



OLEK's art explores sexuality, feminist ideals and the evolution of communication through colors, conceptual exploration and meticulous detail. OLEK consistently pushes the boundaries between fashion, art, craft and public art, fluidly combining the sculptural and the fanciful. With the old fashion technique of crocheting, she has taken the ephemeral medium of yarn to express everyday occurrences, inspirations and hopes to create a metaphor for the complexity and interconnectedness of our body and psychological processes.

OLEK's bursts of bright colors often mask political and cultural critiques woven into the fibers of her installations, mirroring her respect for artists and writers. She highlights that which already exists in the current time and environment. As an active supporter of women's rights, sexual equality, and freedom of expression, OLEK has used the broad appeal of her work to display her solidarity with those stifled by oppressive laws worldwide. Her transformation of public spaces and objects reflects cultural evolution, mirroring the public response, from those watching and from those within the art.

Born Agata Oleksiak in 1978 in industrial Poland, OLEK's art was a development that took her away from industrial, close-minded Silesia, Poland.

In 2000, OLEK received a BA in Cultural Studies from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland and relocated to New York City. OLEK's work has been exhibited in galleries, museums and public spaces worldwide and featured in numerous publications such as The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Magazine, TIME Magazine, Vogue Italia, Newsweek/ Daily Beast, Village Voice, Vibe Magazine, Artinfo,

PBS, CNN, CBS, ABC and NBC. OLEK is the recipient of the Ruth Mellon Award for sculpture in 2004, In Situ Artaq award (France) in 2011, and a grant in 2011 from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) for performance in public space. OLEK's residencies have included Sculpture Space in 2005, Instituto Sacatar (Brazil) in 2009 and AAI-LES in 2010. In 2008, OLEK was the winner of the Apex Art competition, which aired on PBS. In 2010, the artist was commissioned by the Brooklyn Museum of Art for a one-day interactive performance installation. In 2012, OLEK was part of the "40 Under 40: Craft Futures" exhibition at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Renwick Gallery, for which her entire crocheted studio apartment was exhibited. Recently, she has exhibited at Miami Art Basel as part of *Women on the Walls* at Wynwood Walls and curated by Jeffrey Deitch.

In 2009 OLEK exhibited in Museu do Traje e do Têxtil at the Instituto Feminino da Bahia in Salvador, Brazil, in the Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum in Paderborn, Germany from 2012-2013, and in Museum Villa Rot in Burgrieden, Germany from 2013-2014. In 2014, OLEK's work was featured as part of the Brooklyn Artists Ball at the Brooklyn Museum in Brooklyn in 2014 and 2015, New York. In 2014 Han Nefken Collection commissioned her work as part of "The Future of Fashion is Now" exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

OLEK regularly partners with private organizations and businesses to give back to the community and supports many non-profit organizations with her artwork. In 2012 OLEK partnered with Kiehl's by crocheting a work entitled "Mr. Bone" to raise money for Children's Issues. OLEK is the ambassador for the Jasiek Mela Foundation "Beyond Horizons". In 2013 she partnered with Elephant Family and created an installation at Lancaster House in London's West End for an Animal Ball held in the presence of the Royal Family to raise funds to support the preservation of Asian elephants. In 2012 and 2014 OLEK taught crocheting workshops at the municipal jail in Katowice, Poland and together with the inmates created a

20 meter long crochet wall as part of OLEK's prison-outreach endeavor.

OLEK is also a highly sought-after guest lecturer and speaker. OLEK lectured in 2010 at the 19th Annual Matrilineage Symposium at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York; in 2009 at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, New York and at the Art Academy in Krakow, Poland; and in 2008 at Loyola University, Art and Environmental Studies in New Orleans, Louisiana. OLEK participated in a series of lectures and performances at Colgate University, in Hamilton, New York in 2006 and spoke at the Public Art Symposium: "Beyond the Object" at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York from 2004-2005 at the Material for the Arts, Performing Arts Workshops in New York. In 2014, OLEK will give a lecture at Multikino Zlote Tarasy as part of TEDx Warsaw in Warsaw, Poland.

OLEK currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Through her body of work, OLEK has always sought to bring color and life, energy, and surprise to the living space. OLEK's ongoing goal is to produce new work and share it with the public.