thinking of Steven Johnson describing how, depending on conditions, "slime mold oscillates between being a single creature and a swarm." Trust in the knowledge of the swarm is offset by the tremendous will involved in creating the conditions and steering the results. This doppelganger grounds the connection to Mulholland Drive, the subject of the second act of the opera, "Conference is Transference," which masquerades as a conference on David Lynch's film. Because each conferene focuses on just one moment in the film, they are like ants who do not see the colony.

The third act, "Traumaathon," is a festival of fund-raising rituals and act four, "Amid a Wind of Sudden Syndrome," may finally be more like an opera. As Transient's Theme unfolds, everything is both itself and the image of itself. The audience, in their partipation of the event, is part of its construct. Performers are co-creators. Bethany Isdell sets an emergent condition using games with language for real stakes. (Mis)interpretation, mixed connections, disproportion, paraphrasing, impersonation, and category access becomes useful tactics for learning how to negoti

ate our bodies' protrusions in an impenetrable world.

as Isdell puts it, "we need play to know what to do w/ trauma—w/ capitalism, w/ social media, w/ the schism betw art & labor, w/ the methohdical harassment & abuse of women's bodies & queer bodies & minority bodies. That's the big picture that seems insurmountable. It's also creepy because anybody who would try to mount that is probably a politician or a priest & I don't want to be either. So it's a soap opera. It's creepy, silly about sex, about death & feels so much like something almost familiar."

-Sophie Pinkham

Leeza Meksin
by Sophie Pinkham

right and overhead top
installation view of WINGLET at
For high visibility
construction fencing, spandex,
mesh, rachet straps, rope, and
zip ties on chain link fence and
window grates, 16 x 22 x 33
feet. Photos by Leeza Meksin.
Images courtesy of the artist.

Leeza Meksin took a basement, a dank place full of exposed piping (painting Freud), and did it fabulously. Her position is that houses deserve to have outfits too—even for their nether regions. With draping, weights, and ties, flashy spandex and shiny lamé, she made the basement's flat surfaces and straight lines into curvy, glamorous figures, ready for their close-ups. Meksin put architecture in drag, and renamed pipes and pylons for airline parts.

In the garden behind the gallery, Meksin installed Winglet, a huge piece of hot-pink open mesh layered with smaller pieces of bright-pink and neon-green patterned spandex. It looked like an airplane wing, but it was also a canopy, dapping the sunlight and providing a cool shelter for visitors on a hot June day. Meksin was careful to place it so that the plants beneath it still got enough light. For her, decoration is accommodating, considerate of the needs of others. Decoration is polite; it does notloom or crush. Decoration is not architecture—yet, at the same time, as Meksin points out, it is a way of tak

ing possession of a space. By dressing up both the insides and the outsides of buildings, Meksin creates a tension between architecture and decoration, art and bodies, and what is visible and what is concealed. She pursues this project in other mediums, as well— for example, in her disconcertingly tunescent sculptural paintings, or in flesh-colored foam handbags that look like breasts. (These "douchebags" tease Freud, for whom handbags were vagina substitutes.)

Meksin was born in Moscow. When she was eleven, she and her family fled Russia and landed in Columbus, Ohio, where they began the process of mak

ing a new home, in a new language, with hand-me-downs from Jewish char

ity. Meksin's installations reenact, again and again, this experience of emigration, as she makes colorful, feminine, racy costumes for walls, balconies, interiors, and even, in House Coat, the exterior of an entire two-story house. Her family's geographical, cultural, and linguistic relocation, she says, made her aware of how ungrounded our lives truly are, leading to her work its emphasis on masquerade, on lightness, on the play of opposing identities. Emigration also made her unusually aware of the power of names. Russian, the lost language of her childhood, assigns a gender—mas
culine, feminine, or neuter—to every object and idea, no matter how inani

mate, and this gives birth to all manner of poetic possibility. Finding themselves, suddenly, to be gendered beings, the objects in Airplane, as well as her other works, learn to make themselves at home, to dress up, and, eventually, to take flight.

-Sophie Pinkham is writing a book about living in Ukraine.
left: FIN BOX, 2014, site-specific installation at Airplane Gallery, spandex, wool and steel frame; ratchets, straps, turquoise beads, light bulbs, zip ties, 112 x 92 x 75 inches.

opposite: Installation view of DIGITAL OUTSIDE, 2014, IN HOUSE, WHAT IS YOUR CRIME?, presented by Regina Rex at the Knockdown Center in Queens, NY.