

“Are you ready?  
Are you ready  
to produce...  
Sunlight?”

recitation of such texts could easily have come across as symbolic of the loss of humanity under the onslaught of technology, on *Head Slash Bauch*, it served more as a reminder of the person behind the machines.

With *Westernization: Completed*, AGF shifts her focus away from the fractured sonics and lyrical abstraction of *Head Slash Bauch*. On the face of it, it is a more accessible record with bona fide pop songs, however unconventionally structured; but still it is a more difficult record to wrap your head around. AGF cites her close friend, fashion designer Uli Dziallas' reaction to the record: “When I sent her the finished product, she said she thinks it's beautiful and really exhausting.”

“The first record is actually more easy to consume, I think,” Fuchs says. “It's like noise and ambience. Even I still listen to it. Sometimes, when I don't know what to listen to, like at airports or something, I just listen to some old AGF tracks, because they're just like filling the space out with sound. They're just so—they are quite comforting, but the new record is more demanding, definitely.”

It is *Westernization's* intimacy and directness that demands the most from the listener as AGF offers snapshots and scenes from her life, charting her relationship to the world at large. “I really wanted for people to understand me after the first record, which was really abstract,” she says. “It was so nice not necessarily to have a message and not to use my voice for something so strong; but that was my first record, and I didn't want to do the same thing again. I decided that I wanted to say things more clearly, I wanted to say where I come from like hip-hop people do. They explain where they come from and their views on the world, so even if I don't agree with 50 Cent, I understand. So it's a little bit like that.”

But *Westernization* is more than just the contents of the CD; the packaging is itself a work of art, an integral part of the release. It contains images of paintings by Ulyana Gumeniuk, a Ukrainian ex-pat living in London, as well as photos of AGF—some with words etched on her skin—some with her in poses similar to that of the



figures in Gumeniuk's work—and a brief e-mail exchange between the two artists on music, painting, and fashion.

“For me, everything in this booklet and in the artwork has meaning and is special,” Fuchs says, “and that's why I tried in the booklet not to have so much text, especially not my own words, since I didn't want to dictate to people any more what to think, which you already kind of do when you say things straight. So in the booklet, I wanted to have more inspirational space for people to just feel something or look for something.”

As she was working on the record, AGF stresses that she was inspired by Gumeniuk's unusual, figurative paintings, finding a kindred spirit, another artist who grew up behind the Iron Curtain and was now undergoing her own personal westernization. “I started working on this record at the same time that I met her,” she says. “I was desperately searching for inspiration. I was trying to find movies and stuff like that, because music—at least not electronic instrumental music—was not giving me much that was necessarily inspiring. I was looking around and I found her. And that was quite important, because we fast developed a close friendship based on our work and talked a lot, almost all by e-mail.”

“When I was finishing work on the record, she was finishing work on an exhibition, and we were having the same problems: When do you finish a painting? When do you finish a track? When is something perfect? When is something too perfect? When do you destroy everything by trying to make it perfect? With all this stuff we were

comparing, mixing in things, inspiring each other to add different influences.”

With her westernization complete, AGF now looks to chart new territory, one perhaps not quite so personal. Not surprisingly, given her prodigious work ethic, her artistic plate is overflowing with projects—working with a German female drum n' bass MC, an ongoing collaboration with Scottish composer Craig Armstrong, a possible instrumental version of *Westernization*, a techno record, and, of course, building and maintaining her ever-evolving Web site, [www.poemproducer.com](http://www.poemproducer.com).

When we talked, the project that was animating AGF was her all e-girl group, called Lappetites. The group features four very different laptopists, each from different countries, from different backgrounds, and of different generations—AGF, UK experimental musician Kaffe Matthews, Japan's Ryoko Kuwajima (a.k.a. Ryo Co.), and the newest member, French electro-acoustic pioneer Elaine Radigue. The project is in its infancy, but their first session together in an Amsterdam studio and their subsequent long-distance collaboration has AGF really excited.

“It was just so natural for us to set up the studio,” she says, “because everybody was totally set on what they were doing. It was so cool. It was a good first-time experience for me to feel like...totally normal! I'm not an alien! There are more like me! [laughs]”

*Westernization: Completed* is out now on Orthlorno Music