

Kledia Spiro (1987, Tirana, Albania) creates videos, paintings, performances and installations. She explores the connection between weightlifting and folk dance as a new celebratory ritual for understanding the relationship between the artist and her parents, as well as the present and the past. By experimenting with indeterminate methods, Spiro wants the viewer to access the otherwise inaccessible domestic spaces. Her works are characterized by the use of everyday objects in which recognition plays an important role. By taking daily life as subject matter while commenting on the everyday aesthetic of societal values, she absorbs the tradition of remembrance art into daily practice. She examines the common language of sports, dance, and performance and what it means to perform inside and outside a space. What is left when the performer is gone.

Her works are based on Freudian and Piaget behavioral concepts: visions that reflect psycho-analysis, behavioral psychology, and a sensation of indisputability, combined with details of odd, eccentric, absurd, totemic and humoristic elements. She formalizes the coincidental and emphasizes the conscious process of composition that is behind the seemingly random works. The thought processes, which are supposedly private, highly subjective and unfiltered in their references to fantasy and baroque worlds, are frequently revealed as assemblages. Her collected, altered and own works are being confronted as aesthetically resilient, thematically interrelated material for memory and projection. By questioning where one is, what one is actually looking at and the concept of movement, she investigates the manipulation of lifting objects overhead and its effects.

Spiro tells a story of reverting the story. She reveals her families idiosyncrasies by displaying a few moments in time, strung together, between childhood memories and

constructed realities. Her work explores knowledge production and the elements of difference when knowledge is based between parent and child, and the parent and child are from very different geographic and political places. Spiro investigates the rules and taboos in culture. She focuses on her parents as an Albanian couple, learning the olympic weightlifting movements through their own culture of folk dancing.

Play is a serious matter: during the game, different rules apply than in everyday life and even everyday objects undergo transubstantiation. Her works isolate the movements of her parents and objects in their home. By doing so, new sequences are created which reveal an inseparable relationship between celebration and ritual. By contesting the division between the realm of memory and the realm of experience. These works focus on concrete questions that determine our existence.

Spiro started working with her parents by teaching them the olympic lifts. She was intrigued by the preciousness and sincerity in their interaction with each other and the camera. Spiro asked if she could video them inside their home, her home. It was an interesting process, as one's Albanian home is a great source of pride and privacy. The privacy and secrecy which was very much emphasized during both of her parents' childhoods and adulthood from the socialist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha in Albania.

Suddenly her attention shifted to reversing the role between parent and child. Her home became a source of colliding worlds: the old world with the modern world. As well as a hybrid of Albanian and American cultures. The objects in the house started having much more "weight" and presence. The domestic objects had a history inside the old house and had witnessed the ever changing installation that was her home. These objects contained a totemic existence when activated by the artist's parents.

Spiro would like to transform weightlifting into a new form of movement and celebratory tradition where the movements start become a drawing in space. She is very interested in using her parents in the performances and making them the artists. Spiro uses lifting objects overhead while dancing as a metaphor for overcoming the cultural struggles she and her family faced when they immigrated from a country of war.

At the age of six, Spiro was one the subject's of her father's dissertation titled "The Child through Psychological Views of Freud and Piaget". She decided she would re-write her father's dissertation through video and make him and her mother the subjects. The elements in which Spiro would study them would be through dance and lifting objects. She was always intrigued by Albanian folk dance and the country's long history in using folk dance as a celebration. Going back and looking at the videos Spiro had shot made her realize something fundamental about her approach and overall message. Weightlifting was only a means to understanding what the form of lifting an object in the air, above one's head means. Lifting objects in the air can be a reference to celebration, like traditional wedding dances, when the bride and groom are lifted up in chairs and danced around. This action can also refer to protests, parades, pickets and religious holidays. The action of lifting objects in the air above one's head has served as a source of empowerment when putting protest signs up or as a sign of winning, hope or reverence.

Spiro realized weightlifting was a metaphor for something much bigger than success or empowerment, overcoming struggle or immigration or war or any personal struggle. It was about showing that everyone has something to lift in their lives. For Spiro, it is her parents. They are the "mythical giants" of her world, the ones that sacrificed their whole life to create a new one for her. Spiro is always carrying that

weight and wants to one day be able to “lift them up”. She may never be able to because of everything her parents carry and hold inside them, but she will always try. That is her life goal.

Yet, in the mean time her parents are lifting their own objects up in the air, in their own home. Though absurd and comedic, their actions are also satirical and genuine. They are celebrating their life in the U.S along with their struggles of navigating between their cultural identities. They are always uprooting and trying to lift everyday objects in order to raise their kids and their life up in the air. Her work strives to make people think of what they want to “lift”.