Zornitsa Stoyanova

choreographer | interdisciplinary artist

Based between Sofia, Bulgaria & Philadelphia, USA
zornitsa@bodymeld.org
www.bodymeld.org
www.bazaspace.eu

ul. "Hitar Petar" 51
PANCHAREVO, SOFIA, 1137
BULGARIA

IG: @bodymeld and @zstoy
FB: facebook.com/bodymeld
Vimeo: vimeo.com/bodymeld
YouTube: @zornitsastoyanova
@bodymeld

What I do:

BodyMeld – Director – since 2007 - Create performance, video, photography and produce programs to support the dance community though exchange, performances and workshops. Teach composition, improvisation, and dance on camera locally and abroad.

Dancer – freelance – since 2006
Worked with Iva Sveshtarova & Willy Prager, Zhana Pencheva, Sasha Waltz & Guests, Boris Charmatz, Eiko & Koma, Sie. Willi Dorner, <fidget>, Lionel Popkin, Idiosyncrazy Productions, Group Motion Dance Theater, Emergent Improvisation Project, and others.

Dance Writer and Editor – thINKingDance.net – writer 2015-19, editor since 2019.

Teaching - performance technique, improvisation, dance for camera – since 2011
Temple University and *University of The Arts*; *Jurany Studios at Workshop Foundation*, Budapest Hungary; *One Dance Week* festival, Plovdiv, Bulgaria; *Wanted Dance Festival,* Rennes; and many others.

Created programs – Current: an evening of dance and art (2007-2011), Dance Cinema Projects (2008-2010), Move. Dance. Think. Fest. (2015), Moms Make Art residency (2016), Get What You Need residency (2015 – now), Grappling together festival – 2016, residence of Polish choreographers in Philadelphia 2018-2019, International one-week workshop in DNA – 2021, Festival "Alternative Stage", Bulgaria 2022, BodyMeld International Performance Research Academy, Bulgaria 2023 & 2026; Trilateral Dance Artist Exchange for choreographers from Philadelphia, Sofia and Budapest 2024 to present; and others.

Sampled performances and improvisations 2010 - Present

2016 – present

Future Love – work in progress on intimacy and AI as the new “pretty woman”, expected premiere Nov. 2027.

Honesty and Other Fiends (a.k.a. Brutal Honesty) – solo performance premiere at Cannonball Festival, Philadelphia. Sept. 2024.- touring

Sound Body – a group international co-creation with Peter Sciscioli (USA) Bulgaria on the theme of democracy and democratic process at The Red House, Sofia, Bulgaria. Nov. 2024.

Body Text Voice – a performance situation with poet and performance artist Sophie Verraest (Belgium) at Toplocentrala, Sofia Bulgaria. June 2023.

Shame – a research presentation of the process of Brutal Honesty – May 2023 at TAM, Veliko Turnovo, May 2023.

Window to another place – created for Leap Off festival, collaboration with micro fiction writer Antonia Atanasova, Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria. Nov. 2022

Altered States – a performance conversation - touring – Megan Bridge and Zornitsa Stoyanova, performed at Etud Gallery, Sofia, Fidget Space, Temple University, Bryn Mawr College Philadelphia 2021 – present.

The Beach – created for the Alternative Stage Festival, site specific festival in Pancharevo, Bulgaria, September 2022.

Woman in Red – a site-specific performance at the National Gallery "Kvadrat 500", organized as part of the Antistatic Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria 2022.

Род и диня не прави Родина (aka Family and Watermelon ≠ Homeland) – online performance series supported by National Cultural Fund Bulgaria – March 2021.

Bolero (in quarantine) – Online live performance – January 2021.

The Future is Here – Online live performance produced by Fidget Space and 4bidden 4fuit, Philadelphia, PA New Year’s Eve 2020.

Andromeda – site-specific performance created for Philadelphia Museum of Art – Jan. 2020.

Un-seen – *Etude and Friends Festival*, June 2019, Sofia, Bulgaria. (password: art123matters)

Explicit Female *(Rocky Award for performance 2017)* The Fidget Space and Vox Populi Gallery, Philadelphia, PA. Aprl. & Sept. 2016 (*note: full nudity, password: artmatters)

2010 - 2015 shatter ::: dawn –Crane Arts Old School, Philadelphia. April 2013. (password: artmatters)

Paper Duchess –Falls Bridge Festival, Philadelphia, January 2012. Wanted Festival, Rennes, France, July 2012. PARD Performance Series, Philadelphia, May 2012.

Vertigo – commissioned by Philadelphia Center for the Book with support by New Stages for Dance. Studio34 and Christ Church Neighborhood house, Philadelphia May 2011.

Experiment 1 - Commisioned by the New York Dance Exchange, CEC, Philadelphia, Nov. 2010. Sour - commissioned by Performance Mix Festival, Joyce SoHo, NYC, April 2010.

Selected dance films and exhibitions:

EnTrance: Female bodies in digitalscapes – solo exhibit photography, sculpture, and film at Toplocentrala Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria, May- June 2023.

Elsewhere – (2015-2019 – 7m 20s) – world premiere at Etude and Friends Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria, June 2019 | Outlet Dance Film Festival, USA Oct. 2019 | Tipperary Dance on Film Festival, Ireland Oct. 2019

Explicit Female – film from *Explicit Female* performance (2016 - 7m 19s) – Salto Independent Film Festival, Uruguay, Oct. 2018| Short Long World Festival, Argentina, Nov. 2018|
Outlet Dance Project Film Fest at Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ Oct. 2018 | 20/92
Video Festival at Crane Arts, Philadelphia, Mar. 2017. | Къща, screening in Sofia, Bulgaria,
June 2017. |Fidget Space, Philadelphia, Apr. 2016. (Password: Explicit123Female)

Geometries of Time – (2016 - 4m 40s) Detroit Dance Festival | Dance on Screen, Short films at the Roxey Ballet | Mexico City Videodance Festival | Hope Film Awards | Greensboro Dance Film Festival | 2017 Philadelphia Screendance Festival.

Open Lens II – group photography exhibit (2016)– Da Vinci Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA.

Chrysalis – (2015 – 3m 58s) Ozark Shorts Film Festival | CineDance Women – online publication | 2016 Philadelphia Screendance Festival | Outlet Dance Project Dance on Film Festival | Movies by Movers | The Iron Factory Dance on Film Festival | Vox Populi Gallery, AUX Space | International Open Film Festival semi-finalist.

The Experimental Exhibit for the European Month of Photography 2014 – group exhibit at Museum of Sofia, Bulgaria, October, 2014.

Sampled Residencies 2010 - present:

Philadelphia: The Iron Factory, Mascher Space Cooperative, <fidget> Space.
US: Bennington College (VT), Black C Gallery (Gainesville, FL), International Interdisciplinary Artist Consortium ’23 with invitation by Movement Research, NYC, USA.
International: Derida Dance (Sofia, Bulgaria), Stary Browar Nowy Taniec (Poznan, Warsaw, Gdansk in Poland), Meet the Next Generation Fellowship - eXplore Dance Festival (Bucharest, Romania), and others.

Sampled Professional Development and Education:

Masters of Choreography – COMMA joint degree Fontys and Codarts Universities, Netherlands – 2025
Paolo Cingolanil(IT); Steve Batts(IR); Peter Sciscioli(USA); Megan Bridge(USA); – 2023
Jeanine Durning (USA)– 2020**; Deborah Hay (USA)**– 2008, 2011 and 2018**; Nancy Stark-Smith**

Improvisation(USA); Rosalind Crisp Dance(AUS); Tim Etchels Making work (GB); Luciana Achugar Choreographic Workshop – all 2015**; Michelle Boule Performance Workshop,** 2013 and 2014; **Fay Driscoll Choreographic Workshop; Falls Bridge Fest** with Ishmael Houston Jones
and Yvonne Meier - 2012; **Susan Rethorst making your best work workshop.** - 2010
Headlong Performance Institute, 4-month training, Philadelphia, PA - 2008.
American Dance Festival, Durham, NC - 2005 and 2006.
Bennington College, B.A. in Dance and Sound Design, Bennington, VT - 2006.
Kontakt Budapest International Improvisation Festival, Hungary - 2002, 2003, and 2004.
American College of Sofia, Bulgaria – English language school - high school diploma – 2000.

Supporters and Presenters:

USA: Philadelphia Museum of Art, Phila.| Movement Research, NYC. | Trust for Mutual Understanding| Pew Center for Arts and Culture (previously Dance Advance), Phila. | Pennsylvania Citizens for the Arts, Phila. | CEC new Edge Mix, Phila. | <fidget> space, Phila. | Danspace Project — after school series, NYC | Hight Tide Gallery, Phila. | Hubbard Hall — Vanguard series, NY | Inhale Performance Series, Phila. | Marlboro College - Embodied Learning Symposium, NH | NY Dance
Exchange, PA and NYC | Little Berlin Gallery, Phila. | Mascher Space Cooperative, Phila. | New Dance Alliance: Performance Mix Festival, NYC | NEXUS Gallery—Influx Series, Phila. | Philadelphia Live Arts and Philly Fringe, Phila. | Rutgers Camden Center for The Arts, NJ

International: Art Stations Foundation, Poland | Workshop Foundation, Hungary | Derida Dance
Center, Bulgaria | eXplore Dance Festival, Romania | Wanted Festival, France |
One Dance Week Festival, Bulgaria | Къща – Creative HUB, Bulgaria | Bulgarian National Cultural Fund Bulgaria | Antistatic Festival Bulgaria | Toplotsentrala Regional Art Center Bulgaria | Elizabeth Kostova Foundation, Bulgaria | Sofia Municipality Cultural Fund, Bulgaria and others.

Portfolio Zornitsa Stoyanova

Artist statement:

I am an interdisciplinary artist who primarily makes performance. As an immigrant and a mother, my body holds a plethora of identities that shape the content of my work. Living between Sofia, Bulgaria, and Philadelphia, USA, I never feel a clear belonging. My nomadic body took years to recognize the sensation of being marginalized and "othered" as home. I make work that interrogates notions of otherness and polarization as a political act against division, war, and capitalist structures. I dive deep into the body to seek answers in sensation, reason, embodied research, and humor.

As a choreographer, I use text, song, man-made materials, and movement. I am interested in the autobiographical and political body and use my 20-plus years as an improviser to draw from the "here and now". Most recently, I've been naming my devising method Polyphonic Dance – a space for deep research of all that I am, with the goal of devising performance material. In this approach, I relate to Simone Forti's Logomotion, Ruth Zapporah's Action Theater, and Deborah Hay's approach to improvisation.
I seek to face truths and work from the not knowing. One such truth is that I am unable to escape my aging female body. Thus, my work often has to do with womanhood, feminism, power dynamics, death, and all of their political and historical implications. I seek to reveal, to make transparent, to share. In this, I often engage with my audience by inviting them on stage or choosing a non-traditional venue and format for my work. I also write occasionally for thINKingDANCE.net, where I am an editor.

I value honesty, experimentation, innovation, visual disorientation, and interaction with my audience. Sometimes, I work from the visual, where producing video and photography precedes the creation of live performances. Other times, I would explore embodied honesty and truth as a political act for years without having a specific goal in mind. All my process is focused on the practice of noticing emergence. Using specific choreographic tools, I make a lot of visual, movement, text, and sound material. I meld this material together, interrogating its meaning, its connection to the world, the body, and politics. After looking at this material (sometimes for years), I use it in performance. This way of working has created two modalities in me — a quick, instant composition performance, or an evening-length performance that takes years to complete.

Since 2013, I have worked with Mylar reflective material. I interrogate its potential for cultural meaning and use it to create new abstract and psychedelic imagery often related to otherness, alienation, and representation of sexuality. The creation of this sci-fi-inspired world started with photography and filmmaking and resulted in the works, *Explicit Female* (2016), *Un-Seen* (2019), *AndroMeda* (2020), *EnTrance: Female Bodies in Digitalscapes – solo exhibit (2023)*. I continue to work with this (same) material, looking at its implications on ecology, sustainability, and my eventual death, as the

material stays the same for hundreds of years.

Since 2020, I have been engaged in a performance practice researching honesty in the body. It is a process-driven approach of instant composition following traditions set by my teachers and mentors, Deborah Hay and Jeanine Durning. In 2024, after four long years of embodied research, *Honesty and Other Fiends (a.k.a. Brutal Honesty)* solo emerged. With a premiere at the Cannonball Festival in Philadelphia, USA, the solo and my practice continue to evolve and have been shown in Bulgaria, the US, and the Netherlands. This practice and research have culminated in the development of my devising method, ***Polyphonic Dance,*** which was the subject of my MA in Choreography at Codarts and Fontys Universities(2025).

Online presence:
Websites: www.bodymeld.org / www.bazaspace.eu
Instagram: @bodymeld and @zstoy
Facebook: www.facebook.com/bodymeld
Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/bodymeld
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@bodymeld-newchoreographies4232

Sample work:

Research:

For the last 6 to 7 years I have been engaged in a practice of emergent language and song I call Polyphonic Dance. The research is based on the practice of not censoring myself working only from the here and now. A deep commitment to brutal honesty and continuous engagement with creation, here are a few videos of early rehearsal research footage
Polyphonic Dance as a methodology was published through Fontys and Codarts Universities here:
https://www.academia.edu/129932256/Zornitsa_Stoyanova_Polyphonic_Dance_COMMA
I continue to develop the method and research further the practice.

Constant talking and moving score – researching with emergent meaning (4min)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfMOBVJ9LfA
Emergent song on the theme of Death… - researching song and movement using structures of pop song and story (4min) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_p0EBzEscg
Dancing reels on social media:
https://www.instagram.com/p/DTXVQMVCOv0/- improvisation dance to Kate Bush
https://www.instagram.com/p/C4wO3OJtjlA/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWFOE_uDkXc – balance
https://www.instagram.com/p/C4uTp-aIb_H/ - Wild Bjork dance

Performance:

Honesty and Other Fiends (a.k.a. Brutal Honesty) (2024/25) 1h 15min – solo – available for touring
In our present reality of alternate facts and political fraud, Zornitsa Stoyanova seeks an answer to one of the biggest issues in modern society – the seeking of truth.
The performance works within the boundaries of the confessional, the mundane, and the absurd. Sometimes funny, the final solo piece includes talking, singing, nudity, objects on stage, and live feed special effects. Interrogating what it means to be honest and how to remain honest, Stoyanova moves through different devised stories talking about normality, love, shame, and death.
The themes explored relate to normative behaviors questioning all societal norms and the performative nature of all our identities.

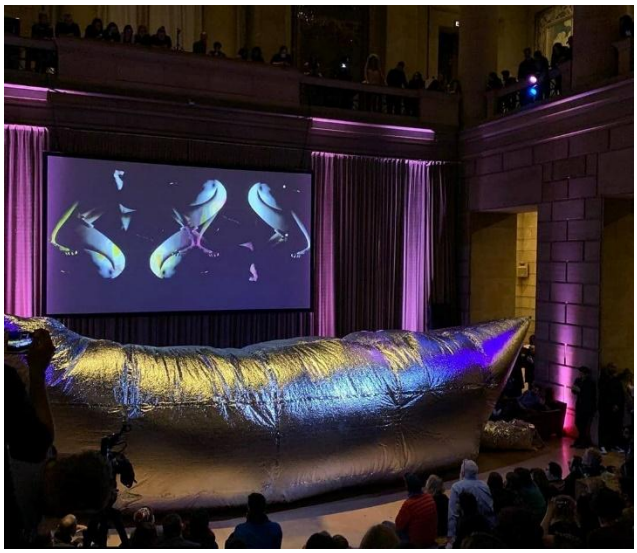
All info here Full performance here: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/1028395515/1815c84d1b

Sound Body (2024) 25min. international group work
Co-created by Zornitsa Stoyanova (BUL/USA) and Peter Sciscioli (USA)

Description of the process here: https://www.bodymeld.org/sound-body-workshop-and-performance-project/

Altered States: a performance conversation (2021) (1h) - a dance and conversation duet between Zornitsa Stoyanova and Megan Bridge. Trailer video (4min) https://vimeo.com/573200681

Press about *Altered States:* Megan Bridge and Zornitsa Stoyanova's Altered States: A Performance Conversation, Isabella Mojares, August 12, 2021



***AndroMeda* 2020 (25min)-** commissioned by Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia Jan. 2020. Video excerpt (4min) https://vimeo.com/393010082

Press about *AndroMeda*: Twisted Future: Zornitsa Stoyanova paints a technological apocalypse with AndroMeda at PMA's Friday Remix, Winfield Mabin, The Dance Journal, March 2nd, 2020.

***Explicit Female* 2016 solo show (1h)**:
https://vimeo.com/199202000 password: artmatters
filmed at The Fidget Space, Philadelphia May 2016.
Outline of the performance. Please, view the sections depending on your interest.
1m - 5m – Audience Conditioning.
12m – 22m50s – Audience building section of the performance.
22m50s – 27m30s – Audience on stage performing with Zornitsa.
36m – 40m - Use of text written by Zornitsa.
41m – 48m - Talking to the audience and teaching them the dance.
49m – 1h (end) – The dance with live feed special effects.

Press about *Explicit Female*:
The Madonna Resilient, Kat J. Sullivan, thINKingDance.net, May 13, 2016.
Every Woman, Carolyn Merritt, thINKingDance.net, September 20, 2016.
http://phindie.com/13072-13072-explicit-female-herebegin-dance-2016-fringe-review-73/

Interview: De-mystifying the Birthing Body: Zornitsa Stoyanova, Julius Ferraro, thINKingDance.net, August 27, 2016.

My Writings:

Writing used as text in performance:
AndroMeda 2020 - https://www.bodymeld.org/in-the-press-en/text-from-performance/text-from-andromeda/
Un-seen 2019 – https://www.herebegindance.com/writing-about-dance/untitled-and-solo-text-from-performance/
Explicit Female 2016 - https://www.herebegindance.com/writing-about-dance/explicit-female-secret-life-of-the-female-body-text-from-show/

Essays:
Dance in Europe – in search of artistic and organizational sustainability, Zornitsa Stoyanova, ThINKingDance.net, July 18, 2018.
Bulgaria on the map of European Dance – a personal journey in cultural dissociation, Zornitsa Stoyanova, ThINKingDance.net, May 9, 2018.
Nude Body, Zornitsa Stoyanova, Culturebot.org, October 29, 2015.

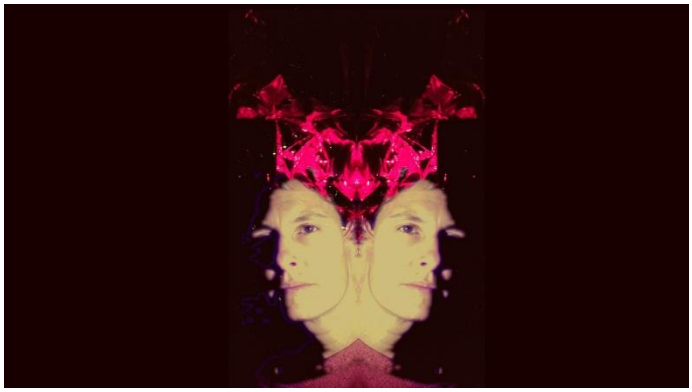
Digital Art:

Films

Chrysalis – (2015 – 3m 58s) Ozark Shorts Film Festival | CineDance Women – online publication | 2016 Philadelphia Screendance Festival | Outlet Dance Project

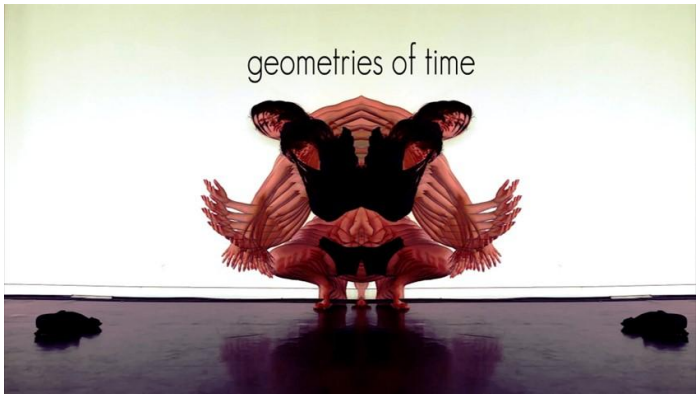
Dance on Film Festival | Movies by Movers | The Iron Factory Dance on Film Festival | Vox Populi Gallery, AUX Space | International Open Film Festival semifinalist.
https://vimeo.com/bodymeld/chrysalisfilm

Andromeda Dreams of Love - (2020 - 6м 30сек.) - part of the performance AndroMeda commissioned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



https://vimeo.com/583156346/11aaed5849

Explicit Female – film from *Explicit Female* performance (2016 - 7m 19s) – Salto Independent Film Festival, Uruguay, Oct. 2018| Short Long World Festival, Argentina, Nov. 2018| Outlet Dance Project Film Fest at Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ Oct. 2018 | 20/92 Video Festival at Crane Arts, Philadelphia, Mar. 2017. | Къща, screening in Sofia, Bulgaria, June 2017. |Fidget Space, Philadelphia, Apr. 2016. https://vimeo.com/160890338 (Password: Explicit123Female)



Geometries of Time – (2016 - 4m 40s) Detroit Dance Festival | Dance on Screen, Short films at the Roxey Ballet | Mexico City Videodance Festival | Hope Film Awards | Greensboro Dance

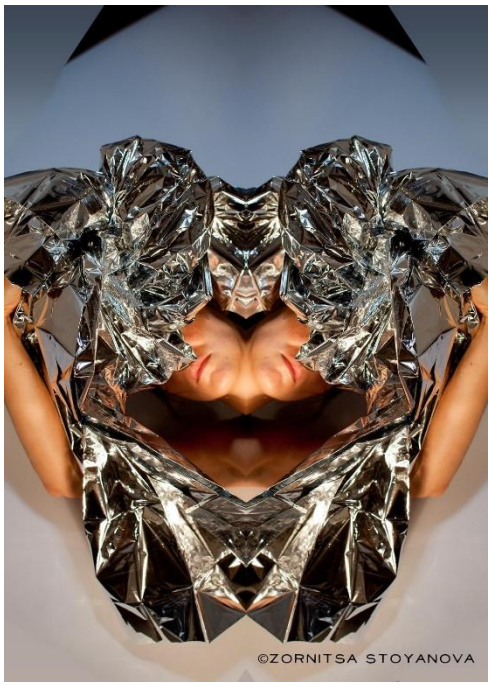
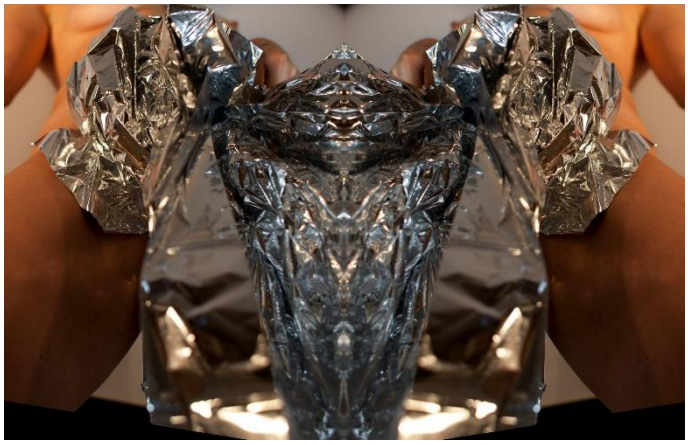
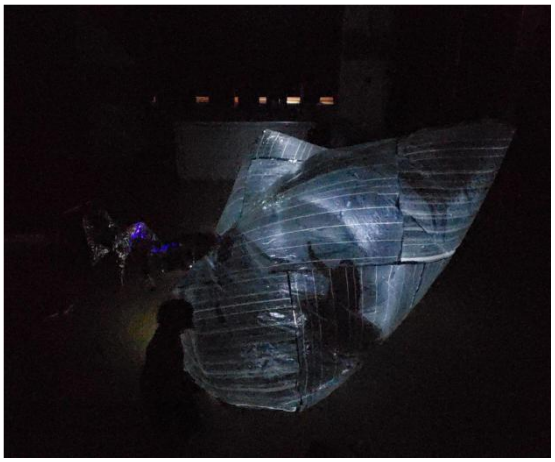
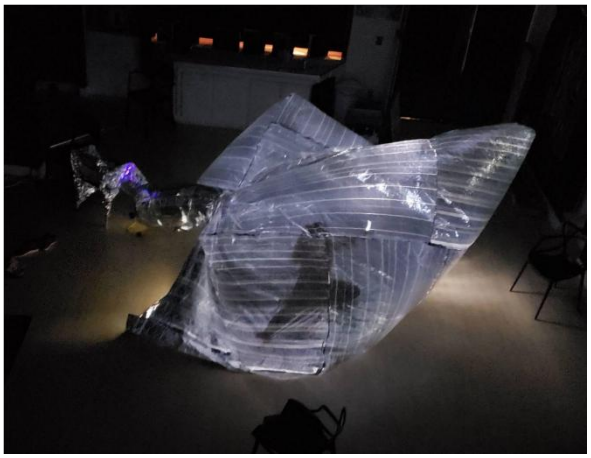
Film Festival | 2017 Philadelphia Screendance Festival.

https://vimeo.com/159354480

Elsewhere – (2015-2019 – 7m 20s) – world premiere at Etude and Friends Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria, June 2019 | Outlet Dance Film Festival, USA Oct. 2019 | Tipperary Dance on Film Festival, Ireland Oct. 2019.

https://vimeo.com/318239988/f08ca0855d

Род и Диня не прави Родина (2021) – a humorous web series exploring cultural and national identity using personal stories of Zornitsa Stoyanova, funded by National fund "Culture" of Bulgaria. Watch here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_XaiBr94lw&list=PLEvxNTpwZ9Y41zr00_sXd6wUhh2Zr61jI

Photography and installation: