

Author, professor to give talk on gender identity in former USSR

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ALFRED, NY Alla Myzelev, assist professor of art history and museum studies at SUNY Geneseo, will give a talk on the Alfred University campus Wednesday, Feb. 14, that will examine how gender identity has changed in the former USSR during the early part of the 21st century.

The talk, titled “When Balaklava Goes Orange: Pussy Riot and the Fashion of Protest” will be given at 7:20 p.m. in Holmes Auditorium, Harder Hall.

After the fall of the USSR, traditional roles of masculinity and femininity in Russia had gone through significant re-evaluation. In the early 2000s, less rigid forms of gender identities evolved and prospered for some time. Now we are witnessing the return to more conservative values in Russian culture.

Myzelev&s talk will test this trajectory of gender function using both masculine and feminine fashion. She will be looking at the two successful designers of male fashion to understand how an understanding of masculinity had changed in the 21st century. She will then turn to Pussy Riot, a Russian feminist protest punk rock group, and attempt to analyze the reasons for their two-year imprisonment through the lens of gender identities. Three members of the band were arrested following a protest at a church in Moscow; two of them were convicted of crimes and given two-year prison sentences.

Myzelev has published extensively on feminism, activism, and material culture. She is the author of *Architecture, Design and Craft in Toronto 1900-1940: Creating Modern Living*; *Exhibiting Craft and Design: Transgressing the White Cube Paradigm*; and is currently writing a manuscript on the politics of fashion in the Soviet Union. Myzelev has also curated several shows including the yearly *Feminist Art Conference International* exhibition in Toronto (2014-2017).