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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

10 Russian Women to Watch

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For our special print issue "Women in Focus," we lined up ten upcoming stars in music, business and politics. You might have never heard of them until now, but these women are making their mark at home and abroad.

POLITICS

1. Katrin Nenasheva

Through a series of daring art performances, Katrin Nenasheva has brought attention to issues around torture and mistreatment in Russian prisons and mental institutions. In the summer of 2018, Nenasheva, who is 24, says she was kidnapped and tortured by militants while visiting her grandparents' grave in the Donbass region of Ukraine. In September, her semi-immersive exhibition in Moscow dedicated to torture victims was banned by the authorities.

"Radical political performance art in Russia is often considered a masculine, male domain," she told The Moscow Times. "I try to challenge that image with my art dedicated to the

everyday person and their struggles."

2. Lucy Shtein

At just 22, Lucy Shtein's CV resembles that of a political veteran. In 2017, Shtein was elected a Moscow municipal deputy, where she made headlines by placing plaster casts of her breasts on Soviet-era apartments listed for demolition in her Moscow district. An outspoken advocate of legalizing drugs, Shtein also headed Ksenia Sobchak's Moscow campaign offices during the celebrity journalist's run for the presidency in 2018. She currently hosts a popular political talk show on YouTube and pens a weekly column for the Ekho Moskvy radio station.

On being a Russian woman in politics, she told The Moscow Times: "Russian politics, like many spheres, is dominated by men as a result of prolonged female marginalization in society. I envision a country where gender does not play a role in politics."

SPORTS

3. Jennifer Akinimika

One of Russia's most talented young athletes, Jennifer Akinimika,17, is currently the Under-18 national champion in both 100-meterand 200m sprint distances. Born and raised in Krasnodar, Akinimika's father is Nigerian and her mother Russian. She has spoken publicly about her aim to break Russia's current 100m record held by the legendary sprinter Irina Privalova.

On being a mixed-race woman in Russian sports, Akinimika told the Sports.ru outlet, "I realize that I stand out on the track in Russia, but running helped me deal with all the insecurities I had about my skin color."

4. Nadezhda Karpova

The future of Russian football is female and Nadezhda Karpova, 23, is arguably its biggest star. In 2017, Karpova was bought by Spanish club Valencia in what was a rare move abroad for any Russian football player. Karpova is an outspoken advocate for women in football, while her distinct aesthetic style has seen her featured in magazines likes Tatler, ELLE and Esquire.

On being a Russian woman in sport, she told Harper's Bazaar, "I want there to be equality, and I don't think it's weird when girls play football. Take me to any backyard, I'll beat all the guys there, and then we'll see if they say football is a male-only sport."

BUSINESS

5. Yevgenia Kuyda

Yevgenia Kuyda, 32, is the co-founder of the groundbreaking app Replica, which creates an artificially intelligent copy of whoever uses the app. Originally, Kuyda built Replika to digitally recreate a friend who had died in an accident in 2015. Born in Moscow, Kuyda was previously a magazine columnist and founded Bribr, an app that could secretly record someone if they were asking for a bribe.

On being a woman in business, she told The Moscow Times: "In Russia, people don't want to give you a second chance when doing business. If you fail, they say you are a loser."

6. Gulnaz Khusainova

Moscow-born Gulnaz Khusainova, 29, founded the start-up Easysize which assesses customer shopping preferences and predicts whether they will return purchases. The startup has reported it has helped save online stores up to 7 percent in revenue. She was featured on the "Forbes 30 Under 30" list this year.

On being a Russian woman in business, she told The Moscow Times: "When people first see me during meetings in Russia, they think I'm the marketing girl. In Europe it's a bit better. Maybe they think I'm responsible for business development."

ARTS & CULTURE

7. Olga Koch

Olga Koch, 25, is probably Russia's funniest stand-up comedian working in English. This year she was nominated for the Best Newcomer Award at the prestigious Edinburgh Fringe Festival for her debut show called"Fight. "Koch is the daughter of former Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alfred Koch, one of the masterminds behind Russia's turbulent privatization in the 90s who now lives in exile. Much of Olga's comedy is based on her unusual upbringing.

On being a woman in the comedy business, Koch told The Moscow Times: "You never see yourself as a Russian female stand-up until somebody points out to you that you are. To you, you are just you."

8. Taus Makhacheva

Taus Makhacheva, 35, is a visual artist from Makhachkala in Dagestan. Her video art has won accolades for its commentary on the complex cultural and political realities in the North Caucasus region and has been exhibited in the Tate Modern in London and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. Artistic sensibilities run in the family: Her grandfather is Rasul Gamzatov, one of the Soviet Union's most praised poets.

"Culture is underfunded in most places in the world, and Dagestan is no exception," Makhacheva told The Moscow Times. "Ministries and museums are understaffed, but I love and admire the persistence with which women working in the cultural sector try to break through walls."

9. Nina Kraviz

Born in Irkutsk in Siberia and with a degree in dentistry, Nina Kraviz is an unlikely ambassador for Russian techno. Kraviz, 29, has headlined countless prestigious festivals throughout the world since she rose to prominence and last year she was named the world's best DJ by the British Mixmag magazine.

On being a woman in the music industry, she told the Guardian: "People were suspicious of a

pretty woman making music on her own, with a vision. They couldn't handle me."

10. Liza Gyrdymova(a.k.a Monetochka)

With the release of her latest album "Coloring for Adults" this year, Monetochka has cemented her place at the helm of a new wave of electro-pop taking over Russia. Monetochka, 20, whose stage name might be best translated as Lil' Coin, rose to fame in 2016 after putting out her first album on Russian social media free of charge. The record made waves by tackling issues as diverse as heartbreak and the conflict in Syria.

Her latest release was an instant success for capturing the Russian youth's sense of humor and angst. On being a woman in the music industry, Monetochka said in a July interview with the Vpiski internet show that, "As long as there are bosses who grab girls' butts and harass them, we have something to fight for."

For more in the "Women in Focus" series, click here*.*

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