



Viktoria Draganova: LIFE SPORT, we are so delighted that you are participating in us, because you bring a totally new perspective on engaging with art: you are a concept rather than a regular exhibition venue, as you have chosen to operate in a hybrid form – as a shop and as an art space. On lifesport.gr you say that you’re testing some specific ideas on the relation of the words your name consists of, life and sport. What exactly is the idea behind LIFE SPORT?

LIFE SPORT: LIFE SPORT is essentially both a sweatpants shop and an art space. It began as a film (ongoing) made of people wearing sweatpants, mainly in Athens, kind of a portrait of a city through a sweatpants filter. The idea for the shop resulted out of these observations as an attempt to combine an independent art space with a fully functioning sweatpants shop that generates alternative funding. LIFE SPORT is basically a pursuit for self-sufficiency. Projects that we host with artists online or in the shop experiment with ideas of sustaining and reclaiming, the invention of life as sport, the challenges of self-improvement and precarity. The possibility for failure is already an integral part of the project, which in a way makes failing less daunting. Humour is an important part of survival and coping with crisis.

On your webpage you call LIFE SPORT sweatpants “critical wearables”. What do you mean by that?

Critical wearables are clothing items that raise questions

and are subject to research and reflection. Claiming a widely available product, such as sweatpants, our own, is not only a near-impossible task but a seemingly complicit act that mimics entrepreneurial capitalist ambition as the only viable model by means of continued repetitive reinvention of the ever same. Sweatpants for us represent a state of paralysis.

LIFE SPORT was founded only recently in Athens, in 2014. What’s the situation in Athens?

Good question. To tell you the truth, I don’t really know. It can be an arresting place and very easy to lose perspective. Some people say it’s the magnetism trapped in the marble. There has been a momentum, a temporary excitement brought on by changes in government creating enthusiasm for the left, which was charged and contagious. But no one seemed to know where it was going, it became an abstract pull of a situation. However, for now it’s over. We are back to a more centralized position and continued austerity. The uncertainty remains.

Can you imagine LIFE SPORT outside of Greece?

Absolutely. A pop-up version of the store was installed at Künstlerhaus Bremen earlier this year. Also, there is an online shop to order your sweatpants: www.lifesport.gr

LIFE SPORT (est. 2014) is both a sweatpants shop and an art space. Based in Athens, we aim to become a fully functioning shop with the intent to generate alternative arts funding in a time and place where there is none. Hosting presentations, spoken word and services, LIFE SPORT is invested in the experiment of the invention of life as sport, whilst encouraging collaborations with artists that share our ambition to reclaim independence and self-empowerment.

Sweatpants are critical wearables worn by everyone at some point in their lives, making them the ideal product. Recent projects (all 2015) include 'Trash strike!' installation by Puppies Puppies, a performance by Kimmo Modig on 'the difference between 99% and 100%', a collaborative video 'Fitness Povero with Life Sport' by Nina Cristante and a series of seminars on Ancient Greek Herbal Medicine with Stella K. What's coming next is a new sweatpants edition inspired by Stefanos Mandrake's 'Black on black' cartoon series. You can order your pair at www.lifesport.gr

This conversation has been published online on www.swimmingpoolprojects.org on occasion of **us**, an exhibition in collaboration with I: project space (Beijing), Jenifer Nails (Frankfurt), LambdaLambdaLambda (Pristina), Life Sport (Athens), Linda (Sofia), Opening Times (London), Peach (Rotterdam), and The Green Parrot (Barcelona) at SWIMMING POOL from 7 November to 15 November 2015. Organised by Viktoria Draganova. With the financial support of Stolichna Programa „Kultura“ and Austrian Embassy Sofia as well as with the generous support of all invited art spaces.

SWIMMING POOL

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SWIMMING POOL is a space for art in Sofia. It hosts artistic and curatorial projects as well as readings, screenings and performances. Its premises are located on a rooftop in the city center of Sofia. Built in 1939, they consist of inner spaces as well as a terrace with a swimming pool situated in the middle. Director of Swimming Pool is Viktoria Draganova.