Frantskevich's hand-woven tapestries tell, in brightly coloured and dreamlike tableaux, the story of the war. Personal stories, of her family, of her father, the partisan hero Kuprin Sergey Gavrilovich, of a daily life of suffering punctuated by mundane chores and dreams of a better life. But they also capture, and preserve for future generations, the collective experience of the war.

Today, her work is held in museums in Russia, including the Muzey Balashikhskiy and the Muzey Russkogo Lubka i Naivnogo Iskusstva.

EZEKIEL MESSOU B 1971 (ABOMEY-CALAVI, BENIN)

Ezekiel Messou learnt how to repair sewing machines after leaving his home country for Lagos, Nigeria, as a young man. Today, working from the back room of his own sewing machine repair shop in Abomey-Calavi, Benin, **Messou** creates intricate drawings cataloguing hundreds of sewing machine models, which have earned him a place in international collections of alternative art-makers.

Working with pen and pencil on notebooks, **Messou's** works have evolved from simple, technical drawings into elaborate illustrations characterised by flowing contours and ornate patterns that evoke botanical motifs, in an organic rendition of the machines' inner workings.

Part diagram, part invention, each picture is completed with a stamp and declaration of authorship: *ets qui sait l'avenir * réparation des machines à coudre * le machinistre* (who knows the future * sewing machine repair * the Machinister).

Ezekiel Messou's notebooks are held in important European collections, including the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.

THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING**
www.gallevary.com

The Gallery of **Everything** is a commercial space for non-academic artists, private art-makers and other alternative creators.

An initiative of The Museum of **Everything**, the gallery engages with a wide network of institutions, artists and curators to place artists in private and public collections. The gallery's roster includes major historical masters, as well as newly discovered authors. Events include group and solo exhibitions, talks, readings and happenings.

The gallery has been exhibiting at Frieze Masters since 2012 and opened its London gallery space in 2016. Exhibitions to date include *Journeys into the Outside*, an installation of environmental art-making in collaboration

with performer Jarvis Cocker, and *Le Foyer de l'Art Brut*, an in-depth study of artist Jean Dubuffet's legendary 1947 project in Paris.

Proceeds from The Gallery of **Everything** help support The Museum of **Everything**, a registered UK charity and non-profit organisation, dedicated to the advancement, integration and celebration of artists and makers beyond the cultural mainstream.

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THE MUSEUM OF **EVERYTHING**
www.musevery.com

The Museum of **Everything** opened in London in 2009 and has welcomed over a million visitors to its large-scale installations in Britain, Europe, Russia, America and Australia.

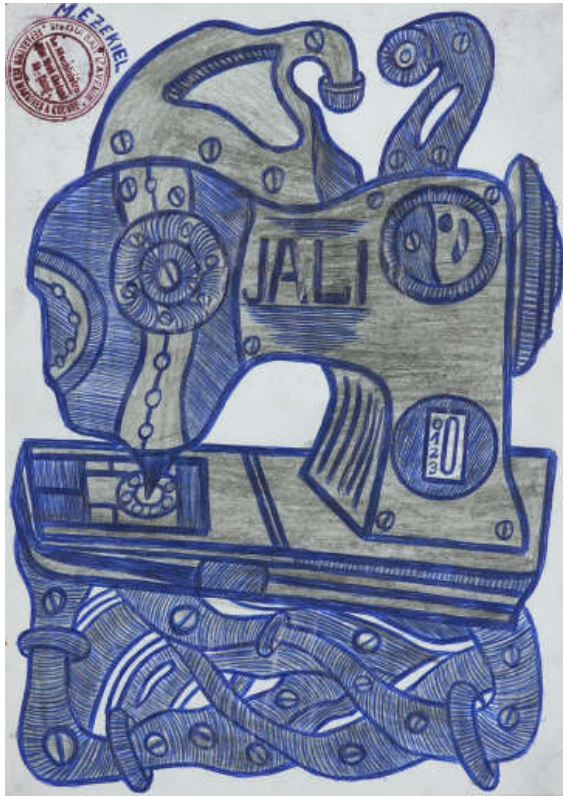
As the UK's leading advocate for non-academic and private art-making, the museum functions as an international exhibitor, archive and activist, collaborating with artists, curators, writers and institutions. These include Tate Modern (UK), Hayward Gallery (UK), Pinacoteca Agnelli (Italy), Kunsthal Rotterdam (Holland) and Garage (Russia).

The Museum of **Everything** remains a major influence on the inclusion and display of non-canonical art. It was closely involved with the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, during which it was also profiled in a BBC documentary, *Turning the Art World Inside Out*. Recent activities include a 2017/18 exhibition at Mona in Australia, featuring several hundred artists in the largest installation of self-taught art ever presented in the region.

SELECTED ARTWORKS



OLGA FRANTSKEVICH





EZEKIEL MESSOU

INSTALLATION VIEWS

THE GALLERY OF
EVERYTHING

4 CHILTERN STREET
LONDON W1



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