



spectacle ...zzzzzzzzzzzzzz... no, there's no way: my archive is overflowing...

...but when my cigarette is about to finish BAM!, goal, moderate euphoria in the room, and the TV screen lights up with the blinding white of Cristiano Ronaldo's uniform, and he also seems much happier than us as he points to the name on the shirt: only RONALDO, no CRISTIANO, but there it is, FLY EMIRATES: Fly Emirates, I presume, finances our happiness, sponsors the collective joy [I google: *to sponsor etymology* and I find out that it derives from *patronus*, "defender, protector", as patron, of course, both words come from pater, obviously, stupid, THE FATHER EMIRATES, THE FLYING DADDY, I don't know], there you have it, RONALDO and FLY EMIRATES, but no CRISTIANO, as if the Emirates had stolen Cristiano's identity, voilà!, EMIRATES: EMERGING ECONOMIES, *the decolonization will be financial or it won't be*, exquisite intuition, oh, wait, THE EMIRATES THREATEN CRISTIANO: ISLAM AGAINST CHRISTIANITY, religion, big theme, FOOTBALL: CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS, come on, don't stop, it looks like I have it and BAM!

Chaos.

People arguing. Some guy chants "MEEEESSI, MEEEESSI" to another guy. An unacceptable provocation. Cristiano Ronaldo and Messi, PORTUGAL AGAINST ARGENTINA. Or maybe, if we want to be picky, ARAB EMIRATES AGAINST ARGENTINA. I feel privileged for being able to witness this unheard of historical conjuncture. Here, in this bar. Athens. It's happening. I take out my notebook. Have to know more. Where do these people come from? I place my bet. IRAQ! No... SYRIA! The dispute gets louder, they're screaming at each other, screams in a language I don't know.

It feels scary.

I ask for the tab: I want to be in a safe space. The *documenta*. I want to be in the *documenta*, walk around the EMST with my tote bag, to think hard, silently, change the white of Cristiano Ronaldo's shirt for the white walls of the museum, reflect upon the Islam sheltered in the white cube. I get paranoid: what if in reality the Arab Emirates sponsor *documenta*? Google soothes me: no, Germany does. GERMAN CASH.

I leave the bar, leave them to their argument. In the end, I always stick to those who sponsor my safety.

## II

With the desire to create platforms for reflection and debate beyond the limits traditionally marked by the art institution, *documenta 14* offers a wide range of projects that exceed the exhibition format. Among them, Studio 14, an interdisciplinary research laboratory based on "a surplus of knowledges that makes—beyond any inevitable history—another disturbing, living history possible between the traces, fragments, and forecasts of what can be incompatible times, although incompatible also unavoidable—if we do not want to remain closed inside the boundaries of a given European model". The public meetings of Studio 14 are articulated in five 'scenes', thematic axes that range from the question of translation to the role of the Mediterranean as symbolic-bordering topos between the West and its others. The second of these scenes is called *The Birth of Tradition*, problematizing from this Nietzschean paraphrase the discursive processes that anchored the Greek Hellenic period to the origin of Europe as an ontological entity. Invited by the organizers of Studio 14, Dimitris Papanikolaou presents the notion of *archive trouble* to refer to the performative aspect of tradition, pointing to the affective-political disposition that enables the sustenance of the national fiction. I remember that the night before, Marta had told me an anecdote from her year in Barcelona, something about a conversation she had with a Catalan anarchist, a guy who dreamt of the abolition of the State and its borders while showing symptoms of a surreptitious Catalan patriotism, an emotional surplus that overflowed his discourse.

Our bodies as devices through which the archive manifests itself.

There is a fascist at the deep end of my soul: Europe sponsors my subjectivity.

Sitting quietly, I consider intervening in the discussion with another etymological remark, showing the fine thread that connects "archive" with ἀρχή (the origin), but I soon understand that more than half of those present speak Greek. FAIL. Ashamed, I keep quiet, not knowing that in a few seconds I will undertake the

most subversive act of the month and a half that I have been in Athens: among the books, papers and pens that cover the table around which the speakers sit, I glimpse a stack of stapled photocopies called *Archive Trouble* by Dimitris Papanikolaou; still not knowing if those papers are available to the visitors, I put the photocopies in my backpack. FUCK YOU *DOCUMENTA*, YOUR ARCHIVE IS NOW MIIIIIIINE! While the talk goes on, and still ecstatic at the boldness of my gesture, I subtly skim over Dr. Papanikolaou's article. His *archive trouble* proposes an exercise in hermeneutic betrayal to the dominant narrative upon which Greek identity is constructed, departing once again from a paraphrase, this time from the canonical text by Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*. I recall the Spanish translation of that title, *El género en disputa*. The archive, like gender, is also in dispute. But wait: who are the contenders? What team am I playing for?

The angst is back.

I take a deep breath.

The comfortable fiction 'LATIN AMERICAN' comes to the rescue, comforts me momentarily: I pretend to know which side I am on.

Papanikolaou takes the theatre play *The City State*, by the Kanigunda group, as a paradigmatic example of a Greek artistic movement that arose in response to the economic crisis, a series of aesthetic/political manifestations that would dynamite the chrononormative discourse of the country, altering the national logic (and teleology):

*instead of 'who is to blame for bringing us to this point?',  
the question becomes how can one tell the story  
of the now in relation to the past, what it means to act  
while one is positioned within a genealogy that has  
reached a critical point.*

Alongside the work of Kanigunda, Papanikolaou lists the films *Country of Origin* (Syllas Tzoumerkas), *Attenberg* (Athina Rachel Tsangari) and *Dogtooth* (Yorgos Lanthimos), as well as the political paintings of Stelios Faitakis, an artistic short-circuit that finds its *raison d'être* in the problematization of the national archive.

Art, once more. That's my team. Art is the medicine that will heal my archive.  
*I am an independent researcher based in Athens, I knew it!*

### III

At night, a few drinks, chain smoking, light dinner, we talk about art (what else?) and some about sex (couldn't do without), always with an ironic tone and affected self-consciousness (VERY ARTY). I think it was Fabiana Faleiros (*in this game the first name never comes alone, if you do not have a last name you do not have a name*) who reclaimed the return of love as an artistic motif, what's going on with us, why don't we give a fuck about love any more, and I replied that no way, that the world is about to go to hell and so how are we going to pay attention to something so trivial and heteropatriarchal as love, are you kidding?, such good fries in this place, one can really tell that they are handmade. A very cordial discussion, you have your opinion, I have mine, could you pass me the salt?, thank you very much.

Suddenly, a mariachi approaches our table. A mariachi in Athens, long live globalization. He has everything: the suit, the moustache, the guitar, but no, he cannot deceive us, he is a false mariachi, there is no doubt. The imposter notices our scepticism and counter-attacks, opting to take the apophatic path: he won't get our coins for his *mariachi performance* but for his *mariachilessness*, for being an obvious fake. With his fiction exposed, he shouts, mistreats the guitar, so that we can't continue chatting, I start to roll a cigarette as if to say *I couldn't possibly pay attention to you because I'm rolling myself a cigarette*, but the False Mariachi does not give up and keeps leaning on our table, ruining our dinner, until he says:

– *Money! Money! MEXICO! MEXICO!*

AND NO. There we got you: we have a Mexican artist in the group. Gris García is Mexican. You are not. Gris García: Mexico—False Mariachi: No Mexico, I'm sorry, we have no change. Grunting, he gives up, leaves us. Searches for his

new prey, finds them, an English couple, good luck!

Relieved, we joke for a while about the possibility that this could be an artistic performance paid for by *documenta*. A thing of the type *Mariachi Stories, Greek Bodies: Dislocating Mexican Culture*. If so, we could have taken up the debate on national identity, on the lie of 'the local' and the devastating effects of a global capitalism that sells culture as souvenirs; we could have been fascinated by the iconoclastic spirit of the False Mariachi and his very *non-site-specific* practice, which confronts us with that mirror in which we do not want to look, because it would return the image of the tourist with accreditation; that would have been the perfect opportunity to show off our vast knowledge, knowledge legitimized by DIY workshops and official diplomas, knowledge flooded by a city that insists on pissing on our taxonomies, a city that does not allow us to extract TRUTH, produce content and all those things that we enjoy so much and for which we are here.

With all that mariachi nonsense my fries got cold. I ask the waiter for a menu and he brings it to me in English (such lovely people, the Greeks). After all, it seems like the night will have a happy ending. I find what I want:

VEGAN BURRITO