*O place of many a mystic sacrament! / Archaic Aphrodite’s splendid shade / Lingers above your waters like a scent / Infusing spirits with an amorous mood. / Worshipped from of old by every nation, / Myrtle-green isle, where each new bud discloses / Sighs of souls in loving adoration / Breathing like incense from a bank of roses” […] O Venus! On your isle what did I see / But my own image on the gallows tree? / O God, give me the strength to contemplate / My own heart, my own body without hate! [[1]](#footnote-1)*

The exhibition is the result of a multimedia research process, based on own life and professional experiences of the artists, with the aim of demystifying the notion of feminism, which has been distorted lately, inadequately used, worn out by constant repetition in every possible context[[2]](#footnote-2) and often has pejorative connotations.[[3]](#footnote-3) The project seeks to get rid of the extremes. On the one hand, the understanding that being a modern, emancipated woman implies the rejection of anything that is archetypically female in pursuit of her main goal, of becoming a man, as well as another extreme that implies female domination and supremacy. Artists do not deny the differences and nature of both sexes. On the contrary, they celebrate them, trying to explore and question what makes the so-called female principle.

An island is a mystical place, circular, sun-bathed by the dome of the Meštrović pavilion. It is also the home of the goddess Inanna, the Sumerian goddess of love, fertility and war (3rd century BC) that is identified in the Babylonian mythology with the goddess Ishtar, and later in different cultures becomes Aphrodite, Venus, Freya or Lada, her counterpart in ancient Croatian mythology. The traditions connected to her are rich in legends, hymns, myths, and controversies. She is a four-person goddess like Kibela: besides being a virgin, a mature woman and an old woman (warrior, lover, and ruler) she is also the ruler of the underworld. She is at the same time a self-centered young girl and a rebellious teenager, who is able to break all the prohibitions, opposing various fatherly figures. She often appears as a merciful goddess of heavenly justice, but also as an angry goddess with a particularly violent character.[[4]](#footnote-4) During the day she is a beautiful goddess of love, but also a bearded god/goddess of war who governs at night. Nevertheless, even in the male role Inanna never becomes a full man, but a woman with a male character![[5]](#footnote-5) She is both Eros and Thanatos, and her complex nature, the kaleidoscope of various character traits and patterns of behavior, perfectly fits into the idea of ​​presenting at this exhibition the complexity of what woman makes of woman, pointing out the existence of that duality in ourselves.

*Žena* (Cro.), *femina* (Lat.), *woman* - all three cases are etymologically the same, meaning the one who breastfeeds, who gives birth and is someone's wife. The contemporary concept goes far beyond the etymology but does not deny the importance of the role of woman as the creator of a new life, the perception of a woman as Mother Goddess, idea already present in the Paleolithic. That is why, in the center of the gallery, a pink puddle is poured - a central installation associated to water. Water as *archê* (Thales), the originating principle of the world. It outlives every passing change; everything comes from it and returns to it. Pink, female, yet universal because everything flows (*Panta Rhei*).[[6]](#footnote-6) The whole reality is in a constant flow, in constant change. Everything comes from one, and again, from everything one. But, besides water, this installation is a direct link to what is generally human -organic tissue – skin, an organ, womb or insides as a whole. This element is complemented by a variety of artistic situations with an emphasis on the female body - artists are playing with materials such as concrete, wax, stone, textiles; different textures; media, but also objects - instruments for "upgrading" or "repairing" a woman's body. With this approach, the boundary between the socially conditioned and the biological body is lost, and the sexuality and the female attributes do not provoke shame; on the contrary, they become the qualitative element of every woman, contrary to the mainstream transgender culture that surrounds us. The way in which a woman uses them as a statement depends solely on her, and in that sense, we have come to a new era of feminism, far different from the original fight for the right to vote. Now is the time to fight for our body and its transformations through digital media. The whole body deprived of objectification and deconstruction (not to say butchered) to individual parts. Nevertheless, empowerment of women should not be reduced to the bare selfie in the bathrooms because, unfortunately, some very important issues of women's rights remained unresolved, and this exhibition indirectly also tries to warn about that too.

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1. Charles Baudelaire, *The Voyage to Cythera* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. According to the American dictionary of Merriam-Webster, the most popular word in 2017 was exactly the word feminism. It´s search on search engines and use, compared to the previous year, increased by 70 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Siniša Vuco: "Feminists are those women that nobody fucked right, so they whine. When they find right fucker they become happy women and they make lunches." [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.angelfire.com/mi/enheduanna/Ninmesara.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Jasmina Osterman, *Velike mezopotamske božice*, Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest, vol. 46, Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, FF-press, 2014: 25-50 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Simplicius of Cilicia [↑](#footnote-ref-6)