



## **EXPERIENCING CONNECTION ISSUES**

**Capacete Athens, 2017**

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Editorial team: Jari Malta, Eliana Otta and Gian Spina  
Design: Juan Salas  
Proofreading and text editing: Tanja Baudoin  
Translation: Hudson Rabelo

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I'm sure you have also received, at some point, a suspicious invitation: the friend who invites you for dinner and it turns out he has nothing in his fridge; someone who has the idea to organize one of those uncomfortable reunions of old buddies from high school; the e-mail from an (alleged) distant relative whom you had never heard of before but who needs some money for a shady business enterprise...

A little more than a year ago some of us were reckless enough to answer to the following open call:

*From March through December 2017, Capacete will unfold its program in Athens (and part of it in Kassel), amid documenta 14 and related events, the Athens Biennial, and the city's regular programs and cultural activities. If, in an integrated world, everything seems to merge into homogeneous, hegemonic processes:*

*What does it mean to displace an experimental, collective, learning and research-based initiative from one continent to another, and specifically from the southern hemisphere to the South of the North? What motivates such a dislocation, and what does it implicate?*

*How does such an initiative engage with a new local context, taking into account the complexity and heterogeneity of its communities, histories and socio-cultural dynamics? If, to some extent, ancient Greece was and still is used as raw material for shaping the imagination of Western modernity, what can contemporary Greece offer in dismantling colonialism and neoliberal, financialized, speculative capitalism?*

*For 19 years, CAPACETE has received practitioners active in different fields and coming from all over the world to experience, exchange, research, love, produce, present, publish and share. Now it is CAPACETE's turn to displace itself; a group of up to 12 participants will be selected to fully engage in a 9-month-long program in and with Athens, a context foreign to CAPACETE's original and regular activities. CAPACETE's approach to learning and research is a time-*

*based, collective, discursive, performative and experimental practice that needs time and close involvement in order to converge a less-hierarchical and decentralized exchange and production system.*

It's no surprise that we ended up spending a good portion of our time in Athens trying to understand what were the hidden clauses in that open call. Asking ourselves who was hosting whom, why and for whom we were talking, where 'the project' ended and our lives began. That was not the only thing we did, though: we also bonded, loved and fought each other, danced... and even wrote a bit. This publication compiles some of the texts that resulted from those nine months. More than a faithful reflection of our experience, it supposes a choral and fragmented approach to the complexities and tensions in which we found ourselves immersed; an impossible cocktail of fun, confusion, unknown languages and micropolitical challenges.

But a book can also offer the opportunity to expand an invitation. Thus, the voices of Yara, Marina, Fotini, Despina and Alkisti, who in different ways were part of our affective network, join this collective murmur. Their texts complicate, broaden, and overflow an amalgam of memories, conversations, poetic journeys and personal diaries that we organized into five sections, without losing the hope of finding a sense where the senses do not reach.

**waiting-line-thoughts written on a napkin** marks the beginning of our journey and starts, paradoxically, in an immigration office, a place of waiting, recipient of imagined horizons and frustrated desires. We gathered as well living room and dance floor reflections addressing the forces that regulate the circulation of our bodies and ideas.

The texts grouped under **shifting voices** share the concern for the transforming potential of art institutions. While the cultural industry allows the most radical discourses to coexist with the most conservative structures, here the authors pay attention to pedagogical experimentation, the disposition of bodies in space and the role of audiences in those possible transformations.

The title **don't call me \_\_\_\_\_** refers to a poster that caught our eye on the walls of Athens. The phrase "Don't call me Greek" served as a provocative invitation to an anti-fascist hip-hop concert. From different perspectives, this section aspires to destabilize hegemonic

narratives about territory and national identity, with special emphasis on the Greek case.

Our **confessions, spells and medical prescriptions** are, in fact, exercises of political imagination: strategies to resist (and exist) in precariousness, unfolding critical forms of intimacy to generate ties from vulnerability and despair.



As a way of wrapping things up we asked ourselves **how to undo a to-do list**. A last (dubious) invitation to be unproductive, to speak in broken English, to laugh at art and through art, to trust poetry.

In Athens we experienced a lot of connection issues. The same could be said about the gestation process of this book, which was to a large extent forged through Skype conversations ("Wait, you're frozen", "I didn't hear you, could you repeat?", "Fotini, are you there?"). We cannot miss the opportunity to thank the accomplices in so many misunderstandings: Helmut, Ana, Amilcar, Eva, Nuno, the Doulos family, Maaike, AMOQA, Kostas, Panos, Zafos, Helen, William, My, la Echaves, Delal and Hudson. We invoke with special force Gnaki and Penelope, for their animal love, and Tanja, who knew how to avoid that this extended invitation ended in a bigger mess.

**waiting-line-thoughts  
written on a napkin**



## Centres, peripheries, and the surprises of an elusive mobility

Eliana Otta

I've been living in Athens since last March, together with eleven artists of different nationalities, as part of the artistic residency Capacete. Originally from Rio de Janeiro, Capacete is a project that has existed for nineteen years now, based on offering time to those who take part in it. Time for whatever one needs or desires: to think, to investigate, to know, to enjoy, to experiment.

The residency has been characterized by its hosting of many European artists, those with greater possibilities of paying for the time for which the residency doesn't pay, since even if it still offers lodging and an ideal scenery to develop work and affective links, it doesn't have the resources to pay for tickets or travel expenses. This year its director, Helmut Batista, proposed to invert the situation, bringing Latin-American artists to Europe. The selection of the place had its motives: the particular historical moment Greece is going through, then the spark of the crisis and its failed attempt to leave the European Union, its complex role in welcoming thousands of refugees, and that *documenta 14* elected the capital as its headquarters under the controversial title *Learning from Athens*. In its declaration of principles, the famous German institution proposed itself as a platform for reflection upon North-South relations, which was one of the interrogations launched by Capacete to those who answered their open call: How to understand this dynamic from "our" south?, How marked is it by a colonial logic and how can we answer critically to it through art, if we can?

Five Brazilian artists, one Chilean, one Uruguayan, one Mexican, one Argentinian, one Peruvian, and two Greeks were selected to live together in this interesting context, invited to dedicate ourselves above all to know it, think it and "to do nothing". A first surprise was to acknowledge that among the group I was the only one who arrived

with a three-month visa. Brazilians had a six-month one, the Chilean a one-year one and the other ones had been living in Europe long enough to have achieved or started the process of obtaining different citizenships. Thus, I saw myself obliged to start the formalities to obtain the permission to live there right after arriving, facing a bureaucracy I didn't know, in a city and in a language also unknown.

Fortunately, besides the privilege of taking part in a residency that offered me time, I could count on the help of supportive Greek friends. If even with their help the formalities proved heavy and endless, I can't even think the nightmare they must be to those who can't count on someone to accompany them every morning from office to office, translating and intervening with the employees, not really eager to comprehend a cultural exchange not filed under some bureaucratic formality. Even less, obviously, can I imagine what it means to go through something like that when what's at stake is life, one's own or that of loved ones, and when the cost of each unexpected formality risks alimentation or rent money.

Those who visit the Athenian immigration office have provenances as varied as those who live in this city or pass forcefully through it. And the process to accomplish being listened to is as slow and chaotic as other local dynamics, those which from the start gave me a feeling of familiarity that smoothed my adaptation. Those who talked to me in those offices were kind, even if that didn't really guarantee them being clear about the information I needed. I lost money and time with unnecessary formalities to obtain my residence permit. Translations of all kinds, writing letters, exchanging e-mails, calls and coordinations helped me seal the process, even if I couldn't help losing the plane tickets to Kassel I had bought, because of the extended waiting period, in which I couldn't leave the country. The first ticket had been bought by Capacete, as part of our activities for that year, which included a group trip to the historical location of *documenta*.

It was clearly a very important opportunity to know the origin of the institution that had come to shake up the Athenian artistic and activist environment (whose streets bore posters and graffiti against the event, which in addition to the low attendance by the Greek public, confirmed the rejection which inspired the deployment of resources and good intentions). It was also important because it would be the first time that I go to Kassel and *documenta*, widening my incipient

experience in an artistic event of that caliber. I mention this because it never ceased to surprise me the way in which the people I talked to took for granted the possibility of accessing them, as well as choosing not to go, being able to do so.

I suppose that, as in the case of the visas, we Peruvian artists are in a very different position than those who come from countries that have been part of the international art circuits for longer.

In my 36 years of life, besides the Lima Biennials that I visited when starting my education, and that Luis Castañeda eliminated when he became mayor of Lima, the only events of this magnitude that I had visited were the São Paulo Biennial and Manifesta, both in 2016. This clearly marks a difference, from the start, from those artists who grew up in countries with institutionalized biennials like Brazil, or in countries like Mexico or Argentina where the access to culture and art, promoted by the State, are much more democratic. If this is my case, that of an artist from the cultural elite of Lima in a centralist country like Peru, one can imagine how hard it must be to access this kind of experience for artists in less privileged contexts from my country.

So my residency companions travelled to Kassel. While they saw the shows that left gaps in the museums here (many pieces that were on display in Athens travelled to Germany, leaving eloquent empty spaces in their place), I alternated my constant handling of papers with the activities proposed to me by my new community. The impossibility of travelling allowed me to deepen my link with the city I was living in, generating bonds beyond the residency and the intense routine that the *documenta* schedule offered.

In that week I could go to the presentation of Gregory Sholette's book *Delirium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism*, in the occupied theater Embrós, a space that's run by people who actively took part in the assemblies in Syntagma square during 2011. Sholette is known for his participation in important collectives that reacted, in 1980s New York, to gentrification and real estate speculation, urban phenomena that he dedicated his time to think about in the next decades. That day he presented his current lines of investigation, centred on processes such as the constructions of branches of museums like the Guggenheim in the United Arab Emirates, who are making efforts to become the artistic centre of the

future at the expense of migrants working in prison conditions. In this speech I saw for the first time an audience that seemed to have both people linked to the arts and those more linked to activism, groups that usually move through very different territories and whose biggest common point, at least recently, seemed to be the shared rejection of the German institution.

That week I also attended the celebration of the Gay Pride Parade, organized for the first time in Syntagma square, joining the group of members of the LGBTQ Refugees assembly. Its members were mostly Syrians, who sang and moved their hips with much rhythm, summoning many foreign reporters to cover the event. It was undoubtedly the most colourful and cheerful group in the parade, because their smiles and looks were as seductive as the movement of their bodies, as it was the first time they had taken part in such an event. Probably as important for them to express themselves in a public space was that such a public space as that particular one welcomed them, the Greek streets and squares being eminently masculine spaces. So masculine, above all in the lower class neighbourhoods, that our constant question during those months was: where are the women?

In those days I took part in another interesting use of public space, a colourful street carnival in Metaxourgeio, a former industrial zone that is nowadays a mixture of a perfect example of gentrified neighbourhood, junkie refuge, and red-light district. Many people that I knew as regulars at my favourite bars and cafés gathered in a little improvised park, a friendly earth patch with some tents and a kiosk of wood and wicker. From there we followed a truck that carried a Balkan music band, while throwing paint around and getting muddy from the falling rain that surprised us on that summer afternoon. The potholes in the roads became puddles, and soon people stopped protecting themselves from the rain to form a human mass, as joyful and wet as it was blurred.

The following day I went to the poetry recital of Chilean poet Raúl Zurita, part of a festival of literature in Spanish, in which, besides being moved by his reading, I was surprised to be informed that the translation of his poetry presented that day had exchanged its vulgar expressions for less offensive ones. Talking to friends increased my curiosity about their affirmation that there was hardly any example of a Greek poet, modern or contemporary, that used vulgar expressions or

that wrote with the insolent impudence of the Peruvian poets from the 1970s and '80s.

Little by little, my Capacete friends returned from Kassel and told me that I hadn't missed much. That yes, it was interesting to see how Documenta functioned there as a correct white cube, as the external context to the exhibitions was so little stimulance that it allowed one to fully concentrate on the art without questioning its pertinence to a given space and time (like one inevitably does here). Some pieces were better understood there, where one could access the complementary information that was generously displayed. The most interesting was listening to Paul Preciado publically refuse the possibility of developing with depth his ideas in such a big institution. Anyway, I expected to form my own opinion of the event, but then I didn't know yet that I wouldn't be able to use the ticket I rescheduled - this time, paid with my own money.

The weeks went by, and despite checking the Immigration Office webpage daily, the only answer was that "there isn't enough information". The last time I had gone to deliver the missing paper required to seal the visa formality, a handsome employee offered to put my folder on top of the others so that I wouldn't lose the flight to Germany, which, as I had told him, I was trying to avoid. The employees attending to the public are all young, because, so they told me, the State prefers young people who accept precarious short-term contracts. The boy seemed to be a nice person, even if I changed my mind when I got home and noticed he had added me on Facebook. The following days, while I revised the results on the Immigration website hoping to find the solution to my problems, I couldn't avoid a feeling of harassment while I doubted whether I should accept his friendship request in order to ask for the card that was taking so long. Meanwhile, the card wouldn't come, and once again I lost the flight to Kassel.

Nevertheless, that week I had access again to experiences that made me thankful for not having gone. One of those was the art festival Art Panegyri, organized in Corinth by a friend of Nikos, the Greek artist from the residency. His friend Kalí had decided to move to Germany some twenty years before, after having finished her studies and gotten married there. Her parents couldn't accept that she wanted to immigrate and decided to build a big house to convince her to come back. While Kalí went ahead to Berlin with very little resources, without

help from her family, the house grew and became filled with decorative elements, including mementos from Greek statues and a bathroom with mirrors on the ceiling. A little while ago the parents accepted that their daughter wouldn't return and live with them and she accepted that it'd be healthier if they could all spend more time together. So she decided to spend her summer vacations in Corinth and enjoy her big house to host artists, making it into a gathering point. She started to organize a residency and festival in the garage next door, combining her interests linked to critical reflections about and from contemporary art, with those of her immediate community, where culture is experienced especially through theatre and dance.

For this edition, she decided to approach the relationship between centres and peripheries, taking into account the context of Corinth and its lack of linkage to Athens, and taking advantage of the fact that anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, whom she knew from Berlin, would be passing through there. With help from her parents and friends Kalí set up a varied two-day programme that included a photography show, a lecture by a Dutch anthropologist about Documenta, a mini-procession with wooden figurines that incorporated Barbies and a kind of totem representing the academic institution, as well as presentations by local theatre, dance, and salsa groups. The second day evidenced the many interests of the attending public, composed of families, children, older people who for the most part didn't speak English, which prompted Nikos to improvise the role of translator in order to save the intervention by the Dutch anthropologist and ease the participation of the renowned Arjun, whom most part of the attendants probably didn't know.

Appadurai knew how to quickly read the situation and decided to summarize complex ideas in a few phrases, simple but acute ones. In response to Kalí's invitation to speak about the relationship between globalization and contemporary culture, he argued that to be there, in Corinth, made him think that one must not forget that "the centres of yesterday are the peripheries of tomorrow, and that the peripheries of today are the centres of tomorrow". Therefore, faced with a question by Nikos about what relationship artists should have with activism, he answered that it was necessary to avoid the extreme notion of an individual genius, disconnected from the codes of his time, as well as the notion of the artist that's totally dedicated to the task of transmitting

the messages of a community. That somewhere in the middle of these paths was the art that could significantly intervene in our time.

After his intervention, it was the turn of the group who danced salsa, and so many of us found ourselves drawn to the dancefloor, including the special guest star. That night his enthusiastic dancing aroused in me almost as much tenderness as seeing Kalís parents carrying chairs and tables, offering water and wine to the assistants, and putting in place the projectors with videos about speculation and the international art market.

The following week, Nikos again gave meaning to my forced Athenian stay, this time by taking me to his parents' house on the beach. This day I experienced the Greek hospitality again, and even if it was hard for us to understand each other, with my still precarious Greek, the affection of his mother, evident through the generosity with which she hosted and fed us, connected immediately with a certain kind of Peruvian affection, which I identify especially with my father's family who are of provincial and rural origin.

Walking through the streets of Corinth, Nikos called my attention to the posters on the public light poles inviting anyone who wishes to attend the funerals of the recent dead. Funerals in Greece, especially in the peripheries, are massive events that are open to all, as opposed to funerals in places like Amsterdam, where he told me that one would only attend after receiving a personal invitation letter. These are extremes of public and private with which he deals on a daily basis, since he immigrated there more than ten years ago. Extremes of the ideas of hospitality and respect for the limits of the other, that constantly intersect him, as he had to get used to repressing an inherited generosity that reaches the point of hiding money in wallets or in other people's cars so they'll let him pay his share of the tab.

My condition of being immobile in this country made me deepen my affective bonds with its people and ways, while I started to accept that I'd be the only one in my group that wouldn't know Kassel and one of the most emblematic events in global contemporary art. I proceeded with my daily routine of clicking on the immigration website, waiting for another "There's not enough information" notice, until I decided to go there in person, since the thirty days they had asked me to wait were over. Again, three-hour lines under the sun,

people arguing and trying to agree, the same lawyer approaching with dandruff on his shoulders trying to convince you that the process will be torture without him, the same cursing guard who answers in Greek every question I ask him in English.

It doesn't matter, by then I already knew the numbers in Greek and understood all that he mumbled at me with disdain. But I might not have progressed that much in the language, because when it was my turn they told me that my license had been ready for days and that the Greek phrase that I thought meant "There's not enough information" actually meant that I had not filled in the forms correctly on the website. I couldn't translate their page to English because it constantly crashed—like an employee told me in a very relaxed manner, "the page crashes, like any other".

Finally I had the long-awaited residence card in my hands. I should have felt glad and relieved, but I felt dizzy—if I had had it as soon as it was ready I could've reorganized myself to travel. Now there'd be no time and any ticket would be crazy expensive. Why hadn't I paid more attention to the form? Why hadn't I exhausted the possibilities of how to fill it in and translate it? Maybe subconsciously I longed to stay in Athens instead of going to Kassel?

These questions haunted me, torturing me for the rest of the day. Nevertheless, a little after that I realized that this peripheral citizen, deep down, didn't feel bad about not reaching, this time, one of the centres of the art world.

## CR7/d14 and the Fake Mariachi: AN ARCHIPROBLEM

Jari Malta

I

Ethnographic radar ON: these people are not from Greece.

- Waiter, *sijnomi*, could you crank up the volume?

[-----loading file with prejudices and stereotypes-----]

The TV set, now, frantically. A stadium frozen in time by the roaring of thousands. Upward shot of Cristiano Ronaldo. They film Cristiano Ronaldo from below, and he still looks way cuter than any of us.

I google:       *cristiano ronaldo market value*  
                  "100 million €.Salary: 32 million € per year"

[LOADED FILE] Refugees. They're refugees.  
I'm at a bar surrounded by refugees. For sure.

I google:       *documenta 14 budget*  
                  "documenta 14's budget was 37 million €,  
                  spread between 2013 and 2018"

Cristiano Ronaldo is worth 3 *documentas*.

Cristiano Ronaldo could set up a *documenta* each year. Why wait 5? *documenta* non-stop. Yeah. Such madness.

I give myself the deadline of one cigarette to sketch some hypothesis about all that, a lame thesis about the relationship between football and high culture, art, and spectacle ...zzzzzzzzzzzz... 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 AMERICA’ 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

## Dissident black written for an error-contained narrative

Musa Michelle Mattiuzzi

*Athens, Kipséli—July*

In recent years, white supremacy—in the context of research and of contemporary artistic practice—is making an effort to listen to the voices of dissident bodies and to reflections on body politics coming from transfeminist practices and gender disobedience. The privileged extractivist white cis-supremacy wants to gather the echoes of dissent by engaging with the recognition of narratives that are fragmented and contradictory, and only proposes itself to an appropriation of the aesthetics of performance—a programmed allusion to precariousness. The premises of these dissenting thoughts regarding the asymmetries that have historically conditioned our bodies to subalternity they prefer to silence.

Whiteness hides in a gesture of silencing whenever somebody critiques their investigative gesture of appropriating subaltern references. I believe this is a self-centering of its action of domination because the colonization of life took place and is still taking place through language. White people hold formal education as their platform to establish what is good, bad, civilized, wild, human, non-human. And to say what art is. I see this as an act of extractivism, a trace of colonial violence. And I see these gestures are updated by the neoliberal policy of inclusion that reverberates the echoes of our multiple voices in a list of contingencies and representational demands. And soon this list becomes a real compulsion towards our difference through the premise that our dissident bodies, by occupying the spaces of privileged whiteness as aesthetics and commodities, could perform salvation in a civilized context from the ruins of the straight patriarchal white world. Whiteness is located so firmly in language that it even changes our senses. We are trapped and rooted in its structure in which the word of command, who has it or who even has the privilege of exercising it,

constructs the narrative. And above all: there is a belief in the word, the path to name the word, the legitimate word, the means to mediate the word. Whiteness creates strategies of translation, and mainly capitalizes on the notion of community, defending that we are all equal and understand the world in a similar way, in order to weaken any action that can disrupt its position in this world constituted by inequalities.

It is in this sense that I am thinking the narratives and the subjects of this microcosm that I am living now. Yes, I need to contextualize myself in the time frame of the residency in Athens.

A Latin Greek mix. The civility that went wrong. Our pacification in solving practical questions. Dissent being silenced at every step. I think that at this moment it is fundamental for me to start a dialogue with this community through this writing, and in doing so, I might perhaps question myself and seize the violences of a white cisgender space that pretends to experience a practice of integration of the commons and therefore extracts the most powerful from the dissent—self-criticism—but that excludes us at every moment when the process is weakened by logistical failures, for example. I realize that in this microcosm there is no possibility for self-criticism. If the idea of community is the integration of different cultures and different people, without generating inequality, without generating annihilation of what is not 'central', here is the fragility.

I realize that self-criticism in this context does not work as there are silenced estrangements. And the bodies subalternized by coloniality cannot be generators of language, because language presupposes power. Here is a black dissident writing. And whiteness prefers to say that we have a debt, and it turns us into agents of messages that escape the structures. The signs of domination, those which we are used to, are the 'domesticated' assimilation of a different culture, its appropriation. But cultural appropriation is not the same as to integrate into it. Because in this kind of community subaltern bodies cannot address self-criticism. In this community, people disclose optimistic narratives and expose us to a fragility demarcated by political asymmetries. It's maddening.

It is the opposite of valorizing; it is the opposite of contributing to expansion and proliferation, it is the opposite of participating positively in a cultural integration that will combat the violence and



fascism that colonization, imperialism, neoliberalism, and capitalism teach us so well.

The logic of coloniality, assimilation and appropriation constantly captures us, being how we are. And our effort must be to live against it, not to be captured by the same logic, to not seek to capture the 'other', the non-hegemonic, the 'different.' And this is a constant self-reflexive exercise, on a daily basis, endless.

To think writing with blood, to cross the border and launch the retreat.

Retention...

Withdrawal.

Turn whipped blood into letters that are unappealing to read.

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## Excerpt of unfaithful prose

Marina Miliou

I imagined that I could write you a story. One that would carry you away into a field that cannot be measured or remembered. Remembering Capacete Athens in linear references and narrated events seems illusory or unfaithful to the abundance of overlapping moments that still remain unsaid. Remembering is a task of picking and isolating images and it would be unfair to tame my sensorial memories into prose by mapping them. Capacete was a modular explosion of tasks, relationships and unraveling conversations, with fierce thinkers and unanswered questions. I try to be faithful to the fragmentation of my being, which lingers between sensorial and tactile, while it breaks and restructures every time I position my body in a new space of rich interactions such as the ones I witnessed in the Capacete Athens group. That said, this text will wander between poetry, tactility and visual imagery by jumping into the gaps between memory and the unremembered.



I remember welcoming the group, upon their request, in my hastily chosen Athenian house, which I settled in after living abroad for nine years. I talked about my practice in conjunction with my mother, a practicing archaeologist. An apartment in Pangrati with moist windows and shiny floors. A space filled with thirteen researchers, all thirsty to share their past and find points of contact for the present. Puffy white-stained pillows on the ground to substitute the lack of chairs, a projector, and cold *raki*. The eagerness to co-inhabit our Athenian reality created a profound connection.



Working for documenta14 and the Athens School of Fine Arts, while also being close to the Capacete Athens group exposed me to a process of existential inquiry; I often questioned the dynamics of each group and the conversations they provided, stood for, confronted or promoted. Eventually a sense of gratitude replaced this otherwise destabilizing everydayness that defined my position between these two milieus. The daily process of adapting to these distinct environments, however, was perplexing, dusty and unrefined. This text is about that dust. Once it settled, I realized that although I was mentally present in both documenta14 and Capacete, physically I was dragging myself around the city without really knowing where I fit better or whether things were evident enough for me to be able to decide. The official

professionalism, intellectual stimulation and hasty hands-on workload of documenta14, or the rawness, spontaneity and fierce criticality that the Capacete Athens group provided? From all sides, diverse thinkers took me on radical journeys of social, political, intellectual and existential unlearning. Unlearning from within and gradually rediscovering the outside. An Athenian outside, an outside that describes the contextual, infiltrates it and becomes existential and somatic. It listens, inhabits, impregnates and re-abandons.



Being part of the documenta14 team was a contradictory position. It entailed a sudden influx of critical exchanges, spending time with phenomenal artists and often being surprised by some of the non-hierarchical relationships that developed around the context of the office. Although documenta14 was an institution and functioned structurally and politically as such, some people that worked there admirably fought against the stereotypical neoliberal pattern of hierarchical relationships within the workplace. The intangible pressure of the institution rubbing against its workers created a striking contrast that could be interestingly analyzed someday. If documenta14 was an amalgam of structure, hierarchy and chaotic rebellion, Capacete and

the groups with whom they interacted in the Athenian community, questioned and confronted hegemonic norms while establishing alternative social spaces for conversations to flourish. Within Capacete, structural hierarchy was a productive term to be analyzed, shaken and observed but not to be embraced. Working for a mega-institution makes you forget the sound of your individual voice as it treats vulnerability as a disability. In contrast, Capacete created a space where vulnerability was explored profoundly, sometimes on the verge of being overwhelming. In a context like Capacete diverse voices keep their individual hue and at the same time converse in a unified melody, so that any pain that is manifested develops into something collectively experienced. Thus, horizontality in some cases, was periodically harmful and overwhelming for the dynamics of the group.



Capacete Athens was not about the people nor about the residency. Essentially it was about the reverberation of inhabiting a city collectively—of course with its faults and complexities, as well as with its moments of empowerment. It was about occupying rooms, hours throughout the day, bars, dance floors, texts, collaborative projects, poetry, criticality. Capacete gave its breath to Athenian elements which otherwise would have remained untouched. Capacete is a mute vibration that echoes in the streets of Athens as long as one listens to it. With a gaze of tenderness, the group aimed to listen before acting.

They aimed to empower silence by noticing it—noticing silence as an alternative feminist perspective that exists within an exposed, caring vulnerability. In other words, my memories of the group are breathing loudly but they are mute.

By maneuvering between an institution and an alternatively structured residency I realised that the process of handling different subjectivities should be composed with a certain kind of care. How does one coexist in diverse communities while being true to oneself? If documenta14 posed complex sociopolitical questions they sought to answer in a predefined time-frame, Capacete posed questions and left traces that comfortably remain boundless. Questions that lie within answers themselves, alternative ones. Flexed ones. The residents of Capacete mingled in a variety of Athenian locales. Their happenings spanned from experiential Nightwalks in various neighborhoods around Athens, to Neratzinha parties at Asylo (a bar close to Omonoia Square), to poetry and film evenings at Communitism (a self-organized initiative in a reclaimed neoclassical building in Metaxourgeio), and finally to their Public Programs that were steeped in sociopolitical conversations, workshops, site-specific performances and screenings, and were hosted in Circuits & Currents (an event space that belongs to the Athens School of Fine Arts and is at the center of Exarcheia). These actions initiated rigorous dialogues around a multitude of questions and predicaments such as the Greek “South” as both a global and local state; the country’s urgencies which derive from and are created by both a western and non-western lens; and the question of *how and whether* these urgencies can be distinguished or identified.



Other events analyzed the subliminal patriarchal system that establishes gender norms and violently suppresses gender fluidity and inclusion. It is a virus that has prevailed in the country and its institutions for generations, and has infested the city's reality and its people's movements in a very regressive, prolonged and exhaustingly brutal manner and it needs to be addressed, pinpointed and reformed. Finally, other conversations touched upon topical nationalistic phenomena and vocabularies that promote otherness, but most times remain overlooked or become normalized. These conversations walked through open doors that cannot easily be closed due to the complexity of the issues. However, the events hosted by Capacete assimilated critical vibrations that preexisted and needed to be cared-for, fought-for and continued.



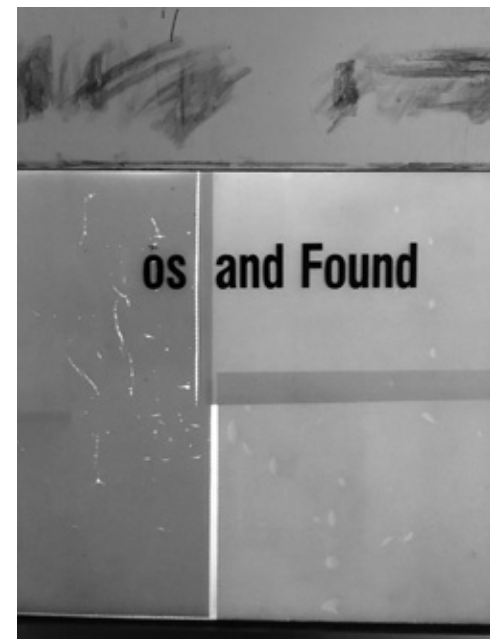
I would like to clarify that I am not suggesting that Capacete was an initiator or an external power that came to Athens to address issues that had never been addressed before. I am rather implying the opposite. These issues have been scrutinized for many years and there are many important groups and communities who strive for attention while fighting against them. The Capacete residents attempted to seek out these communities. They conversed, listened and took part in these complexities by including their own voices and methodologies in what already existed.

We exist within an interval of time in which space is congested and the urgencies within it are unquestionably fragile. Time is accelerated and steeped within the perpetuated abuse of power. The necessity of a clear-cut resolution, *an end*, sometimes masks questions without offering other alternatives. How can one better illustrate the exigencies of the present moment without imposing a so-called end, a resolution, an answer? This end is groundless and becomes

an *it*—which then recycles itself into a never-ending loop of effective actions. I identify with the processes of *becoming* that Capacete Athens attempted to embrace. I yearn for resistance, vulnerability, recovering time, alternative perspectives, silence, poetry, and directness. I fight for effective exchanges. How is this urgency of preserving the fluidity of a contemporary moment relevant to artists, writers, movers and transnational bodies? Why is pausing, questioning and calculating one's collective power without the need of a finality considered an illogical action and why is it compared to the process of failure or falling? Capacete was and still is a generous undefined process that brilliantly remains in a state of suspension.







## We can only trust poetry

Rodrigo Andreolli  
Athens 2017

we can only trust poetry

there will be no proofs at stake  
this is a scientific event, but there will be no proofs at the end.

it's the nature of science as it is the nature of the arts to depart from  
the impossible  
to make up reality  
think of the scientists we know  
think of the artists  
they build perspectives by speculating on truth and reality  
exercising theories of existence.

therefore, there will be no final proofs  
but we will entrust ourselves entirely to the condition of faith  
not faith on something outside, as from here on there will be no  
outside or inside  
but on something that is already here in between us, and this "in  
between", at the same time, are we

we will manage to imagine together a premise  
and we will support our ideas with everything we can

we will struggle with the impossibility of really grasping  
the materiality of these subjects  
but we will embody them  
and in our bodies  
they will matter

our bodies as ultimate devices for communication  
expanding perceptive capacities  
in order to reach subtle levels of information exchange

it's all here  
but our bodies,  
educated and disciplined,  
are restrained by certain established architectures,  
by history  
sociology  
anthropology  
logos  
logics

we think of all that and we are all that  
and we dream of change  
we value the dream as much as we value the bed that we are sleeping  
on  
and we take the concrete for fantasy and the dream for reality  
imagining spaces where multiple realities can play  
and insinuate themselves  
without ever arriving at a definition

we are in search for whatever slight change we can reach  
to weave a thread  
strings, vibrating forms and shapes,  
forgetting and remembering as a whole  
multitude of forms  
yet the whole  
infinite potential of existence

the space curved  
time not linear

we can pick a point  
in the mesh of spacetime,  
we can pick a point

parts of the same particles,  
divided and isolated in space  
will respond equally to whatever stimulation the other is receiving  
profound state of empathy

aren't we little pieces proceeding from one big explosion?  
from one little, extremely dense, spot of dust?  
so we are all, whatever we are, human, animal, vegetal, mineral....  
...what else is there?....  
... we are all reminiscences of the same thing  
are we all entangled then?  
what happens to one, happens to all?

thoughts trying to escape established knowledge  
while taking shelter underneath it

isn't contradiction the only possible coherence?

we will embed ourselves in the contradictions of time  
and from there, move together to create and recreate reality

this is a practice to train our body-imagination  
towards a collective subjectivity  
train ourselves to be in contact with something that is here,  
suspended,  
train our sensitivity to feel the variations of the environment  
train ourselves to be environment as well  
train ourselves to stop being ourselves  
train to un-train whatever we train  
enter a tacit tactic for existing

as scientists theorizing  
as artists fictionalizing  
(or maybe it's the other way around)  
either way it matters

we allow the space to tell us  
we listen deeply  
the space is ourselves  
invisible architects  
we read signs  
believe them  
and act

for this will be an exercise  
a beginning for an exploration of this field

we are going to move in space and time together  
we will try to make tangible the imaginary  
we will build this common space for collective subjectivity to align

all that is here is a key,  
it is just one possible entrance  
a synthesis of the accumulations of encounters that have happened  
around these thoughts

this will be remote dancing

**shifting voices**



## On pedagogical turns and the use of time

Nikos Doulos & Gian Spina

*I can think. I can wait. I can Fast.*  
Heran Hesse, Siddartha

In recent years we have seen a strong increase in the construction of schools as art projects or as new propositions for producing knowledge. Curators and artists present themselves as educators, public programmes have become a sort of new hit, and projects on ephemeral schools are marked as important events.

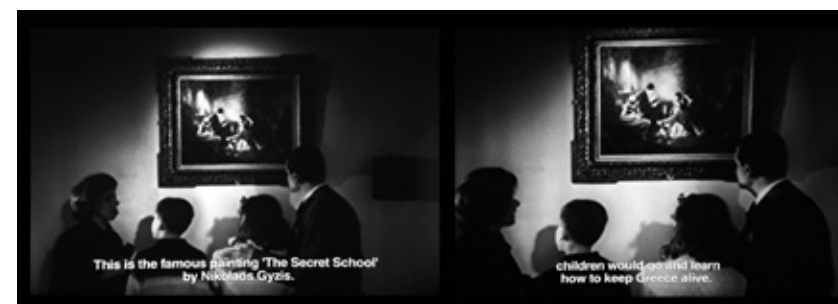
School of Unlearning, Night School, School of Improper Education, School of Everything, School of Death, School of Redistribution, The School of Nature and Principle, The School of Narrative Dance and Other Surprising Things, School of Improper Education... With a quick search one can easily find such projects done by artist-educators which are normally followed by nomenclatures such as an education, dis-education, unlearning, dis-learning, or learning from Athens. A common ground for many of these projects are the ideas of listening as a form of construction, the organization of places for communal gathering, non-hierarchy, and the desire to exchange and compose forms which take distance from the western neoliberal model of knowledge production and circulation.

But what are the consequences and deployments of a non-western-neoliberal proposition inside a neoliberal western environment such as the art world? Are we really willing to deconstruct hierarchies, to accept and embrace this notorious knowledge outside of the status-quo, or are we just using it as an in-vogue commodity in order to gain recognition?

In the nineteenth century, school played a key role in the formation of the nation states in Europe. It was an important weapon for the construction of identity and ideologies and for the development

of discourses of knowledge and power; a real state apparatus which constructed the foundation of what would later be used in a much more sinister way.

One of the main questions when it comes to epistemological turns is, how does one liberate oneself from the socio-historical ideas behind education? Subjective power makes itself present constantly and to be able to analyze and attempt to dismantle those hidden techniques of power may be the biggest task.



"The idea of the 'secret schools' is largely considered to be a national myth that was devised to inspire patriotic feelings in difficult times and to idealize the—often ambiguous—spiritual leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church in the country's collective memory... The topic has continued to receive prominent treatment in Greek history schoolbooks of the past and present century." In: Gioti, Marina, *The Secret School*. Digital video, 11 min, 2009. This work was presented at *documenta 14* in Kassel.

*documenta 14* attempted to learn from Athens, but the question persists: were they really listening? Were they prepared for the change of paradigms within the structures which sustain such an event?

It is necessary to analyze both the collateral effects of such commodification of the school in real life and in the art world and to examine what these learning/teaching attempts could provoke. One departure point for such an inquiry into education could be the analysis of the linguistic implications of the term and the implicit ideologies. Inside 'education' lie the notions of 'bringing forward' and 'bringing up', which point to a positivistic vision of the world while

also raising the question of what is this 'forward' and/or what is this 'up'? In other words, this 'forward' (progress) and this 'up' (north) are still part of a specific ideology, a specific way of seeing the world that is simultaneously connected to something controllable, that shapes subjectivity with its contents and truths and therefore produces power and the possibility of organizing societies according to a specific agenda. Perhaps this is why so many projects regarding school and pedagogy tend to avoid or negate the word education, to suggest the necessity of thinking beyond this ethos, which is attached to the vertical hierarchical axis where one speaks and the alumni (the ones without light) sit, listen, and obey.

So when thinking about un/an/dis-educating we are actually talking not only about a new form of seeing, approaching, and discussing the events, but also about an 'end of a world as we know it', where the necessity of re-addressing the past, re-writing history, and finding ways of re-conducting ourselves becomes an imperative.

At the symposium titled 'School of Everything',<sup>1</sup> held in Kassel and Athens as part of *documenta 14*, Jonas Tinius characterized anthropology as potentially a study of everything and posed questions on how we can "avoid the pitfalls of turning the study of everything into an ideological project of ordering and narrow-mindedness" and on "how one can teach a critical discipline that focuses on appreciating and understanding human experience, and yet is fundamentally based not on theoretical abstraction, but on interacting, doing and living."<sup>2</sup>

His introductory statement echoed with notions of listening, open-endedness and the beautifully 'unfocused' with regards to education: "Anthropology is a discipline that focuses on the study of human beings, on their ways of being, their interactions with one another and the world, which bring into focus even the post- or non-human. It is a discipline that focuses on everything and is therefore, to some extent, beautifully unfocused in its theories and obviously also in its approaches. Anthropological approaches are about listening, doubting; its methods are open-ended, some describe the basis of its knowledge production as a 'deep hanging out'...."<sup>3</sup>

A very similar approach is the one of Nicolas Austin Legros. Perplexed by the restraints and hierarchical methodologies of western pedagogy, he wishes to embark on a two-year cycling expedition from

Athens, all through East Asia and ending in China. His project titled *The Draisian School* originates from the Draisian bike—the ancestor of the bicycle invented by Karl Drais in 1818. The title serves as a metaphor for being on and off the road and for learning to balance between epistemologies (ground knowledge) and interpersonal experiences.

Legros is a master student himself at the School of Fine Arts in Bordeaux (l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art de Bordeaux), and embarks on this expedition as a means to produce a thesis within and beyond the restraints of the academy and through a new educational ecology. He describes the project as 'a school within a school', framed by the appropriation of existing academic tutorial structures enriched by informal encounters and connections with locals as new generators of learning. Geography, history, music, politics, and everyday rituals become the fundament of a sensorial awakening that takes place through a procedural 'being with'. This learning condition positions him in the dual function of a student and a distributor of knowledge (a mediator) among a constellation of 'experts' beyond the geographical restraints of the west.

In a sense, one could read Nicolas Legros' proposition for a school as an anthropological research project, in accordance with Tinius' line of thoughts, and as the tailoring of an education that doesn't simply object to contemporary or western pedagogies but distills from them all essential discursive and reflective particles for its benefit. It is a journey of understanding human experience, a study of everything, and a 'deep hanging out', beautifully unfocused and yet thoroughly assembled.

But surely we are not all eager to jump on a bike and embrace a nomadic lifestyle as a means of learning, and so we must ask: how can we construct spaces of deep hanging out as new pedagogical temporalities that evade epistemological hierarchies and surpass dated educational models? And maybe more importantly, could these spaces actually exist, given that the politics of learning is an integral part of the neoliberal regime of operation? If we are aware that the commodification of the everyday leaves little, if any, space for modes of exchange, imagination, and sensorial awakening beyond the capitalist structures that define productivity through their dogmatic prism, could those zones of learning become places of unlearning, where non-productivity isn't a shut-down but rather exists in opposition to entrenched methods of knowledge production and consumption?

Over the last decade, we have witnessed a plethora of thinkers speaking about the fast changes in human experience, from conversations to walking, from looking to sleeping; a time of permanent syntony in an overexposed world. The subversion or eradication of simpler forms of inhabiting the world creates a form of insomnia, a state of sensory impoverishment, of permanent illumination. Schools have been, with rare exceptions, reinforcing this fast-paced agenda. How then can the school be a place for reclaiming spaces for daydreaming and non-productivity?

We are conditioned to live in a world of 'permanent illumination,'<sup>4</sup> which is the dystopian aftermath of western enlightenment where knowledge production is framed by a photology that surveils and controls it for the sake of productivity and capital benefits. This conditioning serves the appearance of an improvement of our social status, of our economic situation, and of our standard of living. It creates lifestyles and mediates them as desirable truths. What many authors, such as Jonathan Crary, Christophe Bouton, André Lepecki, and Jorge Larrosa Bondia, have perceived is the rise of an impoverishment of experience through the increase of information; a dispossession of the self, a form of amnesia in a disenchanted world "in its eradication of shadows and obscurity and of alternative temporalities."<sup>5</sup>

This is certainly a metaphor, but the regime of information plays an important role when we think about both our daily experiences and the pedagogical turns which are the subject here. However, if we attempt to incorporate those ideas into a more expanded application of pedagogy there should be a place for darkness, not just as a metaphor or antonym of the permanent illumination we are living in, but as place of being in another rhythm, as a possible place of resistance that exists within that which is already out there in the world. André Lepecki calls this potentiality of darkness "the dark promise," which conditions the creation of something away from the fraudulent brightness that the state delivers, "a darkness in the light that operates fugitivity."<sup>6</sup> We could therefore think of the school as a dark promise, as an environment emerging from the temporal condition of deep hanging out, where time can literally make its presence perceived.

One could identify this as a form of escapism, a moment of silence or a pause. But as witnesses of the commodification of those ideas through the commercialization of leisure, we can no longer speak

in those terms. What is truly developed here is a form of learning beyond the imposed politics of time and productivity, a constellation of periodic raptures of some sort that encompass a non-western perception of time that supports and shapes productivity as an elusive entity. And though we talk about a prototype for a school, education, or pedagogy, we are in the most profound way confronted with this fundamental question: how do we deal with the very precious tool we have, which is time; what do we with it? Perhaps this calls for new ways to prevent the complete and total privatization of time, such as a condition of being with and 'feeding' each other and multiple 'others' (human and non-human) through seeing, listening, caring, offering, and thus living; a doing nothing, but doing a lot. While this might appear as a paradox, it does legitimize itself through a temporality that evades deadlines, solid outcomes, a quantification of its processes, and the urgency for the mediation of its encounters.

In late March 2017, the Capacete art residency landed in Athens, to form an approximately eight months residency titled Capacete ATHENS. Transposing its *modus operandi* from South America to Greece, this 'gathering' of ten Latin American and two Greek artists framed itself as an experiment and proposed a first semester of listening, being together, and engaging with *documenta 14* and the local communities without having a necessary goal—actually there were no imperatives in its proposition. That is to say, we were changing and being changed by being, by contemplating and letting things happen, in a programme without a programme. Perhaps this is the common point of some of the ideas which embrace the non-productivist use of time; to concentrate on being-together, on giving phenomena a chance to happen without pressure or imperatives.

To come under the shade of this mango tree with such deliberateness and to experience the fulfillment of solitude emphasize my need for communion. While I am physically alone proves that I understand the essentiality of to be with. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart*

*This text was originally published online in artseverywhere in August 2017, in the middle of the Capacete residency programme.*

See: <<http://artseverywhere.ca/2017/08/22/pedagogical-turns/>>

## Notas

1. See: <<http://www.documenta14.de/en/calendar/23511/the-school-of-everything-at-the-parliament-of-bodies>> and <<http://www.documenta14.de/en/calendar/22574/the-school-of-everything>> Accessed 16 June 2018.
2. Tinius, Jonas, 'Anthropology and/as the Study of Everything? Paradoxes, Potentials, and Pitfalls.' *School of Everything*, Kassel and Athens, July 2017.
3. See: <[http://cyborganthropology.com/Deep\\_Hanging\\_Out](http://cyborganthropology.com/Deep_Hanging_Out)> Accessed 16 June 2018. Jonas Tinius discussed this concept in his presentation.
4. Crary, Jonathan, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. London and New York: Verso, 2014. p. 14.
5. Transcription from a recording of: Lepecki, André, 'Are You Alive Or Not? Looking at Art Through the Lens of Theatre', at the Studium Generale Rietveld Academie Conference-Festival, Amsterdam, March 2015.
6. Ibid.

## documenta has nothing for you

Gris García

"I'm not a curator", says Preciado with his characteristic assurance.

If I believe it, it's despite the fact that his name is credited as curator of public programmes for *documenta 14*. Preciado, besides the definitions that one can give of him—or the thousands of possible introductions one can make for him—is, to me, a great theoretician, orator, and pedagogue. Never before him have I had a teacher that generated knowledge and constructed in a critical manner the idea of collective thinking.

His hands move frantically when he tries to explain his position in *documenta 14*, while we listen with attention, the audience of one of the talks of the panel 'School of Everything' in Kassel.<sup>1</sup> He tells us about his latest experience at MACBA<sup>2</sup> in 2015 and the way in which he was expelled by the director of that museum. The trouble: a paper sculpture (emphasis on this frail material) in which one can see the king of Spain in an 'uncomfortable' position, taking part in a threesome with Domitila (a Bolivian activist) and a dog. This piece was part of a show commissioned by him and Valentín Roma titled *The Beast and the Sovereign*,<sup>3</sup> that the institution tried to censor a few days before its opening. The alleged offense to the crown cost him his job and led to the closure of the Independent Studies Programme (PEI—Programa de Estudios Independientes) that he had been directing for a couple of years. Paradoxically, these events ended up being in themselves a metaphor for the domination game between the institutions and their agents, enhancing the curatorial discourse that put in question the autonomy and the power of the nation state.

How much can an institution 'crack' itself open? Is it true that one can generate such ruptures from the inside? Is it naive to want to play the Trojan horse? I ask myself these questions while Preciado speaks of how his work has always aimed to parasitize the institution and how, even if sometimes that has resulted in 'failure', he has kept trying to put in

evidence non-acknowledged knowledge and has kept questioning the borderlines between academy/museum/institution and/or theoretician/curator/teacher, perching in the fine lines in the middle of those. If there is anyone I can consider a specialist in questioning the frontiers between things, it's him. To pass from being Beatriz to being Paul, to present oneself as a non-curator and be credited as curator—these things make me remember his position in the world: not to recognize oneself when looking in the mirror, to redefine everything each time one starts something.

To continue with the PEI example, it's an exercise of mediation between the University Institution and the Museum Institution that starts from these questions: how to validate a program of radical pedagogy? How to use a museum as a space for study and critical thinking? How to use the university to obtain a degree? In that or in some other fashion those questions have been answered in the more than 10 years in which the program lasted, starting with constantly questioning MACBA, asking many questions—to PEI itself, to the institution, to the city—, questioning its working practice, demanding better conditions—asking for presuppositions, occupying spaces—, causing confusion and reviving the idea of what a museum is capable (or not capable) of. In the end, the links built between us who studied here resulted in—and implied—a watershed in our lives. And by the way, nowadays we have a master's degree, abstractly titled 'Advanced Museum Studies and Critical Theory', issued by the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

"The museum has been, and always is, a space of heteronormativity"—the same as the academy, art, and everything else, I think—, it's not necessary to specify numbers or details, this problem has been made visible for years in the work of many artists (such as Guerrilla Girls, Mónica Mayer, Maris Bustamante, etc.) and has been approached in the most diverse manners by critics and theoreticians. Preciado does not hesitate to say that the institution is not a place where freedom dwells, or where artists, curators, and cultural agents do what they love. I share this idea, but at the same time it makes me bitter when he assures that many parallel revolutions happen in the world and dares to compare his 'micro-revolutionary' situation in the museum with the experience of Ahmad Alkhatieb—a Syrian soccer player who was invited to the roundtable and had previously shared the tale of how he fled his homeland. The comparison not only seems out of place, it also makes me cringe. I don't even dare to compare what happens inside a museum

with the situation in Syria. I shared the feelings of awkwardness and error with Jari Malta through gestures and glances when his words reached us again. "Freedom is not a natural right", said Foucault.

Preciado linked this to multiple references by mentioning the revolution in Haiti, a milestone that is constantly present in his expositions. However, his attempts to give visibility to the way he understands the idea of revolution and how he uses the concept of minorities to influence the institution are weakened when he becomes aware—at times—of the delicacy of the topic and reaches his current position at *documenta*.

For the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of this event they decided to move from Germany to Greece in an attempt to assess the European crisis and widen the notion of 'south' (an ambiguous notion, one that undoubtedly depends on who is talking and where one is looking from). This act of transferring *documenta 14* has been seen and labeled by many as a colonial gesture, for many reasons. Preciado talks about this labeling in a superficial way, encircling the idea while excusing the investigative processes of the show, as if conceiving them in Athens could legitimize the result. This reminded me that it seems to me that one of the key questions is always, how does the space in which an idea or concept is developed influence its results?

To live in Athens for two years, as Preciado did, must have been overwhelming. To enter the complexity of a country such as Greece is not easy: it's a space where many troubling issues pertaining contemporary reality on a world level are at stake. Athens deals with the consequences of the crisis at the humanitarian level; its people survive in a weakened economy made worse by austerity measures; they face a severe drug problem and lack of narcotics control among the more vulnerable communities; they deal with conflicts between anarchist groups and the police while integrating or displacing refugee camps and occupied spaces that are constantly under attack. It's a place where one can clearly see the decadence and death of the economic war waged by Europe, not only in 'European' places, but also in those places outside of its borders, many of them labeled as 'south', starting with *documenta* itself.

If this event attempts to put these failures and tensions in evidence, it does it by incarnating exactly that: failures and tensions.

Even with more than 56 sites, shows, lectures, debates, projections; all of the vast programme of the event, it often resulted in a forced attempt that intensified polarization. Whether because of its own way of working (conflicts with its workers, the absence of links with the artistic community that lives and works in Athens, the lack of communication and mediation with the people of the city), or when trying to relate the realities of two spaces as different as Germany and Greece, with so many layers of history, debt and impositions.

These points and others appear as doubts in the discourse of Preciado, who 67 days after the opening of *documenta 14* in Athens seems to realize it, but without risking to enter very deeply in this debate. He has already told us a couple of times that *documenta* itself has not left him with any time to think. It seems obvious to me that the overflow of activities and programming do not leave time for anything. Even in a fit of visible exhaustion, he is able to mention *documenta* is the least critical place, where he has curated the least, and that it has not been able to give way to dialogue and collective thinking. Although it has its charm to hear him complain and make us laugh with some of his—unexpected, for many—comments, he shows us a contradictory Paul, who is torn between telling us about the construction processes of the Parliament of the Bodies (and its place in Athens and Kassel) and letting us know that *documenta* is not a place for everyone, as much as he tries to make it so.

He decides to talk about the first point and tells us about the idea that surrounds the public programme. It arose a couple of years before, after the parliament decided to ignore the response of the Greek people when they answered 'Oxi' ('No') to the referendum on whether to remain within the European Union and abide by its measures of austerity. The reaction of the people and of the bodies gathered in streets and public spaces, expressing their discontent, gave shape to this concept that today is called the 'Parliament of Bodies', the idea of forming a new living parliament. In Athens it was developed in the Parko Eleftherias, a place that was used as a torture centre during the dictatorship in the 1960s and '70s and that today is a museum space. The programme started months before the opening of the *documenta* and had tried to fill the city with some 'notes' that prepared the ground for what was coming—whether this worked or not is another issue. It is important to point out that those of us who make up that parliament are a very specific contemporary art audience: international artists/

curators, art students (mostly from northern European programmes), the *documenta* team and some local agents. In truth, that parliament lacked Greek representativeness, but—paradoxically—this does not concern Preciado, who has already announced not only that he is not interested in the audience, but that he even believes that it does not exist and asks us to tell him, if we manage to know who it is. Which raises the inevitable question: who is this *documenta* directed to?

Unlike in Athens, in Kassel the Parliament of the Bodies takes place in the Fridericianum, the museum that houses the main *documenta* exhibition. Not only that, it also uses the 'golden space' of the site in a conscious decision to 'steal' the sacred space from the curatorship, leaving this site as a space for debate and encounter, supposedly making it impossible to be turned into a showroom. Although in theory this breaks the narrative of the curators, Preciado has decided to install *Polemos*, a piece commissioned to Andreas Angelidakis that consists of a war tank formed by modules with military patterns that are divided and distributed in the space as possible seats, occupying the room and forming a kind of agora that serves as a place for dialogue or rest. This piece is not only the scene of the Parliament of Bodies, but its use also involves the gesture of literally dismantling a war tank, thus pointing out the role that Germany, and specifically Kassel, have in the production of military weapons and their impact on the country's economy and therefore, on Europe.

A day before learning this story I had been in that space resting from the exhaustion produced by *documenta*. The feeling of resting on military patterns at first caused me displeasure, but at the time its comfort allowed me to take a nap for at least 15 minutes. When I woke up, I saw a couple of boys and a girl playing there as if the place belonged to them. The children pretended to build a war tank, precisely what had been dismantled only a few days before. I was surprised by their gestures and grimaces, by the realization that even at such a young age they managed to *perform* what we understand by masculinity. As if at 8 years old they already knew everything about what 'a man should be': they tried to build that tank with all the modules they could, their goal was to make it huge, gigantic, they climbed on top of the modules to reach higher and make the tank even more monstrous than it already was, although their eyes could not even see it. At the same time there was a kind of 'counterpart': the girl, who looked at them in bewilderment and who had built a slide from which she let herself be



carried to the ground and skid against the tank, trying to tear it down. Each time she slid down, I was flooded with the emotion of thinking that she would destroy the tank, but despite many attempts she did not succeed. When she became frustrated for not managing to knock it down, she proposed a new strategy: to build houses. Then began the fight to 'steal' all the possible modules so that the boys could not continue to build the tank. That scene provoked a mixture of feelings between sadness, discouragement, and the certainty of the evil we are doing. The children playing to build tanks and the girl playing to build houses—sadly—were not random, there, in the Parliament of Preciado.



The talk of Paul we attended concluded with three ideas that allowed him to work on *documenta 14*: impossibility, 'failure' and 'Stop'. Although these three sound very similar, he nuanced them when the time came to explain them. The first is about the impossibility of thinking, being, participating, speaking, dialoguing. The impossibility of capturing everything that happens in an event of such magnitude. He understood 'failure' in terms of everything that implies the event itself and its multiple consequences, whether visible—such as cultural tourism or economic impact—or intangible; the affections, the emotions, the relationships, the health, the stress, the fatigue, the exhaustion—that is to say, everything that Preciado perspired at that moment. Finally, he spoke of the 'Stop': with this he literally referred to stopping. His need to stop doing and learn to say no. He mentioned that his proposal for the next *documenta* is that there is no *documenta 15*. He even claimed that we should say no to *documenta*, which made

Jari and me laugh. Our laughter reached him and he did not hesitate to point out that he understood why we laughed, that he knew it was because we saw him there, without having said no, being part of *documenta* and with the corresponding credits, but that if someone had warned him beforehand what to expect, he would have appreciated it: "*documenta* has nothing for you".

At the end of the talk we approached him with much desire to tighten his fatigue with a hug. He asked us then if we had already decided to do something for the Parliament of Bodies. That he was still waiting for our proposal...

I came back surprised, confused—as always—with those contradictions and the many things that figure arouses in me, the figure that had then revealed much of what we had been thinking about the effects of such an event. Exhausted, overwhelmed by the motivational phrases spread around the Airbnb apartment where I stayed, I wondered: who does this *documenta* make happy?



## Notes

1. 'School of Everything' took place at *documenta 14* in Kassel on 11 and 13 July 2017, with guests that talked about politically and artistically motivated initiatives to share knowledge and think education as the key to social change.
2. Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona.
3. For more information about the show, see: <<http://www.macba.cat/es/expo-bestia-soberano>>. Accessed 28 May 2018.

## Make problems everywhere

Fabiana Faleiros

Viva the fat ones,  
Viva the brown ones  
I want to be a woman without models to imitate  
To be a faggot you have to be brave  
Disobedience  
In spite of you I will be happy  
I don't carry your semen  
I vomit your humiliation  
Woman, not submissive nor devoted  
Free, pretty and crazy  
Indigenous, whores and lesbians together  
Rebellious sisterhood  
Sovereignty in my country  
Sovereignty in my body

"Bolivia is the ass of Latin America", said Maria Galindo in *The Apatriate Society of the Political Others*, one of the societies which formed The Parliament of Bodies, the public programme of documenta 14, organized by Paul Preciado. Maria Galindo, who is an anarcho-feminist and one of the founders of Mujeres Creando, an unarmed Bolivian urban guerrilla collective, presented her Manifesto of Feminist Insurrection in Kassel and Athens (or the ass of Europe, as she said). Bolivia represents for Latin America what Greece represents for Europe: a non-place, a peripheral place. And it's from this place that she introduced herself. Not with the intention of claiming a national identity, but because she "likes to enjoy the ass", this place that doesn't count, that doesn't have weight. With Documenta coming to an end, it's worth paying attention to the two parallel, contradictory and non-binary endings which Maria Galindo brought to her talk in Athens and Kassel.

### 1.1 Learning from Mujeres Creando

Based on the experience of feminist activism that has been taking the streets of Bolivia as a political and social forum for more than twenty years, Maria presented her theory of subversion with concepts that she takes, in part, from her book *¡A Despatricular!: Feminismo Urgente*. Her discourse emerges from concrete actions and it is implicated in the invention of new politics, new utopias, and new resistance strategies. Mujeres Creando has already invaded a live television programme on the state-run Bolivian TV channel, whose general manager was accused of sexual harassment. They hold pro-abortion demonstrations in public spaces where women who have had the experience of abortion bear witness, and offer concrete anti-neoliberal policy services, such as negotiations with banks to clear debts of unemployed and indebted women. It's from the streets and from the *Casa Virgen de los Deseos*, an autonomous community centre located in La Paz and Santa Cruz and not attached to any political parties, NGOs, or governments, neither left nor right wing, that Mujeres Creando articulate their non-violent but threatening and dangerous struggle against the patriarchy—against both state violence and domestic violence. Maria belongs to this collective body which has a daycare centre and a radio station from where women broadcast news about their struggles or denounce abuses they have suffered. They also publish political-educational material such as the *13 Hours of Rebellion* documentary.





In *The Parliament of Bodies* Maria began by describing the dissolution of the proletariat in the context of neoliberalism. She continued her manifesto stressing the need to create complex and heterogeneous struggles in the face of agonizing representative liberal democracy—and Greece is an ideal place to say that democracy is a simulation apparatus. With the fall of the universal proletarian subject who operated as a cohesive figure in the struggle, the only hero, the male protagonist, is in crisis. The heroic saviour act of martyrdom has lost its meaning as a social intervention.

Highlighting the neoliberal rhetoric of demands and concessions of rights, which tries to turn the feminist fight into an addendum of liberalism, Maria wonders if it makes sense to call yourself a feminist today, and criticizes the phenomenon of 'NGOization' which in the 1980s and '90s attempted to institutionalize feminism throughout Latin America. The role of NGOs in the 'failed feminist revolution' was developed, along with the structural adjustment imposed by the World Bank in Latin America, as a neocolonial project which built the relationship between gender and the development myth, based on the generalization of the category 'woman' by biological condition. This appropriation of feminism, which she calls "gender technocracy", camouflaged class and racial privileges through the discourse of including women in positions of state power without bringing about significant changes, such as the legalization of abortion and the decrease of feminicides. For her, in the face of this neoliberal, white, middle-class, NGO feminism whose banner is inclusivity and equality, one of the most important critical goals is to expose its class character and its Eurocentric origin, imposed and replicated as a global model for the 'liberation' of women.

Therefore, the re-appropriation of the word 'feminism' is central to a laboratory of 'concrete feminism' such as *Mujeres Creando*. Working with both utopias and what is urgent here and now, they are experts in creating resistance strategies to break with the linguistic fossils of the Left. Their struggles are connected to the daily occupation of the streets, with the aesthetics and life of the smugglers, street vendors and women who build a parallel anti-state social fabric that guarantees forms of subsistence. They occasionally navigate the white supremacist art scene in order to gain visibility, money, and to cause a certain stomachache. They are not interested in the exotic and colonizing art world: "Because we also need some fun. Our revenge is to be happy."

## 1.2 There is an outside

But how do we carry out these complex and heterogeneous struggles, when they often become empty political formulas in constant and exhausting cycles of appropriation, whether by the state, the market, or by the slogans of big art exhibitions? Producing other notions of justice, well-being and everyday life is no longer a task for the universal macho-proletarian, but for a collectively situated subjectivity. "In which furnace can we cook this complexity?", she asked, pointing out that this construction is only possible through a real political subject who makes the ideological operation of connecting patriarchy with other fundamental elements of the struggle. This subject is also a metaphorical one: the indigenous women, the whores, the lesbians and the insane all together form a rebellious sisterhood. Only these forbidden, unacceptable and indigestible alliances can challenge the neoliberal domestication of dissident voices which makes us fall into the 'logic of pairs' (faggots with faggots, peasants with peasants, prostitutes with prostitutes). What interests Maria is the connection between subjects, not politics of identity.

The Manifesto also touches on the question of self-victimization. To take the self as a point of enunciation can be politically subversive in marking differences, seeking peers, and moving away from the universal subject, but to perpetuate this gesture of enunciation and self-affirmation can turn identity into a comfortable, self-reliant, social masochism, an ambivalent position between putting yourself in the role of the victim and becoming a myth of oneself, *the one who can only react*. Maria also criticizes another comfortable place, the art scene, which often uses the third person: to aestheticize the pain of the other, to talk for the poor, the prostitute, the marginalized, exerting power and violence while perversely obtaining applause and rewards.

The last point of the Manifesto of Feminist Insurrection is revolution. For Maria Galindo, the Marxist-Leninist conception of revolution left behind the inheritance of the unreachable: the revolution as a heroic act of killing the enemy to take the state power of a third party. The current Latin American Left has become an umbrella of great ideological discussions that do not translate into concrete policies. Therefore, it is necessary "to wash, cook, weave, another way of understanding the revolution", between the resignation of neoliberal and state blackmail and the archaic and absurd concept of revolution.

The place of revolution is the street, the place of politics par excellence. In the street all social complexities converge. The street is a political place, theoretically and philosophically indispensable. At the same time it's a horizon, a utopia, an impossibility. It's a place of reinvention which allows one to get out of the liberal voracity that engulfs everything, all possible identities and policies. Maria Galindo understands the street as an outside of the art institution, the parliament, the academy. Talking about Latin America, women are taking to the streets across the continent. "And this outside wants justice and happiness with a furious open mouth that states and institutions can not satisfy. The righteousness that we dream of and imagine is not satisfied by the institution."

### 1.3 The Ends

The Manifesto finishes with two possible ends to the schizophrenic situation of documenta 14. Originally, there was a third end, a participatory one. But the necessary material didn't arrive in Kassel nor Athens (it got stuck somewhere between the USA and Bolivia, since every package that leaves Bolivia has a label which says 'dangerous' or 'narco-bound'). Thus, we have two parallel, contradictory endings. Two non-exclusive, non-binary possibilities. One is happy and the other one is supposedly sad. The happy ending was printed on an official paper of the Bolivian Parliament. Maria had stolen the sheets to print the single article of the Parliament of Bodies:

*The Parliament of Bodies is constituted as a non-institution established in the streets. The Parliament of Bodies is the street, as a radical outsider from where history can be modified and created. The intention is to open a space of confluence of disparate and disconnected fights in order to break the conceptual framework which we inevitably fall into. The idea is to give us the opportunity to exchange forms of subversion, so that our fights can be less anguishing, funnier, more effective and slower. The only purpose of this parliament is to generate a world disorder in multiple senses, at the same time. In this parliament we do not legislate, we do not concede nor expropriate rights, construct nor exploit the political representation of the no-one. In this parliament we breathe, we conspire and we transpire.*

For her supposedly sad ending in Athens, Maria emphasized that her presence in documenta 14 wasn't naive, and that she was aware of the institutional and political contradictions of the space she was in.

Then she asked us to be suspicious of Documenta, and ourselves. With a pair of scissors she opened a paper box full of fake euro bills, brought directly from Bolivia. The notes represented the 35 million euro which was the budget for documenta 14. She threw the money on the floor and at the audience, while chanting: "For those who think they were underpaid by Documenta... for those who think that the money was badly spent and offends the structural adjustment in Greece... for those who think that in Documenta the truthful hierarchies are measured with money... for those who think that the criticism towards Documenta in Athens begins and finishes with how much money was spent..."



For the sad ending in Kassel, Maria asked a man from the audience to join her on stage, where she had an object from Bolivia, which stood in contrast to the ostentatious *Parthenon of Books* installation by Marta Minujín. The object cost 10 euro and signified a form of survival in the streets of Bolivia: it was a shoe-polishing toolbox. She asked the German man who answered her call to blindfold and gag her with a cloth. Then she started polishing his shoes. A living metaphor which touches upon a historical trauma. A living metaphor for what Germany represents to Bolivia: an imperialist country which extracts raw materials for the price of a 'dead chicken.'

## How to take care of your voice: exhaustion and other habitual affects when working within large-scale art institutions<sup>1</sup>

Alkisti Efthymiou

I would like to start this text by sharing a short video on YouTube: <<https://bit.ly/2lhBm93>>, in the hope of slightly disrupting the convention of the essay format. In this video, Kerri Ho—international vocal coach and internet expert on vocal matters—provides advice on **maintaining a healthy, rich voice**. She suggests to (1) warm up your voice every day, even when you are not singing, and (2) take care of your body by exercising and getting enough sleep. “A free body is equal to a free voice”, she proclaims casually. But freedom is tough to grasp when neither your body nor your voice depend solely on your individual actions to remain ‘free’.

I am not a singer myself but what I am trying to do here is to think otherwise, with you, with regard to voicing: voicing an opinion, articulating a position, uttering a stance, as a femininity in this still deeply patriarchal world. And I am wondering whether exercises like the one you saw in the video could be of any assistance, if taken non-figuratively and with a bit of lightness.

I must say here that I treat the concept of ‘the voice’ both literally (as the sound that comes from my vocal cords, and—more generally and inclusively—as the faculty of utterance) and metaphorically (in the sense of opinion or right of expression), pertaining to the perception that these modalities are constitutively interlinked. Functioning vocal cords are, of course, not the only means for one to ‘have a voice’—gestures, signs, movements of the body are equally important media, at least in my mind. Even silence, when read as *such* (and not as speechlessness or censorship), can be another—an ‘other’—form of **voicing a stance**.



**2 Find your natural speaking voice placement.** The placement and pitch of your voice should sit in the middle of your range. Be mindful of not speaking too low, too high, too nasal or with rasp. To find your natural dynamic voice, answer a few questions positively with “Mmmm”. There you go! That is your natural pitch. Try to speak at that level most of the time.

One basic advice that most of the websites I looked at give, websites about how to take care of your voice, is to “**find your natural voice pitch**”, your natural speaking voice. It means that the placement and pitch of your voice should sit in the middle of your range, not too low, not too high, not too nasal or with rasp. *To find your natural dynamic voice, answer a few questions positively with “Mmmm”. There you go! That is your natural pitch. Try to speak at that level most of the time.*

But how can I find my ‘natural voice’ in the context of an art institution? Do I need to answer positively with “Mmmm”, and there I go? What is my ‘natural opinion’, and how can I express it? Or, rather, is there ever a ‘natural opinion’, a ‘natural voice’ that is resting somewhere in me and could come forward? This insistence on ‘naturalness’ is stressful, is in itself exhausting. It requires you to be constantly aware of how you’re speaking, as if you have an unlimited capacity for self-consciousness, regardless of social norms and pressures. But screaming and whispering are also exhausting, as many vocal training websites point out.

This issue of ‘finding your own voice’—which is also what they advise these days if you want to become successful in creative fields—has been bothering me a lot lately. I keep looking for it and have not been able to find it. Or at least, I have not been able to recognize it, to recognize a voice as *my voice*, within the art world, and more specifically within large-scale art institutions.

Let’s get back to the issue of naturalness for a minute. As **Anne Carson** stresses in her essay *The Gender of Sound*, “very few women in public life do not worry that their voices are too high or too light or too shrill to command respect”.<sup>2</sup> She offers the example of Margaret Thatcher, who trained for years with a vocal coach to make her voice sound more like those of the other Honourable Members of Parliament and still earned the nickname ‘Attila the Hen’.

In 2018, long after Carol Gilligan published her seminal study *In a Different Voice*, masculinities and femininities continue to articulate themselves distinctively.<sup>3</sup> Soundness of mind, moderation, self-control, and temperance in the use of sound and language are all virtues that produce ‘**the voice of reason**’, which is still the dominant (and masculine) form of public expression that organizes patriarchal thinking on ethical and emotional matters. Whatever utterance strays off from these virtues is considered less worthy of listening to. To quote Carson again, “what differentiates man from beast, male from female, civilization from wilderness is the use of rationally articulated speech: *logos*”.<sup>4</sup>



The Western art world, where I found myself working in, is part of the larger patriarchal structures that still organize our societies, and operates by the very same logic, even when it pretends not to be. I find it, therefore, extremely difficult to locate ‘my natural voice’ as if it *could* be different from the voice I am *called* (by society) to be talking in in order to be heard, to be included, to be respected, to be recognized.

I wondered whether following such advice as ‘take care of your body’ or ‘warm up every day’ would help. In some cases it did, but I couldn’t help but feel exhausted by the process of trying to articulate my thoughts in a way that they make reasonable, comfortable, appropriate sense to the institutional framework surrounding me. And the problem, or rather, the sentiment, remains: **why do I still feel muted?**

\* \* \*

In light of this question, I will now try to share with you my experience of working within two art institutions, the Athens Biennale and *documenta 14*, and how this work shaped both my affective disposition and the search for my voice.

I will start with a short overview of the activities of the Athens Biennale, to give a bit of context in case you might not be familiar with the institution.

The **Athens Biennale** was conceived by three individuals active in the arts, who wished to partake more actively in the emerging Greek contemporary art scene: Xenia Kalpaktsoglou, a curator; Poka-Yio, an artist; and Augustine Zenakos, an art critic. Like many other peripheral biennials, the Athens Biennale responded to the city’s lack of art institutions and the associated absence of a web of artistic production, development and exchange. In 2005 they announced they would curate the first Athens Biennale, titled **Destroy Athens**, which took place in September 2007. The directors/curators decided to start off this first edition with a bang, to make as loud a statement as possible and produce a biennial that could be compared to any other big international art event in terms of format, scale, calibre and visibility.

The second Athens Biennale was titled **Heaven** and opened in the summer of 2009. It was a very ambitious project, realized in a moment of transition, still too early for anyone to imagine the depth

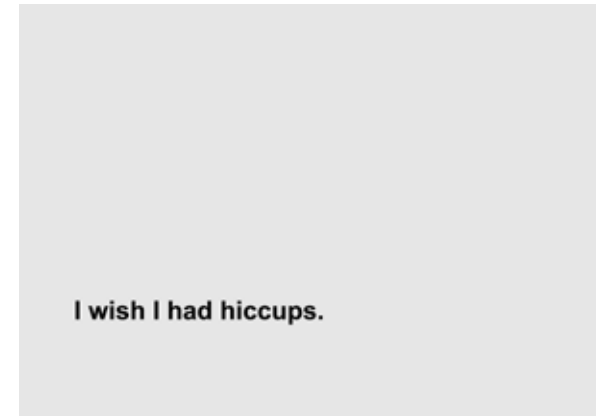
of the crisis that was to follow. As successful as it was in its over-identification with the biennial format (too many curators, too many artists, too many venues, too many events), it wasn't attended by that many visitors and most parallel activities seemed detached from the stakes of the exhibition itself.

By the autumn of 2010 the Greek debt crisis had erupted and the country was to become the ground for an experiment of harsh austerity, rife with insecure state structures and a breeding ground for fascist tendencies. In the meantime the Athens Biennale was gearing up for its third edition, **Monodrome**, which was curated by the two directors (as the third one had left) and Nicolas Bourriaud. Driven by the realization that producing *another* contemporary art exhibition just wasn't enough, this Biennale had to be fluid, non-linear and collective. It was a very local project, hard to read at first instance without some understanding of the Greek context, yet an insightful contemplation on the conditions from which it was born.

Since Greece was still—and remains to this day—in crisis, the Athens Biennale produced its fourth edition once again as a response to the situation. Titled **Agora**, it took place in the building of the Old Athens Stock Exchange and was curated by a team of forty-five artists, curators, theorists, and creative practitioners. Aiming to “explore creative alternatives to a state of bankruptcy”, it was structured around the pertinent question: “Now what?” It proposed the ‘discursive’ exhibition model and unfolded less through the exhibited artworks and more through the one-hundred events that it hosted over a span of fifty-four days. It was the most heavily attended of all the Biennales.

*Agora* took place in 2013 and you might wonder what happened next, in 2015. Well, the fifth edition of the Biennale was titled **Omonoia** (the Greek word for ‘concord’) and is the most difficult to explain and talk about. Not only because this was the one that provoked in me, in the most literal sense, the feeling of exhaustion and not having a voice, but also because, for a number of reasons, it was a failed project. And failure is difficult to come to terms with.

Let me start from where I started.



I started working at the Athens Biennale in 2010, in my early twenties. I was full of aspirations at that time and hadn't worked in any art setting that sounded as big and as important. *Monodrome*, the third Athens Biennale, was my first. I worked as a voluntary production assistant and then as a tour guide, doing mostly trivial yet necessary tasks that no one else had time to do. It was a formative period for me, amidst the general restlessness of ‘the crisis’—I wanted to believe that I had finally found something to hold on to.

Then came the fourth Athens Biennale, *Agora*, in 2013. I was curious about how it was going to work out and felt very excited to be part of such a large curatorial team and meet new people and discuss and learn things. I was silent in most of the meetings, because I was working non-stop at the office and had no time for research and didn't think I had anything to say... But still, I clung to the idea that this was something crucial for the local art scene and for my quest to find my own place in it. In the end I missed all the fun because I had to go to London and start my master's degree.<sup>5</sup>

Then I came back from London and I spoke with the Biennale directors again about my potential involvement. The Biennale had won a prize from the European Cultural Foundation for *Agora* in April 2015, and they even paid us to travel to Brussels and meet with Dutch queens and princesses. That was a huge confidence boost. Adam Szymczyk, the artistic director of *documenta 14*, was also very keen to collaborate—he publically said that *Agora* had influenced him greatly



in deciding to locate *documenta* in Athens. The collaboration never worked out in the end.

The team decided to continue working, even though it was quite clear that we were all burnt out and lacked a strong motivation to continue. We were only six people at the office. Most of us had second jobs to earn a living.

What to do next, after *Agora*? We couldn't really return to the exhibition or festival format. We wanted to do something else, something more 'ground-breaking': a biennial that was not a biennial anymore. Notice how I am starting now to use the pronoun 'we' as I refer to my work for the Biennale. I find it impossible to avoid this type of identification when I am involved in something that I feel attached to, like it has become an integral part of myself. This 'we' will stay with me throughout the text on purpose, because any other pronoun may be more neutral, but would sound too dishonest or detached.

Xenia, one of the directors, became a mother and she needed some stability. We all wanted to feel secure and were too tired to keep working in the same precarious conditions. We decided to slow things down, to prolong the biennial time. Instead of producing an event in 2015 and another in 2017, we decided to stay open for two years and to finally try to transition from a *never-becoming-institution* to an *ever-becoming-institution*.<sup>6</sup>

It became obvious from the beginning that it was impossible to do this without a plan, without a framework, without a team, without money, but none of us really had either the energy or the will to find all these missing elements. It looked almost suicidal to maintain a continuous public programme under these circumstances. And we turned to our old habit, of loud appearance and silent disappearance, of moments of visibility and condensed activity and moments of invisibility and recuperation. But even that was too much to handle, and exhaustion very quickly kicked in.

An anthropologist from London was invited to orchestrate the whole thing. Nobody was a curator, which was a way to horizontalize the content-producing process or another way to avoid responsibility. We didn't know what art to show and we had run out of ideas. We invited artists and socially-engaged collectives to work together on fighting

off precarity. But working together without a transparent structure to contain us, without a holding environment, was no longer enough. What we had in freedom we lacked in care. That's where confusion kicked in.

In this state of confusion we focused solely on the realization of projects, on the tedious everyday admin. We didn't allow ourselves any room for reflection on the contents, on the direction things were going. Maybe we were scared to foresee a failure. We were merely trying to stay afloat. Boredom kicked in.

Meanwhile I was very excited by this second master's I had started, in Gender Studies at Panteion University in Athens. I had found something else to hold on to. I tried to understand what the Biennale meant to me at this point but couldn't. Throughout its editions, gender and feminism were hardly ever discussed as issues worth addressing within the team—not that they were brought forward in any other Greek art institution, but the Biennale had always aspired to be the most political of all. When I brought up such issues, I was mostly ignored or frowned upon. The patriarchal sexist tendencies within the Greek cultural scene were not regarded as a topic interesting enough to be scrutinized. Although instituting *otherwise* was always at stake, feminist practices of instituting were never a reference point.

My dedication to gender studies was read as a 'betrayal' to the promise of stability for the Biennale. I was clearly 'not committed enough' to saving it. But I had searched for solutions; I had tried, for too long. And then I started wondering, how can I be so attached to this *almost institution*? It pushed me over multiple times. My work was taken for granted. My opinions were disregarded. My suggestions exploited. I wasn't even getting paid. Bitterness kicked in, as a defense.

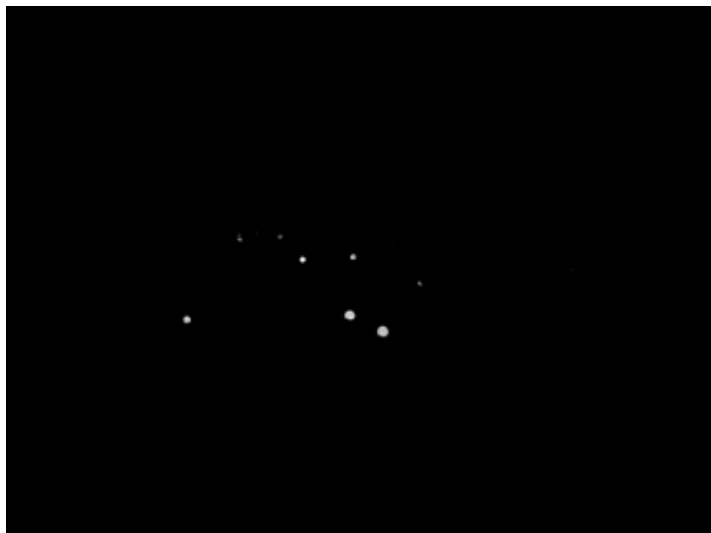
I realized all these feelings were not only specific to the Athens Biennale. Can there ever be a space of freedom and agency without co-optation and subjection? How could I cope with this ambivalence around me? That was a moment when feelings truly became mixed. And when feelings become so mixed, words tend to lose their grasp. When I have to talk about them, as I am doing now, I really wish I had hiccups.

I felt like this...



Marcel Broodthaers, *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)*, 1969,  
film still extracted from YouTube.

<[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L6JO-U\\_ts8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L6JO-U_ts8)> Accessed 26 May 2018.



Let's go back to the institution now and try to think of its predicament as a result of certain **habits**:

- When **crisis** becomes a habit—when it looks like everything's falling apart and there is no way out, and you continuously find yourself adapting and adjusting to conditions that keep shifting beyond your control, like treading water without drowning—you get so attuned to working (or living) this way, until it reaches the point where it feels like this is the *only* way to work or live.
- When **precarity** becomes a habit—when life becomes a constant training in contingency management, and you get accustomed to working with no insurance, no stable income, no set responsibilities and time-schedule—you are forced to find creative ways of *coping with*, otherwise you fall.
- When **ambition** becomes a habit—when you are persistently attached to an insatiable desire to grow bigger and succeed better, to try beyond the possible, to gain even more recognition, to draw even more attention to yourself—to the point where you completely lose touch with where you started from.
- When **subversion** becomes a habit—when you are addicted to an urge to constantly reinvent yourself, in order not to become assimilated into the normative oppressive system that governs your being—when you are insistently trying not to settle for any identity and convention—to the point that everything seems like a mere exercise in words or gestures.

All these habits seemed to exist without the slightest attention to care, to process, to feeling, to listening to each other. A voice that asked for those things could not be heard, because it would compromise the habitual rationality of the patterns described above. A voice that asked for those things was the voice of **the feminist killjoy**, the voice that projects her insides to the outside, the voice that dares to say whatever is better left unsaid. In Anne Carson's words, "by projections and leakages of all kinds—somatic, vocal, emotional, sexual—females [are considered to] expose or expend what should be kept in. Females blurt out a direct translation of what should be formulated indirectly".<sup>7</sup>

The dominant, oppressive reaction to this leakage is, “Shut up!” or “Be quiet!” And I went quiet, until I decided to leave. The feeling of exhaustion, most of all, had become so urgent that the work-dynamic wasn’t capable of containing it anymore.



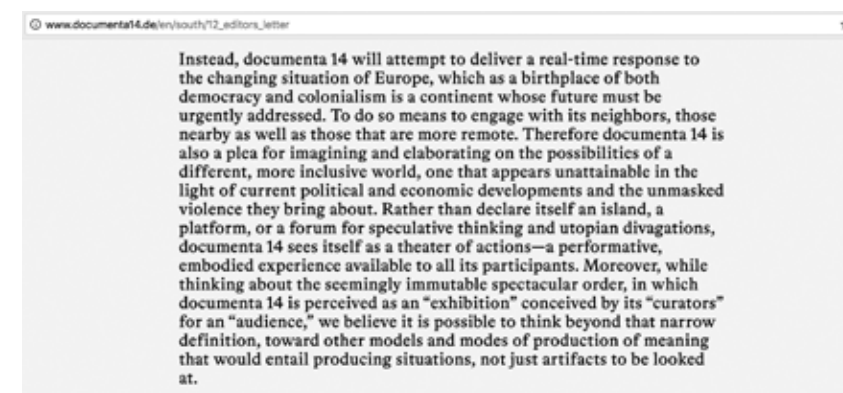
With hindsight, after months of reflection and analysis, I find it valid to describe my relation to the Biennale as a **relation of “cruel optimism”**, where the promise of institutional stability could never be fulfilled.<sup>8</sup> A few of us held on to this promise for a long time, because admitting the impossibility of its realization, or admitting defeat, would have left us sort of hopeless. When I realized that the Biennale will not—cannot—offer me what I wanted, that’s when my attachment frayed and all these negative emotions (exhaustion, confusion, boredom, bitterness) became something felt as *such*. They spilled relentlessly out of the insecure working conditions, the crisis as habit, the ambitious overdrive, and the smug subversiveness, which were no longer parts of an optimistic relation to my object of desire.

If you ask me what could have been done differently, I would say that, instead of going out full force for the fifth edition, we could have stopped the public activities of the institution, gotten some rest, and then worked thoughtfully on building the proper framework for a more sustainable future. Or we could have scaled everything down and done a project on this exhaustion that we were all left to deal with, as an attempt to embrace and come to terms with **failure**, which for me is a totally feminist project in its own right.

\* \* \*

What happens to my voice when I haven’t gotten enough sleep? When, mentally and bodily, I’ve burnt up all my energy operating the institution? “We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired”, says Audre Lorde in *Sister Outsider*.<sup>9</sup> Lorde seems to imply here that we have been socialized to keep on working and keep on speaking even when our body is exhausted, in order to fulfill the capitalist demands for productivity and ability. What she proposes is to hijack this logic and apply it equally when we are stunned with fear. As much as we have been trained to still speak even when tired, though, our voice comes out different: worn-out, trembling, restrained. It needs a certain type of treatment.

I hope I haven’t tired you too much already. It’s time for me to talk about **documenta 14** and I will be much briefer—it’s only been a few months since my contract has ended and I haven’t had enough time to recover.



I assume that most of you are familiar with the institution of *documenta* and that there is no need for me to go into boring historical overviews. For those of you who aren’t, the only thing I will say is that *documenta* is considered one of the most prestigious and trend-setting large-scale art exhibitions, at least in the Western world, and has been happening every five years in the city of Kassel in Germany since 1955. In 2017 *documenta 14*, under the working title **Learning from Athens**,



unfolded in both Athens and Kassel. The idea of a bilocated project, shared and divided between Greece and Germany, was an attempt “to deliver a real-time response to the changing situation of Europe, which as a birthplace of both democracy and colonialism is a continent whose future must be urgently addressed”. According to Szymczyk, Athens was chosen as the site where “the contradictions of the contemporary world, embodied by loaded directionals like East and West, North and South, meet and clash”—all quotes are from the editorial of the first *South* magazine, the main *documenta 14* publication.

I started working for *documenta 14* around October 2016 as an education producer, assisting in the planning and delivery of educational activities in Athens. I got this job after I met one of my bosses in an elevator; we then had a coffee and shared thoughts on feminism and female writers that we like. This itself was motivation enough for me to try out this opportunity. The other huge motivation was a decent salary accompanied with health insurance.



In the education department, I felt particularly comfortable being in a team comprised mostly of women, including people from very diverse backgrounds who inserted issues of gender, embodiment and affect in both private and public conversations. In October 2016 we started a university module in the Athens School of Fine Arts for approximately 20 students from the bachelor of Fine Arts. Over the course of 9 months we had Feldenkrais lessons, photographed the

school, wrote poems with words from texts we had studied, spread gossips, sang pirate songs, took breathing lessons, and played with our echoes. We also developed another programme for schools, where we asked *documenta 14* artists to contribute objects related to their practice. We visited ten classrooms with these objects and knitted, danced, made maps of the city, and discussed many topics, from gender to ecology to migration.

All these activities might sound ‘cool’ and ‘interesting’—to me they also sound important—but there was of course a downside. Big responsibilities and understaffing in our team led to prolonged working hours and produced a lot of stress. In Education we worked in a circular scheme: to avoid aggressive angles, we focused on process and listening to each other’s needs. But exhaustion could not be avoided, when the demands were so high.

The scale of the overall project was almost surreal—I felt like this...



Precarity was less of a materialized condition in *documenta 14* than in the Biennale and this allowed for my voice to sound more secure and assertive. I tried to step out of my quiet zone and there were moments when it worked. I was heard. But despite fantasies and aspirations of collectivity the deep hierarchical order of things created conditions of depersonification, even if there were attempts to break it. I had already been employed for months when I kept receiving emails asking who I am and what my title is. There were so many colleagues, so many artists, so many collaborators, that I couldn’t remember their

names, let alone their voices. I mixed up Lala Rukh with Lala Vula and the son of Tracey Rose who was also named Lala. There were people in large team meetings whose voices I never heard. And mine was often too shy to claim the mike.

The Education department itself struggled to legitimize its existence in an institution that has been so traditionally focused on exhibition production. We did invest in programming that attempted to break with rigid hierarchies, but these same hierarchies struck us quite hard when negotiating salaries or justifying our budget. I felt like a tiny cogwheel in a huge machine that would continue to work with or without me, that would continue to work with or without all the marginalized, oppressed voices that the exhibition tried to put forward.

In several official *documenta 14* texts there were mentions of “a multiplicity of voices”, “a chorus of voices”, even “hearing voices”. I tried to understand why I still felt muted. I missed the voices of friends, of feminists and queers working in Greece, who were rarely invited to take part in the public programme, even though its claims directly referenced them.

Adam Szymczyk deployed and insisted on strategies of minimum disturbance in Athens; meaning that he wanted the presence of the project in the city to be as low-profile as possible and to stay away



from grand public gestures. Whether this was out of respect, out of guilt, or out of lack of engagement and research is not for me to argue. But this stance was often locally interpreted, rightfully or not, as an arrogant or exclusionary silence. There was an inherent ambivalence in having an undisputedly hegemonic institution that makes radical political claims in public statements. Such a contradiction provoked a lot of protests... and posters.

*documenta 14* declared itself a “theatre of actions” that “imagines and elaborates on the possibilities of a different, more inclusive world”—again a quote from the editorial of the first *South* magazine. Such statements sparked the interest of several radical political groups, specifically in Athens, which heavily criticized the art institution in the streets and beyond. Other parties joined in this wave of reactions, from individual artists and curators who wished to build their own pseudo-politically-conscious career to local agitated nationalists and ill-informed journalists, to shop owners who just wanted to attract the international art crowd.

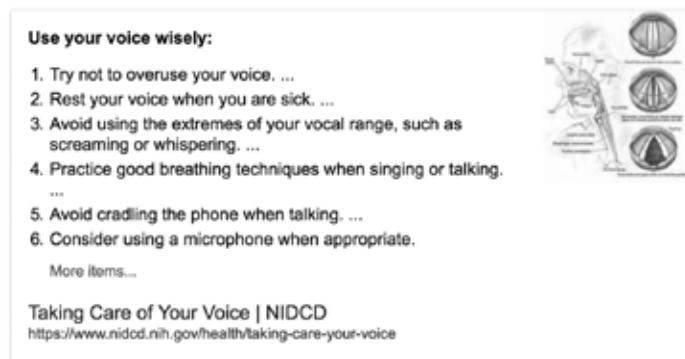
I’ve described this to show how the presence of *documenta 14* (and of any *documenta*) in a contested city creates a particularly messy, chaotic, confused field of negotiation between art and politics. People that you thought were critical of nationalism made statements on how the exhibition was ‘disrespectfully’ appropriating ‘symbols of Greekness’; friends whom you hoped could express a nuanced view on processes of neo-colonization, now were talking about how ‘poor yet honorable’ Greece was being colonized by the ‘rich and cold-hearted’ Germans; colleagues that spent long dinners discussing revolution, horizontality, and decolonial practices were the first to exploit their employees when given the opportunity. I could give you many more examples but I think I already made my point. Anyway, I reached a moment where I had absolutely no clue where, and how, to stand: with or against the institution?

In and around such a large-scale structure, it seems that any form of **radicality** is either oversimplified, co-opted or distorted, to the point where people thought that posters like the one above were produced by *documenta 14* itself.<sup>10</sup>

But I want to finish up with something else.

One of *documenta 14*'s main concerns was how to articulate the unsaid and unheard, how to communicate the silenced, the muted. What space is there, however, within an institution that is run by *logos*, to break away from the rational articulation of sound?

My exhausted self flirts with saying "there is none", but still, I don't think there is an obvious answer to this question.



Let me get back to some vocal health tips. If you consider yourself a feminist cultural worker, my advice is to stay away from large-scale art institutions and focus instead on smaller situations built out of practices of partnering and friendship, that seek stability in relationships of both obligation *and* care. If you find yourself, however, working in structures like the ones I described above, take care of your voice, especially if you cannot find it.



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## Notes

1. This text was first written to be presented during the 'Unsettling Feminist Curating' symposium, held at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna on 1 December 2017, curated by Elke Krasny, Barbara Mähknecht, Lara Perry, Dorothee Richter, the Department for Art and Education/Institute for Education in the Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and *feminist Curators United fCU*. Slightly adjusted, it later formed the basis of a lecture for students of the MAS in Curating of the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), taking place at the OnCurating Project Space in Zurich on 16 March 2018. I would like to thank the participants of both these events for the attentive, curious, and hugely valuable conversations that helped me feel a bit less exposed and without which this text would not have been published. I am forever grateful to my former colleagues at the Athens Biennale and *documenta 14* for the experiences we shared, even in the hardest of times, and I sincerely hope that my words at moments of critique are not harmful to any of them. The sometimes informal style of my writing reflects the initial function of this text: to be read aloud for an intimate public.

2. Carson, Anne, 'The Gender of Sound', in: *Glass, Irony and God*, New York, NY: New Directions, 1995. p. 120.

3. Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
4. Carson, Anne, 'The Gender of Sound', in: *Glass, Irony and God*, New York, NY: New Directions, 1995. p. 128.
5. Postgraduate programmes on art and culture (e.g. curating, creative writing, cultural management, film studies, museology, and so on) are almost non-existent in Greece. One of the very few and ridiculously expensive options, for people who want to further their academic engagement with such fields, is to study in the UK, as I did. I graduated with a degree in Museum Studies from University College London, where I formed close bonds of friendship and mutual support with my classmates—an international group of very inspiring young women with feminist concerns. I also worked at Cubitt Artists with curator Fatima Hellberg, and assisted in the development of an exhibition programme that presented mostly feminist art practices. Thus, the shift in my thinking about art and institutions in relation to gender and feminism has been heavily shaped by my UK education and the experience of living and working in London.
6. From the beginning, the Biennale aimed to never become an institution, in the sense that the people involved wanted to maintain a level of criticality against institutionalization, but would still work within a biennial format. This position created complex internal conflicts (e.g. horizontalism vs. hierarchy, precarity vs. stability) and became gradually more and more difficult to sustain, turning the Biennale into what Livia Pancu called a static and suspended 'almost institution' that ended up just embodying all our unfulfilled promises (for security, insurance, regular salary and responsibilities). In 2015, the position shifted from the wish to be a *never-becoming-institution* to building an *ever-becoming-institution*, something that could, most of all, provide stability but still leave room for critical experimentation. But, as you will see, that didn't work out either.
7. Ibid. p. 129.
8. Berlant, Lauren, *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
9. Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984. p. 44.
10. The poster was produced by an as-yet-unknown group or individual outside of *documenta 14* and was pasted in various streets of Athens a few months before the opening of the exhibition. The letter L in 'Learning' was carefully covered with white paint, in order for the slogan to be read as 'Earning From Athens'.

## Carta

Jú,

essas perguntas me atravessam diariamente e tem sido um trabalho constante dançar com elas, ficar atento às definições sutis que emergem e se confundem num movimento sem fim, ritmo vagante do mar. Olho ao redor e escuto. Essa é a tônica. Então, busco ampliar a minha capacidade de estar em contato e ouvir cada vez mais, ampliando as superfícies sensíveis e entendendo onde estão os meus limites, qual é sua flexibilidade. Olhar pra si para chegar ao outro. Deixar o corpo a serviço do que não se pode dizer, num puro exercício de presença. O que é esse contexto? Preciso entendê-lo para falar sobre ele? São muitas forças operando todo o tempo, tudo parece urgente, tudo parece importante demais. A quantidade de informação e todas as demandas. Todas as demandas que estamos impondo a nós mesmos, e para quê? Para estar no 'mundo', pertencer, entender nossa existência materializada, visível e definida.

Esta residência aqui gera um espaço de transição e reorganização interna, é uma continuidade do exercício da presença colaborativa e curiosa, experimentando estruturas de trabalho, de vida. Essa experiência também coloca em perspectiva minha trajetória, meu corpo, minhas práticas, e torna palpáveis as reverberações que me trouxeram até aqui. Estou tentando aprender a direcionar minha atenção para olhar mais de perto quais são as questões que impulsionam minha ação, que gestos eu coloco ou quero colocar no mundo e o que resulta desta interação. Tenho vontade de dançar, acho que quando danço alguma coisa acontece. Então como dançar e manter-se vivo nesse esquemão do mundo da arte? Talvez fora dele. Como fazer do corpo o instrumento de transformação de pensamentos mortos? Como manter vibrando os ecos de um campo de criação coletiva, comunicação que atravessa estruturas obsoletas, que traspassa tudo, que liga tudo?

Ontem olhei a lua formando um caminho no mar e percebi a concretude desse coisa que é a lua. E como não dá pra viver neste mundo sem olhar pra ela, sem saber dela e sem sentir seu movimento,

que influencia tudo aqui. Ela fica lá olhando pra gente o tempo todo e se aproxima e se distancia, tudo muda por conta desta relação. Tudo no mundo é assim. A lua é um destes elementos, divindades pagãs, manifestações divinas no que é concreto. A luz da lua fazia o caminho prata-dourado na superfície da água e penetrava as ondas para além da minha visão, criando curvas de luz no escuro-azul do mar. Essa mesma luz tocava a terra e o meu corpo numa linha que cortava e ligava tudo ao mesmo tempo. A lua que baixava no horizonte, quase tocando o mar, naquele mesmo momento lançava seu corte sobre outras águas, terras e corpos. Pensei que aquela mesma luz que me tocava toca também você aí. Deste lugar, quero dançar.

Rodrigo Andreolli

Υδρα 2017

**don't call me \_\_\_\_\_**

## Homeopathy of the slowness

Sol Prado & Franco Castignani

All reasons  
texts  
discussions  
criticisms  
arguments.

The blah blah blah of the fashionable philosophers and the yada yada yada of the useful leftist technocrats resound daily on our TV screens and in our ears. They offer us information and theories that presume a sophistication that's both hard to verify and that has no relation to what's happening to us. And that's exactly what we lack: relationships, conjunctions, vectors and surfaces that can translate (to us) from what happens to us, from the instants that shape our living.

With markings, blows, distances, we realize that the world, our lives, will not change (only) with good arguments. One has to put a stop to the arguments. To argue, when that's an end in itself, is similar to the gesture of the dying man who can't see beyond what his eyes show him, preferring to agonize to take some risks so as to feel, think, or live something unexpected. We suspect that the best way to stabilize the course of the world and to transform it in an incombustible corpse is to argue about it. This world, getting more reactive by the day towards any life wish, was not built upon arguing. Neither will we do away with it by betting unilaterally on this way. To inhabit a modification that takes a life and make it rectify its courses, we believe, requires an extra effort, less indulgence with our fears and our sour comforts and more opening and receptiveness to what might come.

\*

Beginning on these rather intuitive fragments: we are trying to write. To open some doors, to blow some soap bubbles, to burn ships, to save the poetry that, despite everything, remains and insists on this

waste land. To look beyond the walls that we build daily. To destroy them. To invent, with whatever we have, a joyful and expansive discipline out of the destruction.

We experiment to start our texts, thoughts, long walks, and tours with some questions.

Sometimes we realize that to ask seems to be, in times of eagerness for success and of an imperative for general adaptation, an art of lodging discomforts, of opening breaches in time, of inhabiting it in its playful freedom and suspend its immediacy.

In short: an art of learning to delay.

\*

To be delayed: not to work, to be late, to deny. To be a retarded, a dysfunctional. To be is to fall behind, to interrupt any function.

Next step is to go looking for friends who are always waiting for us, to do another, more interesting things. To jump over the fences that our times force upon us, for example, and build a gentler and warmer being-together. A thought of political friendship is not possible without some hatred for this life. Kindness, drifting, and *subtle*<sup>1</sup> encounters are also part of the framework of desiring to think and live together.

\*

And well, in this apparently plasticfull pause that oscillates between discomfort and stinging anxiety, we ask ourselves some questions that interpellate our praxis: what mobilizes us today? Why do we desire a continuous movement – projects, residencies, scholarships, grants – as if it were the true liberation from our lifetime? Are we running towards some kind of 'beyond life' while denying the question with a machinery of constant notifications & *subscribing to follow anything apparently new*?

Servants at the service of a new notification?

\*



Swallow saliva while a new Whatsapp notification lighting up the screen of your cellphone (or your computer) and your nerves, like starving hyenas, start to howl and demand attention.

\*



Mobilized and *questioning* why? what's new in this?

We mobilize because there's something of our desire put into this movement. It's not possible, at the risk of being too naive, to think or to feel this constant invitation to move, to change, to stand out, to express our emotion on a personalized wall, to make an extractivist use of the *hashtag* without thinking or feeling at the same time that something really important would be happening there: a decision? Is that deciding?

In short, an ephemeral future.

\*

It would seem that it offers us a future, even if we know, since that far away yell by Johnny Rotten that hasn't ceased to return, that there is no future. We know that the future, in principle, has ceased to be a necessary dimension for action. The future, like this world, is a land

devastated by guilt, doubt, hope, and other sad affections. One needs to abandon it, and right now.

*Fuck you Google!*  
*The future is a bad Error!*

\*

We are left to observe, perplexed, without contemplations, just like Alice in front of her mirror, the poisoned illusion of which we are taking part. But perplexity can also be a weapon to prick this illusion with, to eat it away and chase it out of our scene.

Question of rhythms, speeds, desertions.

Thus, maybe to be able to go through, together, not so alone, the impasse in which we move in order to build other scenes, other ways of thinking and living. Alone-Together, in this joyful and undecided conjunction.

\*

In a brief essay published a few years ago, Santiago López Petit alerted us to the need to *build situations with no future*. A way of *letting one be* in (political, artistic, romantic) situations in their ambiguity. Collective, anonymous, inappropriate situations. Perhaps another way of enduring, sustaining and taking care of them, of releasing them delicately when they're not useful to us anymore and leave no space to the will to live. For more than thirty years we have been hearing the strident speakers of global capitalism repeat, with a self-assured and entitled tone –in other times, this voice can be seductive, frantic, and rather rebellious, depending on the market share and consumer profile– that there is no alternative to the mentioned mode of production, living and subjectivation.

We have to take this account very seriously, not to obey it but to *mock it*. We have to trace its diagonals, to find escape from its diagrammes and lockers assigned to the bodies, voices, and paths.

Pedagogies of flight, practices of subtle encounters.

\*

We want to mock this game, to appropriate its strategies and infiltrate its roots with gas masks until they're vacant and hollow. To hollow out the game.

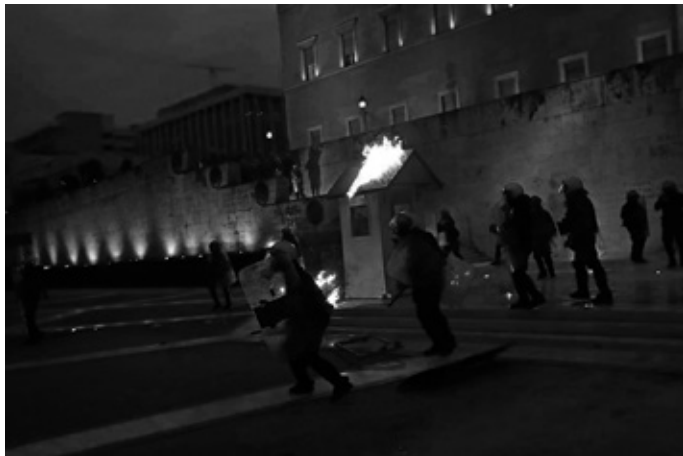
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To promote distances and, in these distances, to cultivate breaches, gaps –responsibility that requires slowness and a patient exercise of kindness. We want to use our laughter as an authentic demystifying machine, to disseminate the error to make common sense crack, to smoke the significant like a molotov cocktail sets fire to the farce of a pseudo-democratic parliament. To return common sense that seem to us *indisputable* to their arbitrariness and radical contingency.

\*

To make it crack under irony, mockery, and fabulous masks.

\*



Greek Parliament, 05/19/2017

\*

To lose –the sense– exposes us to the most feared of disasters. It exposes us to what's outside the norm. It exposes us to direct skin contact with madness and the *undoing*. To the etiquette of melancholy or of eternal depression, or non-productivist hyperactivity. At this point of no-return the therapeutic-power comes to our aid. In exchange for us letting imagination dry in a nice raw-food dehydrator, it offers us a *speeded-up life that seems healthy, for endless performance*. A paradise of controlled emotions in small self-ingestible doses. Spoon pills, syrups to cry, antidepressants to dance, painkillers not to die. Ingredients for a life dedicated to work and the mere reproduction of the *status quo*.

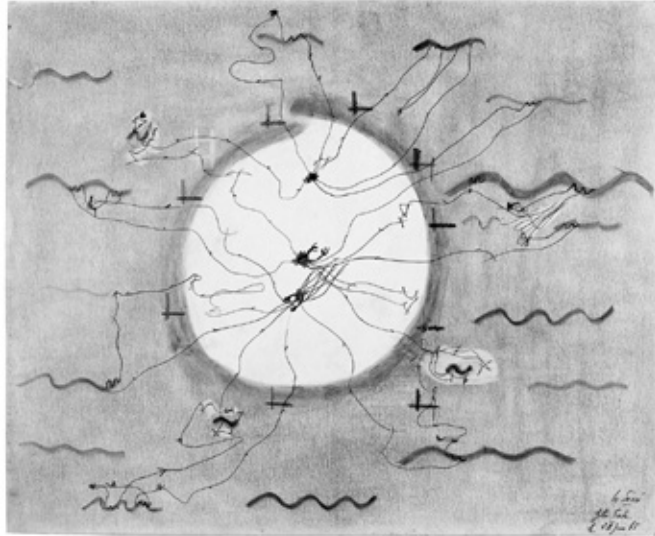
\*

The *us*, we, reduced to the vulgar competence, the self-exploitation, and the taming of our will to live.

The worst deal in thousands of years.

\*

An all-terrain army of CEOs, coaches, artists, managers, gurus, personal trainers, YouTubers, preachers, neuroscientists, highly trained at blocking the holes, closing the exits, organizing the fluxes, and taming the desires will be in charge of all the rest. But in the end our desires insist –despite this *blitzkrieg* unleashed against them, of these encapsulated doses of happiness we consume daily– in being a stubborn beast, indestructible flight. It metabolizes and dislodges the identifications, displace, release, and absolve. The revolts that took place in Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Paris, Tahrir, Barcelona, are just some landmarks, heterogeneous paths, placed and opened to existential and political invention. To the ephemeral (and what's the problem with that?) invention of *what we wish from what we have now*, as Adrienne Rich once wrote.



Fernand Deligny, S/D

\*

We can also deepen and develop our servitudes, that's for sure, become caged wolves, sedentary and rapacious. Maybe it's because of this surprising insistence that the question for a new opening of the senses, in times of normopathic desensibilization, results from a vital and political urgency that one –us, at least– hasn't finished calibrating. Facing the irresistible imperative of acceptance of what is, which invites us to a general numbing of sensibility, and inscribes and viralizes in the collective body the repudiation of any autonomous creative intention, it is necessary to search for new weapons, to imagine other, less cruel bestiaries.

*Free wolves*, that use their freedom, the care and cultivation of proximities and distances, of the welcoming and loving strange ones, in exposure and without conditions, an intensely and immensely welcoming cartography.

A Spanish version of this text was previously published at Lobo Suelto!.

See: <<http://lobosuelto.com/?p=19406>>

## Note

1. According to Juan Carlo de Brasi, the *subtle* happens and presents itself beyond all adjectives, properties, artifices, or common sense. It's an especially soft and porous matter. Tough task for a thought used to searching for similitudes and immediate solutions of the algorithmic kind when faced with the questions it finds, since the subtle avoids being closed in, loves the endless landscapes, extends the passages where all the roads seem to close upon themselves.

## Fields of action, an interview with Joulia Strauss

Raúl Hott

At night, on a ferry crossing the Mediterranean Sea, I had the opportunity to talk to Russian artist and activist Joulia Strauss. It's always challenging to present and think about Strauss's artistic practice: she's someone with the capacity for questioning any existing template of thought. A cat in a human body, a shaman, an incredibly quick mind, and a radical vision give life to her persona. Coming from a tribe called Mari, from the eastern region of Russia, Joulia is the heir to a valuable pagan and matriarchal tradition. She began her career as a sculptress in St. Petersburg, where she quickly became one of the leaders of the local contemporary art scene and of the Neo-Academicist movement of the 1990s. She moved to Germany to continue her studies at the University of Berlin, where her interests shifted towards technology, sciences and math, always manifesting her desire for a unity among these fields, and collaborating with the most radical and influential media theoreticians. Strauss took part in the seventh Berlin Biennial, and her work has been shown in places such as Tate Modern and ZKM Center for Art and Media.

Joulia Strauss is very active politically, always aware of the sifts and challenges we go through as a society. She's been living in Athens for more than three years, and there she founded and organized Avtonomi Akadimia, a multicultural free-access university. The project is conceived as an experiment in radical pedagogy and takes place at the archaeological site and gardens where Plato had his academy. Avtonomi Akadimia constantly invites thinkers, artists, and activists from all around the world to speak and give workshops.

For the latest *documenta* in Athens and Kassel, Joulia Strauss held a symposium entitled *The School of Everything*, hosted by *documenta 14*'s public programme and its educational department. This symposium's objective was to discuss the future of art education in Europe. *The School of Everything* searched for new methods for

horizontal intervention, understanding education as a decisive tool for generating social change.

The migratory situation affects Joulia deeply and she has carried out a series of workshops in refugee camps. Even so, her hope is directed to the use of micropolitics, to one-on-one work, to specific cases of helping refugees, as in the case of Ariam, an Afghan teenager who is just 15 years old. In this conversation we discussed how to approach working with refugees, the work of NGOs, the current situation of the refugee camps in Athens, the eventual way out of the migratory crisis, and the future of Homo Sapiens.

**Raúl Hott:** You stated on several occasions that you don't want people writing any more doctorate and PhD papers about your practice with the refugees or about activism in general, with which you meant to say and emphasize that we need more action, we need to get busy.

Joulia Strauss: So it is. And experience often shows us that even when people are curious and honest about the way they approach Athens, they keep replicating the class structure we have in our society. In the case of scholars who work as activists, the landscape becomes in a sort of test lab that manifests the symptoms of the S&M relationship between Greece and Germany, between north and south in Europe. When anthropologists come to Athens, what do they do? What tools do they have? They offer only the approach with which they've been pre-conditioned to write, and keep replicating vertical interaction structures. This is the classic ethnological pattern of the traveling scientist who seeks to have vacations in the company of miserable others. This is why the most typical reaction to Athens is to write. I aim to disrupt this situation with Avtonomi Akadimia. When one changes the format and creates a different environment, one can provide a platform that allows people to experience themselves as part of a community instead of continuing to follow the academic culture. Our immediate approach reveals that it's ethically irresponsible to keep a 'top down' scheme and sustain the position of the observer. In this way people get involved.

**RH:** I'm interested in this new way of offering help. Today I was thinking about Rachel Clarke's activist practice in Berlin with Syrian refugees through storytelling. You know each other, you're friends, and there are many similar points between both practices. The way

she thinks about the integration process seems very interesting, as well as the way she prepares young refugees to not lose their original values and cultural heritage. In this sense, how would you describe your way of working and the toolkit you use?

JS: This toolkit is not as professional as the one a theatre director like Clarke has at her disposal. In the artist's case there's always a degree of anarchism. At the same time there's a degree of lack, or absence of professionalism. You know this approach very well: an anti-disciplinary and emancipatory approach of the artist who loses their professional and sub-systemic capacity. For instance, not using brushes or avoiding the set of tools the NGOs present when it comes to help. That's why my toolkit is my hands and legs, my feline brain, and a very particular kind of dance. One must dance when entering a refugee camp. It's the same kind of dance when one is dealing with immigration problems; or when, for example, one faces the highest level of German academia, with whom I happen to work. It's exactly the same kind of dance. It's the cat's dance. A feline dance. And while you move and dance, you're going to encounter different beings and creatures in those spaces. Relationships are created in the context in which you are immersed, be it a university or a refugee camp.

My approach to this work comes from a highly politicized angle, from the global revolution. In this way you already know the result you are looking for in each experiment. This is why, for example, for the 'Universitas' project that we carried out in collaboration with AthenSYN, I looked for relationships between people I know in Berlin and their connections to Athens. One might think that when one enters a camp, the refugees will be jumping up and eager to participate in your workshops, but it's not quite like that, it may nevertheless look like this to the public when you communicate it. In fact the human relationships that are forged are the most important thing for me, and they are the result of this feline-like dance. For example, I met Mohammad Abu Hajar during an extremely cold demonstration in Berlin, who connected me and introduced me to Ahmad Alkhatieb, who was in the Skaramagas camp at that time, just outside Athens, when we were coincidentally conducting the workshops. This backstory is irrelevant to the public, but this is the background that makes and creates a community. In this community there are no nations. The participants never in their lives would have thought that they could be integrated into something. It's a different language. We must differentiate between the language of

the public sphere, with which Rachel Clarke operates, and the language of a subculture, or of art. Both in very different ways are contributing to developing debates and re-distributing privileges. I would not call it 'help'. Both practices show the change in how and how much we want to see and think about the world.

RH: Today it's obvious today that we're surrounded by 'choreographies of help' that are established and executed by several institutions, NGOs of European and North American provenance. There's a tendency to unconsciously replicate different forms of violence. It's a loop. And one somehow feels that despite all of the help provided, nothing changes in the end.

JS: There's nothing really civil about our society anymore: everything has been militarized. When an NGO enters a refugee camp there are already many criss-crossed interests in action. The same can be said of individuals who replicate the structure of the kind of society we have, in which it's obvious that the person destitute of legal status is positioned totally below the person who provides help. The helper immediately starts to replicate the structures of violence, because he or she is already inscribed in a kind of political behavioural algorithm. We can tackle this situation, we can see the truth in each of us and we can acknowledge the privileges we have, if we really dare to navigate this world.

A camp is a totally different world, one where the law of the jungle dominates, where there are people who look at you and ask themselves "could we use you?", "do you have some drugs?", "could we have sex with you?", "could you take us to Germany?", "could you give us money?", "do you have contacts in the Immigration Office?". No one sees you as a human being. Do you have any problem with this? If you do, then you haven't quite realized in what kind of situation the refugees are. So you decide to engage in a complete different kind of relationship with those who are there.

Regarding the problems caused by these same NGOs in the camps, that's a wide generalization, since many people use the NGO structure to help others. Many refugees are also hired, so for many of them who are looking for work and to upgrade their status, this is a big opportunity to achieve that, little by little. At the same time, it's also a structure that can be abused for any urgent purpose. Today we're not

in a luxury position of choosing among many options. All we have is the depersonalized and super-bureaucratic NGO structure, with its obscure interests on the one hand, and on the other hand the pure interests of being in the camps. Again, you navigate and move through this fragmented reality which involves the whole of our society, from the top down, from the bottom up.

**RH:** Some weeks ago you introduced me to Ariam, a 15-year-old Afghan refugee who arrived in Athens with his family many years ago and is in the Elefsina refugee camp, in the capital's periphery. Ariam evidently stands out as a teenager, is extremely intelligent, and it's obvious that his future would be different outside of the camp. You know him intimately, have helped him, and we could say he was lucky to have met you and benefitted from your knowledge. Why is it so hard to come up with different options for the life of someone like Ariam? I ask myself, what should happen for a real change to this situation?

**JS:** All of them are ghosts trapped inside a shell. As living beings, they're the exception. The path Ariam and his family must go down will lead them to create exceptions in the current system in order to get out the situation in which they unfortunately find themselves. I believe Ariam is making progress and taking strong steps to change his future. I think he'll lighten up the 'humanity' in a lot of people during his life. Yesterday he promised me three things: 1. Not to be broken; 2. Not to let his heart turn to stone; 3. Never to lose the spark and the curiosity for his education and self-improvement.

**RH:** Have you in the past met other refugees with the same strength as Ariam?

**JS:** If we're talking about strength, no. I've never met someone like *that*. He is fighting alone. He is fighting in a militarized field. This is Elefsina. He's away from the city, there are no acceptable basic hygienic conditions, there are no walls, only moisture and fungus, extremely dangerous for the human body. These camps are highly dysfunctional, there are several generations and age groups put into the same space, that has a psychoactive acoustic that causes strong headaches. If one is constantly exposed to cacophonous environments, the voices at some point gain a strong influence in one's psyche. And you can't learn, you can't think. These are dehumanizing conditions. They live with their families in meager spaces, along with drug and alcohol traffickers. So

what kind of camp is this? Why does the military keep managing it if it's a disaster, worse than living on the streets? This is what Ariam must fight against to ensure his survival in Europe. In order to be a 15-year-old he has made a revolution in the camp. This is his own revolution in order to get education. The way he acts inside and outside the camp, all the relationships he has built with those who go through the camp, make him a unique human being, because it shows to others what's possible. I'm sure that he'll fight for more justice, not only in theory, but through his experience.

**RH:** From the interviews with refugees in the publication *Krytyka Polityczna Athens*, the book that documents the 'Universitas' project, I get the sense that many of them have an inner strength that makes them search for help, not only for themselves individually, but also for their people. They have something more, what could be described as a very special energy, to detonate and bring about change on a much bigger scale.

**JS:** Yes. Those who speak in the book are not that worried about their own destiny; they're more concerned with making some problems public.

**RH:** I'm under the impression that they know that even if they lose their refugee status their fight will not be over and that they should keep fighting for more change.

**JS:** Exactly, they've seen the impossibility of being helped, the failure of any positive and successful intervention. The situation in Syria shows that we live in a financial dictatorship. This prompted us to focus on something that we didn't expect exists, something that we shouldn't face or fight because it's too complex: the way in which Europe is involved and the interests behind the conflict in the Middle East. The migratory crisis shows that Europe is an accomplice in the war in Syria and reaps benefits from these conflicts. No one wants to accept this truth, because to accept it means to lose one's credibility as 'good' Europeans. The impossibility to help points to something important: Europe is no longer what it pretends to be. This is not democracy at all. The refugees show us that.

Understanding the need for help is not the same as having to act out of compassion. The acting out of compassion is a motherly



discourse. And I don't give a shit about all these actions inspired by motherly discourse. It's to clean the shit as soon as the children—or presidents of corrupt governments—have thrown it around, by tackling secondary effects in the same way social workers do. I refuse to become a social worker. Evidently our struggle to open the borders is united with the plight of the refugees. At the same time, they're united to our struggles as artists. They help us help them. And they're helping us unite ourselves in the way we offer help. Together we help the world to breakdown frontiers in multiple directions.

**RH: I'm very interested in the way you describe this 'big picture' and I wonder, what then? What is this disaster moving towards? Is there any path or possibility for triggering change in the benefit of a bigger transformative movement? Basically, what can we do?**

JS: This movement, transformation, or change is a kind of expectation that something should be going in the right direction, and therefore it means that right now we've taken a wrong path.

**RH: Exactly.**

JS: I don't believe that Homo Sapiens is going to improve someday. This shift of consciousness will never happen. It has to do with the number of Homo Sapiens who have already taken that leap and their capacity for interconnection. McDonald's will always have visitors. They won't disappear unless there's a catastrophe, and in that case we'll also vanish with them. But the notion of a consciousness leap for everyone, one that could possibly halt all wars forever, according to the probabilities this will never happen. The best leap I can imagine is that Homo Sapiens finally gets out, is finished, ceases to exist in its current form. Because it has betrayed itself. The new form awaits.

**RH: Despite the criticism to concepts such as Anthropocene and Capitalocene, I find it interesting that they're pushing people towards thinking of different options and ways out.**

JS: The fact that we live inside a gas balloon has provoked a discussion about what we are doing, it has not been because of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene. We have invented a new art form: workshops in the refugee camps. Art in the twenty-first century cannot claim unique inventions; it is only doing what must be done. Instinctively

we think that a world without borders can provoke a new mental state. When we are able to spend time together we are incredible, we are splendid, because we are one.

**RH: This is a great way to understand the basic configuration of being together.**

JS: There is great optimism. Let us ask the oracle: the coming times will be ecstatic, orgiastic and fulgurous, towards a new human being. Meeeeowwww.

*A Spanish version of this text was previously published online at Goethe Institut Chile's Blog del Migrante.*

See: <<https://www.goethe.de/ins/cl/es/kul/sup/rem/21051075.html>>

## Greeks learning from the Germans learning from the Greeks

Gian Spina

*All the Greeks have to do in order to be what they used to be, is to mimic the Germans.*

Georg Ludwig von Maurer

President of the Legislative Body of the first Kingdom of Greece, 1832.

The historic relationship between Greece and Germany arises once again in the year 2017. It has been coming and going for the past two centuries, but this time has the subtitle *Learning from Athens. documenta 14* displaced itself to Athens, expanding its venue to a location far away from the historical Kassel, where not everyone speaks but everyone listens, perhaps aiming to create a multiplicity of voices, perspectives and political bodies.

The goal of this text is to discuss the historic relationship between the two countries and the use of historical narratives and specifically art as a tool for the occupation and perpetuation of the status quo. Throughout the nineteenth century the German presence in Greece was of such intensity that even today most of us pass over it without grasping the past events. When the Bavarian prince Otto von Wittelsbach became the king of Greece, he was only 17 years old. Ten years prior, the war against the Ottoman Empire had changed the geopolitics and the controllers of the region.

Together with Otto came the changes. In 1834 Athens was appointed the new capital of the kingdom because of its symbolism and the king's sentimental relationships. At that time this small town built on the slopes of the Acropolis had only four thousand inhabitants who used to take pieces from the ancient ruins to build their own homes; the classic pillars and the stable marble were the materials for the construction of a city which now became the cornerstone of an identity construction. A vast quantity of Germans came along with the

young king to create not only the political body of Greece, but also the images of Greek identity. The identity of what we now call Europe was then under construction and a solid base was needed. This was a crucial moment for the formation of the future nation states and the development of Greek identity, which was considered too important to be left to a new-born country with a vast mix of beliefs and cultures.

Bavarian rule was imposed by Russia, France and England as a way of establishing a neutral government in the region, impeding the Ottomans who had been dominating the Balkans for centuries and were an active menace to the other three empires. So the conquest and establishment of German rule in the region was a project of negation and affirmation: the negation of the Ottomans and their multiple beliefs and cultures; and the affirmation of an identity—still to be created—that would herald the birth of a whole series of plans and movements based on this myth. The future economic and geopolitical importance of this *birth of a tradition* became a clear place from which a multiplicity of other identities were deployed.

In 2017 another Germanic displacement arrived in Greece and, as in the nineteenth century, it is full of good intentions and paradoxes. On 3 September 1843 the Athenians revolted against the Bavarians and demanded a constitution which was later granted, in German, by Otto von Wittelsbach. During the many seminars and events of *documenta 14*, Greek was hardly heard and Greeks were hardly seen. The *reality* of the event did not relate to the *reality* on the ground. There was hardly any Greek spoken at *documenta*, the prices did not match Greek economical *reality*, nor did the Berlin-Fabrik-Techno opening party. Just as the Greek constitution and re-urbanization plans were made by Germans, today there is an imposition of ways of conducting daily life, once again, but with a different motto: *Learning from Athens*.

On the occasion of his arrival, Bavaria's favourite architect Leo von Klenze delivered a speech on top of the Acropolis, where the king, soldiers and courtiers had gathered:

*all the remains of barbarity will be removed, here as in all of Greece,  
and the remains of the glorious past will be brought in new light, as the solid  
foundation of a glorious present and future*

The barbarity had names and forms. Everything that was not enhancing the idea of a Greek past was demolished or replaced by something else. Mosques were destroyed, Byzantine churches removed and replaced by the aesthetics of modernity, Neoclassicism. Those aesthetics were not the only *apparatus* for the materialization of this project, but an indirect imposition, a way to create slogans on the facades, a sophisticated ideography. It was a Northern artistic movement, so the Greeks were not among the key players who developed the aesthetic that, together with archaeology, was the support that formed Greek identity.

Walking in downtown Athens one sees many buildings in that style, the majority of them composed by German architects referring to what they proposed to be the Greek past. The Philhellenistic delirium is so strongly sedimented that there were a great amount of artists at *documenta 14* that made pieces about the classical myths, from performances to lectures. The fascination with ancient Greece is still very much present, as is the narrative of 'the winner of Western culture'. Perhaps the perpetuation of such ideas is a form of maintaining the establishment, with myths about myths and monuments constructed by Germans who imitated what they called ancient Greece.

This historical period shows us how medicine can quickly become a poison: the lack of dose and the use of arts to achieve a specific goal can have long lasting effects such as those we are experiencing today: the *fetishization* of the Greek lifestyle, soft-colonialism, austerity measures... Above all, the conservation of hierarchies and the use of symbolism to accomplish that.

The German art event certainly had many reasons to come to Greece, but the narrative told above is also part of it. The *refugee crisis*, the 'informal way of life' and the notion of the 'south' are all narratives that come from the north, meaning that definitions and identities are still imposed and composed by the leading powers and incorporated by the local subjects. Just as the nineteenth century saw Greek architects imitating neoclassical German architects who imitated the classical Greek architects, today we see Greeks *learning* from Germans who are *learning* from Athens. Even now that the Athens Biennale (2017-2018) proposed the slogan-joke "Waiting for the barbarians", it overlooks that they are already here, in the urban planning of Athens, the space where the Biennale itself takes place—a building designed by the German

architect Ernst Ziller—, and with the German presence in the backstage, through privatizations.

The point is not to construct a blind criticism towards the Biennale, *documenta 14* or the creation of Greek identity, but to analyze the long perpetuation of ideas and modes of behaving, and how that is part of a greater project of constructing subjectivity, control and ideological domination. Neoclassicism wasn't constructed to create a Proto-European idea, but it became the official nomenclature that reinforced the nineteenth century project just as archaeology served as a vast material to reinforce that story.

*There was and is only one architecture [...] which realized its perfection in the formative years of Greek civilization... [and that architecture] belongs as much to Germany as to Greece.*

L. von Klenze, *Sammlung Architektonische Entwürfe*, Munich, 1830, p. 1.

Also quoted in: Bergdoll, *European Architecture*, p. 150.



*Hellenic Parliament or Old Royal Palace - designed by Bavarian architect Friedrich von Gärtner for King Otto of Greece and his wife.*



*Bageion Hotel - designed by the German architect Ernst Ziller.*



*National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - designed by Christian Hansen (XIX century)*



*Restoration of the Temple of Athena Nike by the German architect Eduard Schaubert and the Danish architect Christian Hansen.*

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*It is true that many of the so-called foreigners often go by my village and I have had the opportunity to get to know them and talk with them. But what do you want me to learn, my friend, from these odd gentlemen who, when you ask them about the people, they examine the piles of stone, and when you talk to them about the living, they want information about the dead?*

Letter signed 'The Old Man from Dalamana,' Athena 2:112, 13 May 1833.

*Naturally one could accuse us that we didn't engage enough with the local art scene. We weren't that interested in the Athens art scene, but rather in the city as a living organism. And that goes beyond contemporary art. Athens does not stand on its own, it also stands for other places in this world. Lagos. Guatemala City. We are equally engaged with this here. The expectation, to connect ourselves with the Athens art scene, would be much too narrow for this documenta."*

Adam Szymczyk, Chief Curator of documenta 14.

When reading at first glance the phrases above, one can sense that in both cases the German newcomers had difficulties engaging with Greek society. In the first case, maybe this was because of the absurdity of the situation, the aftermath of a war which expelled the Ottomans and the arrival of the allies who now controlled and ruled the country, spoke a different language and engaged in activities that did not match Greek reality. Perhaps the most important issue on which to reflect is that of German imposition and control. In both cases Greeks were not perceived as co-producers, neither of an identity nor of *documenta 14*, but as receivers of a kind of *philanthropy* which is a masked way to nurture hegemonic power and hierarchies. The Old Man didn't understand anything of what the Germans were doing there and the Germans didn't seem to care. During *documenta 14* the situation was very much alike: social relationships had not changed, because impositions were still made. Perhaps this would have been the best thing to learn from Athens: the possibilities for new forms of social relationships and co-existence, and the great resonance of what happened in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the imposition was blind and naive; the non-participant was supposed to be the protagonist, and the *doxa-aletheia* dualism between *philanthropy receiver* vs *co-producer* is still very much alive.



The Zappeion - designed by Danish architect Theophil Hansen.

## The Pink Dinosaur against the apparatus of greekness

Despina Sevasti

december 2017



Sevasti, Despina. Performance *Is your figure less than Greek / is your mouth a little weak / when you open it to speak / are you smart?* Presented as part of Maelstrom Slow Dance: Dutch Art Institute Graduation Acts, at Huis Oostpool Theatre, Arnhem, 26 June 2017. Photography: Malcolm Kratz

The research trajectory articulated here came out of, and will return to, my artistic practice—specifically one continuing performance project—that takes issue with the intricate machinations through which normativity constructs and sustains itself via the ideology and aesthetics of 'Greekness'. I call the apparatus that operates to (re) produce and sustain this eternal flow of normativity the *Photocopy Machine of Greekness*.

Giorgio Agamben defines the apparatus as that which fleshes out the heterogeneous network of practices and mechanisms that "appears at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge", enacting disciplined, normative subjectifications.<sup>1</sup> In Agamben's words: "The term 'apparatus' designates that in which and through which one realizes a pure activity of governance devoid of any



foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject."<sup>2</sup> The apparatus of Greekness is meticulously fabricated by a network of "discourses, institutions, buildings, laws, police measures, philosophical propositions, and so on"<sup>3</sup> that have historically sustained Greek and Western civilizations' mutual dependency on a cosmology rooted in the foundational myth of Greekness. To question and queer this persistent athleticism of heteronormative Greek culture, this project is written with a critical spirit and produces and incites what Lauren Berlant calls "ironic noise", which "releases from the background that which haunts our double-binding encounters with the world where we orchestrate positive and negative valences."<sup>4</sup> For Berlant, who draws on Gayatri Spivak's notion of the double-bind<sup>5</sup> as the experience of "staying with the trouble"<sup>6</sup>, staying with the aporia<sup>7</sup> and "the tension between the vital and the institutional"<sup>8</sup>, there is value in a radical aesthetic project that does not get "too celebratory about critical sovereignty" and instead acknowledges the value of the work of "making objects strange... (which) ought to include making ourselves strange in relation to the objects."<sup>9</sup> To produce these object estrangements in my own performance work, and elaborate a critical, ironic, queer and multi-disciplined voice against humanist aesthetic norms, I developed the conceptual persona of the Pink Dinosaur. She is a figure that I present as being able to speak from the position of the artist and the archaeologist, the student and the teacher at the same time.

The Pink Dinosaur performs ironized knowledge production and noise, from/ inside/between all the above-mentioned identities and their inter-relations. Importantly, the Pink Dinosaur is a monstrously archaic female body: she is trained in classical sports only to deconstruct patriarchal mythopoetics; she is an expert in the fictions generated by archaeology because she herself is a man-handled archaeological fiction; she has something to teach, which is unextractable from her ironically fossilized and awkward being, alongside other living fossils; and she is queerly located in Greekness as a fragmented body, living in a territory saturated by what Berlant calls the "commodity's moral propping of a rhythm of accumulation and debt."<sup>10</sup> Within a contemporary context, the Pink Dinosaur relates to the commodity status of being Greek and female. To understand Greekness as a historical metaphor, as heteronormative, macho, white ideological objectification, and as a material reality in the bio-geographical sense, is to recognize a being-commodity that is calling out to further critical interpretive and queered

excavation practices, especially in relation to the ramifications of the current Greek debt crisis.

The Pink Dinosaur attempts to perform the "noise of attachment"<sup>11</sup> from within intractable material conditions and image economies. More vitally, I wear this costume to play the role of a woman surrounded by the ongoing relations of a late capitalist patriarchy that descends from deep time; a hegemonic Greekness that encompasses my working life (teaching and practicing art) as well as broader social relations in Greece. This is an un/tactful position of narration, a weapon against a representation of what constitutes the 'authentic', 'indigenous' Greek artist's body and speech today. In that sense, the speech of the Pink Dinosaur is inseparable from a method of 'associology' of aesthetic criticism, as a scenic dealing with objects and embodiments of Greekness. Or as Berlant writes, "not a scene in suspension, but a noise aesthetics attached to dynamic figuration" and which in this way "reads for the demand of the incident that has dented her, the critic trying to think how to care for an attachment that traverses the proximate domains of life and art."<sup>12</sup> This curious and urgent question of *how to care* crosses art and politics through the fragmented historiographies I am identifying here as in-forming culture, as aesthetic education in the present tense. To set the Pink Dinosaur to work against the (photo)copy machine is to theoretically and performatively interfere with the apparatus of power.

### **The School: Aesthetic Education, Uninterrupted. Where the Pink Dinosaur comes from**

In her performances, the Pink Dinosaur addresses the apparatus reproducing an original<sup>13</sup> Greekness while speaking about the institutional, formal and reproductive particularities of university education that aspiring artists receive in Greece. Prospective students that aim to enter the Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA) spend one to five years in preparatory painting and drawing classes, where I teach. The ASFA entrance exams consist exclusively of live figurative painting, replicating plaster copies of ancient statues that are garnished with still life elements such as bottles, plastic fruit, dustpans, et cetera. Students draw for several hours a day, imitating white pristine statues such as the Venus de Milo, Hermes of Praxiteles, Apollon of Olympia and Kouros Aristodikos, as well as a selection of classical Renaissance examples. This process of imitating the ancient Greek ideals of human form, beauty and



proportion is the foundation of the students' validation as artists across the country. It becomes firmly embedded in their conscious mind, as well as their unconscious. At one point or another, students who go through this procedure begin to dream of surreal struggles with the statues, given the hundreds of times they are required to reproduce them. Apart from these tasks, there is no other format of receiving validation as a candidate student of Fine Arts up until the present day. No portfolio or exhibition examinations, interviews or written statements are expected for the position of student at the Greek Fine Arts universities. The exam system that glorifies the ancient Greek statues, as erections of the perfect, canonical 'ancient human form', still functions to invest in icons of normativity and to measure artistic genius; assessment has not really evolved since the mid-nineteenth century when the Athens School of Fine Arts was founded. The only contemporary addition to ASFA's pedagogy in terms of the entry exams system was initiated in 2010 when students became required to additionally paint 'free paintings', in an imitative and hybridized late canonization of American abstract expressionism and 1970s Greek modernism, clearly perpetuating white masculine ideals of aesthetic universality.

Such historical apprenticeships to Greekness uncannily deliver key examples of the reproduction of not only skills, but culture and aesthetic training as apparatuses in themselves. The school as a reproductive or ideological apparatus is described in Louis Althusser's 1970 essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)'.<sup>14</sup> While Agamben's emphasis on subjectivization processes in the apparatus remains key, Althusser's articulation centres on the definitive element of the school or education system as what he calls "an ideological state apparatus" working precisely through silence, since "hardly anyone lends an ear to its music"<sup>15</sup> and the way it naturalizes, covers up and conceals its reproduction of a universally reigning ideology, such as Greekness in this case.

When I asked my students why we draw statues in order to assess whether we qualify to become artists, they appeared to be puzzled. I consider puzzlement as a valid reaction within this protracted institutionalization of Greekness. The agalmatophilic [statue-loving] examination process in Greek higher education is, paradoxically, naturalized by such a blatant spirit of ancestor worship [progonoplexia]. My students' eventual answers to my questioning of the value of this assessment—reproducing these objects as their education—ranged

from "they are very important" to "they are the epitome of human beauty", to "the human form is the centre of everything", and "it is our tradition, the tradition of ancient Greece". At the same time, the rare voices of Greek art teachers interested in a more contemporary system of evaluation—for example by submission of a portfolio and an interview exam as happens in most art colleges internationally—usually focus on diversifying the variety of contemporary media available for skill development, and turn away from the problematics of reproducing Greekness as an ideological and aesthetic apparatus.

The Athens School of Fine Arts has several departments and syllabi, yet its core operations in terms of tutoring and research, as well as funding and institutional politics, revolve around its eleven painting and sculpture studios. The only female professor presently running her own core studio course is Afrodit Liti. The presence of a single female professor occupying this exceptional position is a tradition at ASFA. Rena Papaspyrou was the first and only woman to run her own core studio course from 1993 to 2005, so in the 180 years of the ASFA only two women in total have been heads of core studio courses. Female professors are less rare in the theory department of the School and in the assistants' ranks. Needless to say, there has never been a female Dean. The disparity of women who are art practice professors also persists, despite the fact that approximately 64% of the students are female compared to 36% male.<sup>16</sup>

For the past three years, ASFA was one of the three main partners of Documenta 14 in Athens. ASFA hosted a major part of the exhibition as well as an elaborate programme of talks and workshops run by Documenta's education department, developed at the school facilities, also with the working title (later dropped) of 'Learning from Athens'. ASFA's dominant mode of production, its ancient canon repetitions, its persistently white cis male teacher prototypes, and the agalmatophilic and patriotic exam system, have not at all been questioned by Documenta's own programmatic valorization of southern, decolonized and queer practices, which were articulated as the contemporaneity of the project.

At the other end of this schizoid (non-)contemporaneity, following a long tradition of unacknowledged reproductive labour performed by women in the field of Greek art education, my own job is performed on a thoroughly precarious basis, usually without substantial

contracts, social benefits or any paid leave and most importantly, in a context that demands a great amount of emotional labour. I find myself among students coming from a devastating political vacuum regarding anything that relates to identity politics or even empiricist history per se, especially non-Greek history, not to mention postmodern developments such as deconstructive or emancipative theory, feminisms, queer theory, et cetera. More often than not, my classes therefore become the very first place where students come across any of these contexts, processes, and possibilities, and can empower themselves, explore the past, the present and their positions through making art.

To my knowledge, there is no discourse up to today in Greece addressing the political and ideological repercussions of this exam system, nor its entanglement with the gendered composition of professorships within the Greek art scene. It was only at the third Athens Biennale 2011, titled *Monodrome*, that several of these plaster statue copies together with drawings in the ASFA exam format were exhibited on the second floor of the main exhibition venue (Diplareios School), curatorially contextualized by the narrative of the construction of modern Greece.<sup>17</sup> The statues were gathered around a screen that played a selection of Greek sporting victories from the 1980s to the apotheosis of Greekness at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Nevertheless, even this exhibition moment, which was depicted in quite a few articles about *Monodrome* and the Athenian art scene,<sup>18</sup> did not spark any recorded discussion on the subject of the exams and the art education apparatus as a tool for social reproductions of Greekness and whiteness. The image of the compilation of statue copies also adorned the cover of Dimitris Plantzos' recent book *Το πρόσφατο μέλλον. Η κλασική αρχαιότητα ως βιοπολιτικό εργαλείο* ('Recent Futures. Classical Antiquity and Modern Greek Biopolitics').<sup>19</sup> Although Plantzos praised *Monodrome* as a rare example of working through the obsession with ancient Greece, he doesn't take into consideration the context of ASFA and the specific conditions of this reproduction, together with the ASFA exam format statue drawings on the opposite wall. It is safe to say that the project was largely received as another generic exhibit of the obsessive leitmotif of ancient Greece/Greekness<sup>20</sup> on a more abstract aesthetic level.

The 4 May 2017 episode of 'Η Εποχή των Εικόνων' (The Era of the Images), a series on state television by Katerina Zacharopoulou, titled 'Η ΑΣΚΤ σήμερα' (ASFA today)<sup>21</sup> attempted to sketch "the new shape of the School in the twenty-first century" in light of documenta 14

coming to Athens and the recent opening of the new ASFA library. Zacharopoulou made this portrait of the school by interviewing four male professors: the current Dean Panos Haralambous, the ex-Dean George Harvalias, and professors Nikos Tranos and Nikos Navridis. The only female beings (artists, teachers, theorists, or school employees from Greece or abroad) mentioned in the one-hour discussion about ASFA's past and future and art education and contemporary art internationally, are Niki Zachioti and Marina Komboliti who run ASFA's library. In between the interviews, the camera sometimes briefly cuts to short instances of 'actual teaching': a male art teacher addressing rows of students, predominantly female, most of whom I have taught for several years in the past, that we never hear speaking.

The dominance of the ideology of the male artist genius in the Greek art sphere and its systematic congealment and reproduction via the apparatus of Greekness couldn't be illustrated better than by the words of the Arte Povera pioneer Jannis Kounellis. Kounellis never taught at ASFA, as he emigrated to Italy at a young age, led by his self-described need as a Greek to "fill the void of the Renaissance that only Italy can supply to a Greek".<sup>22</sup> Yet Kounellis is considered one of the most accomplished Greek artists of all time and his status within the Greek art scene and education system is almost mythical. When he passed away at the age of 80 on 16 February 2017, he was hailed as a legendary Greek, a pioneer, deemed an unconventional genius both by the Greek and international press.<sup>23</sup>

Kounellis always insisted on the civilizing qualities of Western humanism, starting with the Greeks and developing through the Renaissance: "Western thought gives human beings a central role. Everything needs to be centred on humanity, otherwise there's a great risk of falling into decadence."<sup>24</sup> When the journalist asked Kounellis about the blurry impression of what constitutes Greekness within the arts, he replied: "For me Greek identity is the Parthenon with its values."

Furthermore, Kounellis claims in this interview that, since Greece did not ever experience the Renaissance but rather jumped from the Byzantine Empire to 'nothingness' (meaning the four centuries of the Ottoman Empire), it was the Italian Renaissance that saved Greekness. In other words, his investment in his own artisthood depends on a fictional linearity stretching from ancient Greece to Renaissance Italy, bypassing the Ottoman Empire in order to retain

continuous Greekness. This is the stereotypical myth at the basis of the Philhellenic movement of the nineteenth century, which was ideologically and materially bound up with the construction of the modern Greek state. The four hundred years of the Ottoman Empire were conceived as a barbaric aberration to the clean and superior lineage of Greekness, despite the fact that there was no such a thing as 'Greece' up until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This archaeolatric<sup>25</sup> linear history that brings together Westernness and Greekness via the Renaissance is the dominant historical narrative that is taught in the Greek education system until today.<sup>26</sup> I argue that this psychic and aesthetic investment in linear Greekness vis-a-vis the anthropocentric male genius sheds light on the kind of humanism the apparatus produces, not just distorted with regard to historiographic facts, but enmeshed with the violence of patriarchy.

To exemplify this point, consider an excerpt from a conversation Kounellis had with the influential international curator Denys Zacharopoulos and the prestigious Bernier/Eliades Gallery owners Marina Eliades & Jean Bernier.<sup>27</sup> They are discussing what is a great artist, what that artist is motivated to do, and how he creates. Kounellis answers this question in 2010 by citing the renowned sculpture of Laocoön—the Greek model of the male genius from the renowned Hellenistic baroque sculpture *Laocoön and His Sons*, excavated in Rome in 1506 and on display at the Vatican Museum. The sculpture depicts the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons Antiphantes and Thymbraeus as they are attacked by sea serpents. It is considered “the prototypical icon of human agony”<sup>28</sup> in Western art but unlike the iconic Christian sculptures showing the Passion of Jesus and martyrs, its manly suffering is considered to have no redemptive power or reward. Kounellis relates the sculpture's tragic and sublime patriarchal/homosocial Greekness to a timeless hymn of male artistic genius by connecting in one breath the story of Kouros, the first man in classical Greek sculpture, to the sublime manliness of Laocoön, to Picasso, which supposedly explains the historical achievements of the modernist revolution in art:

“It is about moving. In everything, the most important thing is movement. You see, the Laocoön is born within the Kouros. There is a minimal distance between them, not at all great. Kouros was meant as a Laocoön. Laocoön is well aware that he belongs to this family—he sprang from, he came from Kouros. Picasso, when he was painting the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, had locked his model—a girl—into the loft and

he went out for drinks with his friends. I once said to a feminist in Paris that if he hadn't locked up the girl, the work would not have been made. She did not respond—in fact, she never spoke to me again. Either you are wild (a savage) or you are not. You either make or you don't. Stop making, and you stop existing.”<sup>29</sup>

Whether or not this tale of the fantastic beginnings of Cubism—in a painting in which the distorted faces of female sex workers are compared to African masks—is true, the work that remains is to interrupt the assumptions and reproductions associated with this male artistic being that is constantly excavated to appear as the master of history and beauty: an enlightened forceful genius who dominates art and politics, aesthetic and political education, riding on ancient statues to the captured female bodies that submit to his modernist fervour. Ironically, a more diffractive attention to art history and archaeology's own constructedness, which refuses to reinstate any essence of representative originality, may tell us more about what this notion of Greekness in history and aesthetics actually is.

### My queer Pink Dinosaur & the revenge of Amalthea

Before I invented the conceptual persona of the Pink Dinosaur at the Dutch Art Institute, my aesthetic education had for many years been developed in Greek stadiums, within a family saturated with classical sports and Greek ruins; but also very much through the study of archaeology, and only later fine art and theory. What appears to be at stake in these disciplinary trainings are quite *different* “spacetime matters”,<sup>30</sup> a different physics, which might be grasped diffractively, away from the assumed availabilities that exist.

In my performances I introduce the Pink Dinosaur as the descendant of Amalthea, the feminine Nymph/goat figure that nursed baby Zeus in the cave where he was hiding. Admittedly, Amalthea herself is a figure from Greek mythology, yet a largely effaced one, a muted, mutilated and passive animalistic body that only served as a tool and provider for the endless empowerment of the male sovereign performed by Zeus. Her severed horn historically fuelled cornucopian fantasies and entitlements of all kinds of colonial submissions and supremacist stratifications within ongoing Western white world-makings. Reclaiming Amalthea's body and voice via the Pink Dinosaur's persona is an attempt

to refuse this destructive, forged apparatus, not by transposing an authentic, female self, reborn from the depths of ancient Greek fairy tales, but on the contrary, to expose the visceral abstractions performed by the cornucopianisms of the apparatus of Greekness, the immaterial labour and the paraded living statues that safeguard the sovereignty of the apparatus, and as queer theorist Jack Halberstam asserts, "to refuse interpellation and the re-instantiation of the law."<sup>31</sup> The Pink Dinosaur is not fixing a historical, representational and philological error but enacting a play-through for all to see.

What the Pink Dinosaur is trying to narrate is how, in all historical instances, whether it is the beginning of the tiny poor state of Greece in the nineteenth century, or the triumphal days of the Athens Olympic Games of 2004, or the current crisis era when Greece is labeled as 'the south', the apparatus of Greekness is always the entry point, and it is always in operation.

The Pink Dinosaur performs to badly and awkwardly cannibalize the identities of Greekness, from the position of a former athlete, former archaeologist, a teacher and artist, such that she is stuttering with entanglements, haunting the present with all that is continually left out of normative figures of artisthood and aesthetic and political education. She performs as a creative violation, and also as the joke of the gendered repeating part which has no part. While the white bodies of Greek patriarchal society and aesthetics continue to be copied and disseminated, Amalthea as the appropriated mythic core of plenty in and through a planetary reproduction, as ever assumed, is now in crisis. This meta-crisis of capitalism itself is even further traumatizing the image of abundance beyond its situatedness and nationalistic containment. This 'planetary' of the crisis continues to disappear from Greekness and from art. Against her disappearance and decreation, including in the contemporary schools, the woman artist, archaeologist and educator will work to be impossibly re-invented and re-created in the past and present, as a kind of Pink Dinosaur, the symbol of which is machinically interruptive and humorously haunting.

What is posed by the Pink Dinosaur is another way of thinking Greekness, a way in which ancient, classical, the modern state's and contemporary investments in things themselves and the attachments to them, all come together performed, wound up, bastardized, through a queer intersectional pedagogy of/against/away from Greekness. She

plays the queering and absurd role of conveying and correcting without fixing or curing or renaturalizing a more material and imaginative knowledge of and openness to history; in ways that show that the canon itself is fabricated, and therefore totally plastic, but we are in any case fully entangled in it. Otherwise, as Halberstam wrote, women and women artists bound to the photocopy machine of Greekness deal with a lineage in which "(t)he whole model of 'passing down' knowledge from mother to daughter is quite clearly invested in white, gendered, and heteronormativity; indeed the system inevitably stalls in the face of these racialized and heterosexualized scenes of difference."<sup>32</sup> The point therefore is not to try to instate another canon in its place, but to try to perform a kind of un-teaching, or miseducation, wearing a ridiculously fluffy fluorescent costume, and thus to be, in Halberstam's words, "disorganized, unprofessional, uncollegial, passionate and disloyal"<sup>33</sup> all at the same time. In 'The Queer Art of Failure' Halberstam also writes in a similar vein, "(r)ather than searching for ways around death and disappointment, the queer art of failure involves the acceptance of the finite, the embrace of the absurd, the silly, and the hopelessly goofy." It is this goofiness that the Pink Dinosaur both is and deploys, so that "(r)ather than resisting endings and limits, let(s) us instead revel in and cleave to all of our own inevitable fantastic failures."<sup>34</sup>

*A previous version of this text was part of the author's thesis for the 2017 MA Art Praxis at the Dutch Art Institute, supervised by Rachel O'Reilly.*

## Notes

1. Agamben, Giorgio, *"What is an Apparatus?" and Other Essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. pp. 2-8.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Berlant, Lauren, 'Cruel Optimism, Becoming Event: A Response', in: *Public Feelings*

Salon with Lauren Berlant, April 12, 2011, New York. 2011. <<http://bcrw.barnard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/Public-Feelings-Responses/Lauren-Berlant-Cruel-Optimism-Becoming-Event.pdf>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

5. Spivak, Gayatri, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012. pp. 96-118.

6. Haraway, Donna, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

7. "It can only be described as an experience. It discloses itself in being crossed. For, as we know every day, even by supposedly not deciding, one of those two right or wrong decisions gets taken, and the aporia or double bind remains. Again, it must be insisted that this is the condition of possibility of deciding. In the aporia or the double bind, to decide is the burden of responsibility. The typecase of the ethical sentiment is regret, not self-congratulation." Spivak, Gayatri, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012. pp. 104-105.

8. Butt, Danny, *Double-bound: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. 2014. <<http://dannybutt.net/spivak-aesthetic-education-globalization/>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

9. Berlant, op.cit.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid. Berlant writes, "The political, the aesthetic, the pedagogical, and any attachment-love: these are all trainings in absorbing and refracting the otherwise, a virtuality that, by way of the immanent affectivity of form itself, siphons energy from the desire to foreclose that always haunts anchors in meaning. Recontextualization opens foreclosure against its own promise of interpretive and affective rest. Aesthetic criticism here—criticism that reads with the affective impacts of form and object that hold up a critic's sense of the world—uses the encounter with art to perform what Latour would call "associology," changing not only what kinds of tone and relation criticism can have, but how the newly scenified object organizes concepts, becoming a pulsating question that produces speculation, historical narratives, explanations, and more questions."

12. Ibid.

13. Here I am borrowing a concept from Moten, Fred, and Harney, Stefano, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Wivenhoe, UK & New York: Minor

Compositions, 2013. p. 47: "Here is an anoriginary drive whose fateful internal difference (as opposed to fatal law) is that it brings regulation into existence, into a history irregularly punctuated by transformations that drive imposes upon regulation. Those transformative impositions show up for us now as compensation and surplus: as the payment of a massive and incalculable debt by the ones who not only never promised it; and as the massive and incalculable range of labored living, "the thing realized in things...the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces, etc., created through universal exchange" that Marx called wealth. The anoriginary drive and the insistences it calls into being and moves through, that criminality that brings the law online, the runaway anarchic ground of unpayable debt and untold wealth, the fugal, internal world theater that shows up for a minute serially-poor but extravagant as opposed to frugal—is blackness which must be understood in its ontological difference from black people who are, nevertheless, (under)privileged insofar as they are given (to) an understanding of it."

14. Althusser, Louis, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. London, New York: Verso, 2014. pp. 232-272.

15. Ibid., p. 251.

16. These statistics are based on the census study *Athens School of Fine Arts. Το προφίλ του απόφοιτου της Ανώτατης Σχολής Καλών Τεχνών* [The profile of the graduate programme of the Athens School of Fine Arts], conducted by the Career Office of the Athens School of Fine Arts, 2005. <[http://www.dasta.asfa.gr/files4users/files/meletes\\_ereynes/to\\_profil\\_tou\\_apofitou\\_tis\\_askt.pdf](http://www.dasta.asfa.gr/files4users/files/meletes_ereynes/to_profil_tou_apofitou_tis_askt.pdf)> (Greek only). Accessed 10 August 2017. Although it only registered the graduates' gender within the period of 1993-2005, it is my estimation based on the yearly ASFA entrance exams results that these percentages remain as such up until the present day (2018).

17. See the curatorial statement of the Athens Biennale Monodrome, 2011. <<http://athensbiennale.org/en/ab3-monodrome/>> Accessed 10 August 2017. Exhibition views of the statues: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyxNa8SJJEY>> Accessed 14 June 2018.

18. Kuhnt, Sara, 'Beyond the Crisis: On Greece's Burgeoning Art Scene', in: *Afterall*, 2012. <<https://www.afterall.org/online/beyond-the-crisis-on-greece-s-burgeoning-contemporary-art-scene>> Accessed 10 August 2017. Also see: Zefkili, Despina, '3rd Athens Biennale', in: *Frieze*, 2012. <<https://frieze.com/article/3rd-athens-biennale>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

19. Plantzos, Dimitris, *Το πρόσφατο μέλλον. Η κλασική αρχαιότητα ως βιοπολιτικό εργαλείο*. (Recent Futures. Classical Antiquity and Modern Greek Biopolitics). Athens: Nefeli Editions, 2016.

20. This observation comes from my position as the Head of Communications of the third Athens Biennale, *Monodrome*, thus having a first-hand overview of the reactions and discourses that this Biennale initiated. *Monodrome* attempted to address issues of Greekness and the Greek debt crisis in the middle of fierce demonstrations and riots in Athens that were sparked by the first Memorandums. An interesting review of the third Athens Biennale can be found at: Bailey, Stephanie, 'Monodrome: Third Athens Biennale', in: *Artwrit*, 2011. <<http://www.artwrit.com/article/monodrome-3rd-athens-biennale/>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

21. Zacharopoulou, Katerina. Η Εποχή των Εικόνων. Η ΑΣΚΤ σήμερα. (The Era of Images. The Athens School of Fine Arts today). EPT webtv, 2017. <<http://webtv.ert.gr/ert2/i-epochi-ton-ikonon/04mar2017-i-epochi-ton-ikonon/>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

22. Karlopoulos, Yannis, 'Είμαι ένας τυφλός ζωγράφος': Όταν ο Γιάννης Κουνέλλης είχε μιλήσει συναρπαστικά στο περιοδικό 01' ("I am a blind painter": Yannis Kounellis's fascinating interview in the 01 magazine), in: *LiFO*, 2011. <[http://www.lifo.gr/articles/arxeio\\_articles/133813](http://www.lifo.gr/articles/arxeio_articles/133813)> Accessed 10 August 2017.

23. Grimes, William, 'Jannis Kounellis, Leader in '60s "Poor Art" Movement, Dies at 80' in: *New York Times*, 2017. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/arts/design/jannis-kounellis-died-sculptor.html>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

24. "I came to Italy because I was interested in painters such as Masaccio—a revolutionary artist [who] changed from the idiom of the Middle Ages. He was not only a great painter, but also had a great intuition. His art was not classical, but humanistic. And I was born in the country that invented humanism." (...) "I have the mindset of a painter. That's my identity. I couldn't abandon that even if I wanted to. In Greek the word for painter is *zōgraphos*, which means someone who draws life. The Greek is much more precise. It's a matter of living experience." Gayford, Martin, 'Everything needs to be centred on humanity': Jannis Kounellis, 1936–2017', in: *Apollo Magazine*, 2017. <<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/everything-needs-to-be-centred-on-humanity/>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

25. "Archaeolatry, archeolatry (s) (noun); archaeolatries, archeolatries (pl). The devotion to or the worship of ancient customs, expressions, objects, etc." *Word Information*, an English dictionary about English vocabulary words and etymologies derived primarily from Latin and Greek word origins. <<http://wordinfo.info/unit/2564/ip:2/il:O>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

26. Karlopoulos, op. cit.

27. Zacharopoulos, Denys; Iliadi, Marina; Bernier, Jean, 'Ο Γιάννης Κουνέλλης μιλά στη LiFO: "Πάψε να φτιάχνεις, και παύεις να υπάρχουν!" Ο σπουδαίος καλλιτέχνης συζητά με τον Ντένη Ζαχαρόπουλο, τη Μαρίνα Ηλιάδη και τον Jean Bernier' ('Yannis Kounellis talks with Denis Zacharopoulos, Marina Iliadi and Jean Bernier on LiFO: "Stop making and you will stop living"'), in: *LiFO*, 2010. <<http://www.lifo.gr/mag/features/2407>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

28. Boxer, Sarah, 'The Formula For Portraying Pain in Art; Building Chairs or Forging Tools to Ease Suffering Can Transform It Into a Creative Force', in: *New York Times*, 2001. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/15/arts/formula-for-portraying-pain-art-building-chairs-forging-tools-ease-suffering-can.html>> Accessed 10 August 2017.

29. Zacharopoulos, op.cit. The translation is my own.

30. "Diffraction owes as much to a thick legacy of feminist theorizing about difference as it does to physics. As such, I want to begin by re-turning—not by returning as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again—iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns". Barad, Karen, 'Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart', in: *Parallax*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2014. pp. 168-187.

31. Halberstam, Judith, 'The Wild Beyond. With and for the Undercommons', in: Moten, Fred; Harney, Stefano, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Wivenhoe, UK & New York: Minor Compositions, 2013. p. 9.

32. Halberstam, Judith, *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011. p. 124.

33. Halberstam 2013, op. cit. pp. 8-9. "Moten and Harney also study what it would mean to refuse what they term "the call to order." [...] "The subversive intellectual, we learn, is unprofessional, uncollegial, passionate and disloyal. The subversive intellectual is neither trying to extend the university nor change the university, the subversive intellectual is not toiling in misery and from this place of misery articulating a "general antagonism." In fact, the subversive intellectual enjoys the ride and wants it to be faster and wilder; she does not want a room of his or her own, she wants to be in the world, in the world with others and making the world anew."

34. Halberstam 2011 op. cit. p. 187.



## Remote Dancing

### 45' Score #6

Rodrigo Andreoli  
Athens 2017

\_Define a place for the practice to happen [open/outdoor spaces will provide a more intense inflow of information]

\_Set up the limits of this space just by envisioning a shape (circle, triangle, diamond) in the area where the practice will happen

\_On a piece of paper, in the top right corner, write your full name, date, time and the place where you are – say it out loud as you write:

\_On the same paper, in the bottom left corner, write down the target of your dance a few times and say it out loud [target is the information about a specific time and place where you want to direct your dance to, where the dance will remotely happen. It can be anywhere you can name, here or in other dimensions, in the past, present or future. Write down the date, time and name of the place and make up a code for that event. You can invite other people to dance with you by sharing with them the score and the code you created]

Set timer and follow this action protocol:

- 5 minutes: *concentrate on breathing*
- 10 minutes: *deep listening*  
Listen to the sounds around you. Listen to sounds inside you body. Listen to what is close, listen to what is far. Follow sounds. Displace your ears to other parts of you body. Hear through the vibrations coming from the ground, coming from the air.
- 12 minutes: *seismographic drawing*  
Use the back of the sheet of paper to create a map of the soundscape you hear, following internal and external sound waves you can create a map of what you hear, in continuous

deep listening.

- 12 minutes: *remote dancing*  
Keep your perception expanding as you move yourself in space and time. The movement is just a manifestation of this dance that is generated by many people connected to the target event. Use your senses to displace time and space, all you senses here are connected to the target event.

- 6 minutes: a flow of writing  
On the sheet of paper, write what you feel, what you see, what you hear. Images, sketches, impressions, dreams or whatever emerges at this point.

This score is to be practiced individually or in a group.  
The aim is to engage in a practice that will allow travel in time and space through a shared imaginative field.  
Imagining together recreates realities.

<https://yo-wasser.hotglue.me/remote>

**confessions, spells  
and medical prescriptions**

## The day before

Eliana Otta

From 11 am to 4:30 pm

The day before, that is really today, we danced tirelessly until dawn. Nevertheless, I woke up a few hours later, ready for a Saturday full of activities. I'm very curious about the seminar *On Homelands and the Stateless as the World Tilts Right*, organized by Creative Time and curated by Nato Thompson for the Onassis Cultural Centre. The first to speak is Tania Bruguera and her extensive experience allows her to challenge us without hesitation: it's not about analysing political situations, but about creating them; it's not about reacting to events and periodicals, but about producing events and being ahead of the news. Tania understands art as a space from where to project oneself into the future, to challenge our political imagination and push our creativity beyond the reactive behaviour that characterizes the thoughts and missions of the Left all throughout a world whose news one cannot get ahead. Tania insists on inviting us to search for a manner to paralyse power, to get it by surprise, to make it study our languages if it wants to censor us, to force it to have to make the effort to understand us before it can answer us. To paralyse power... How to consider such a possibility when 'our' own debates seem paralysed?

The first roundtable after the opening speech was called *Where is South Africa Now, Now?* In it, Athi Mongezeleli Joja, Zimasa Mpemnyama and Ziyana Lategan, all of them black and South African, exposed their conclusions about the reality they share. A reality that homogenizes the black population in its dispossessed condition: because they don't possess common goods in South Africa they constitute a stateless group inside their own country, as well as in the world. They all agreed that *stateless* is synonymous with *blackness*, and that the good-intentioned European Left didn't do more than mediate between the *stateless* and the power. Ziyana affirmed that today the refugee is the new marginalized subject of capitalism, which continuously needs to create a victim to be helped, in order to divert attention from the colonized subjects that

sustain its historical development. Ziyana laughed and maintained a relaxed attitude while affirming that capitalism is inseparable from colonialism and that Europe hasn't given the world anything good. The two first questions from the audience were asked by white women who didn't agree with that statement. One asked if they were not interested in exchanges with possible international solidarity chains, if they rejected all kinds of intercultural collaboration and sponsored an uncompromising position on the matter. I don't remember what the other one asked, but both interventions caused Simone Leigh, a black American woman and member of the Black Lives Matter movement, to intercept the microphone and say that the amount of *white tears* flowing around dismayed her.

The format of the seminar didn't allow for wide discussions and because of this the first misunderstanding remained up in the air, densifying it in a way that affected the next roundtable. The ambitious title *How to be as radical as reality itself?* was the umbrella that united Defne Ayas, Adam Kleinman, Natalia Antonova, and Antonia Majaca. Except for the latter, all seemed anxious when they took the microphone after hearing that their home continent was designated as historically colonizing – what probably prompted Adam to make clear that despite working in Holland, he's from Turkey. It was probably Antonia's expatriate condition (having been born in a country that no longer exists) that allowed her to approach in a complex manner the corral that had distressed the European attendants that morning, resorting to Denise Ferreira da Silva and her distinction between a 'universal me' and an 'effective me'. These 'mes' differ because of subjectivity and optics, and allow us to differentiate the position of the one who is always affected. Anyway, the ability of the audience to understand reality seemed already split in two irreconcilable ways of looking, dyed in black and white.

Fortunately, the third roundtable, *How do indigenous symbolic representations help us visualize resistance?* helped us escape the black and white entrapment and visualize not only resistance, but also strategies to imagine and act beyond the institutional corsets of artistic or state spaces.

Gladys Tzul Tzul addressed some experiences in collective work undertaken in Guatemala, where notions of authorship and ownership are challenged, as well as the official readings that relegate the fabrics woven by indigenous women to products made to marvel the tourist's eye.

As she explained the various manners in which communitary practices and rituals structure indigenous creation and work, Gladys underlined the importance of parties as strategies to create symbolic short-circuits that allow us to catch a glimpse of what would be an upside-down world. More than proposing a utopian vision of their practices, she showed that collectivizing property and sharing creative tasks in indigenous contexts constitutes a reality in permanent renovation and self-affirmation, sustained by a thread that, as frail as it is, allows them to connect past, present, and future with fluidity and coherence.

Benvenuto Chavajay started out by saluting with a “good morning and good afternoon to everyone”, reminding us that while it was morning here, in Guatemala it was still late in the day. He presented himself as one of “the generation of a son of illiterate parents, therefore I exist, resist, and re-exist”, and during his speech he quoted his father several times to explain his way of understanding art and the world. Benvenuto described his art as a way to dust off history and awake a numb memory. He also described it as a way of giving the stone a second chance in order to re-dignify it, evoking its cultural heritage as another way of “speaking truth in the form of a lie and lying in the form of truth”. That’s how the artist denounced his own disappearance in a local newspaper, with a picture and colour reportage; he literally threw a lime on a peace treaty signed by his country, and drew Christopher Columbus covered by husks of corn, to “cover the discoverer”. Benvenuto tattooed on himself the ID card of Doroteo Guamuche, who won the Olympics but whose name was mistakenly exchanged by an American news anchor for Mateo Flores, and so remained immortalized as the name of the main Guatemalan sports stadium. The artist managed to put up for debate in Congress the restitution of the correct name, and showed his tattoo to the press the day the majority of Congress voted for changing the lettering on the huge building’s front wall. The pictures showing the before and after of the operation not only were evidence of an action that was as poetic as it was demanding, but also showed what simple artistic gestures can achieve when they intelligently penetrate the instances of power. Chavajay’s next mission was to approach the UN and demand the return of the ancient manuscripts of Mayan and other indigenous cultures, without which the very soul of Guatemala has become ill. He maintained that his country doesn’t need money, but needs to take back its soul and that art has moved to smaller towns where it doesn’t need the public’s attention, but the attention of the stones. Even if the audience probably didn’t know how to deal with such an affirmation, to me it was

especially touching when he reminisced about his father telling him that when he sees an indigenous person with his head lowered, it means that person is talking to the earth, not that the person was beaten.

Five hundred years of struggle, death, and resistance could be summed up by that phrase. Five hundred years of contempt for those who managed to communicate with the one who provides us with food and life, readily condensed in a few potent words. Benvenuto’s art was also a source of renovation of our sleeping, marginalized, or underestimated energies. To those of us who were in the audience that day, it was proof that the world is not black and white, to those who came from historically ill countries, wounded by their history or with histories full of wounds, to listen to Gladys and Benvenuto felt like healing a bit. It was also a reminder that our hybridity can and must be a source of creative action, instead of a source of paralysis before the immensity of what hurts us.

In that reduced albeit diverse auditorium some of us felt enthusiastic or inspired, while others remained sceptical, as expressed by an assistant who asked Gladys about the land owning situation in Guatemala and used the expression *communal dream*. By exposing her ignorance of historical indigenous struggles, the question became almost offensive: it elevated to an abstraction and a kind of utopian naivety what is in fact a concrete reality, whose defence costs lives on a daily basis because of its resistance to phagocytic capitalism, which is expert in detecting and sabotaging all that resists privatization and sale.

The day came to a close at the Onassis Cultural Centre, but the audience did not grow, nor did we understand the meager attendance—and the general lack of Greeks—, even if I guessed that it was due to the fact that the place squandered resources in an almost grotesque manner in a city that was evidently in a *crisis*. Even if this word is to be used with caution, it’s inevitable to summon it when one walks around and notices the amount of abandoned shops and the houses and places for rent, in contrast to the imposing Onassis building, its shining premises adorned with coloured lights that use up energy without qualms, and with the amount of personnel hired to clean and watch the outside and inside of the building and who quickly could have filled up the auditorium—or at least could have ensured that the majority of the audience at the event was not made up of the event’s own participants.

Undoubtedly, I thought, if I were Greek I'd find this luxurious display very aggressive, especially in a situation that not only affects life in the city but also divides even more radically the contemporary art scene (with their privileged usages of time and their dependency on troublesome sponsors), of the spaces dedicated to activism and 'real' politics (with their own contradictions, infights, and conjunctural urgencies).

### From 5 pm to 8 pm

Theses suspicions were quickly confirmed, for the day remained dedicated to listening—this time, we, the foreigners (Capacete resident artists) listened to a Greek, Orestis Doulos. He's a member of the Greek Communist Party and took part in the Left coalition that supported Syriza until the party did everything that would have been done if the YES had won the 2015 referendum, despite the NO having won. Orestis made a brief recapitulation of the recent history of his country, attributing its condition of being the weakest link in the European Union chain to the feebleness of its productive base, an almost non-existent industry and service economy, with exception to the ship owners who also own the soccer teams and the media. That is, a fistful of magnates traditionally benefited by the State, among them the Onassis empire.

In a couple of hours Orestis drew for us a disheartening landscape of the state of the Greek mood. He himself said that, "despite being a fun guy", he was depressed, as was the rest of the population. He told us that psychoanalysts were the only ones having a good moment, because most of those who could afford it were in therapy, in a context of general unemployment of 25%, youth (18-28 years) unemployment of 50%, and a visible drop in childbirth (most of the couples who decide to have kids have no more than one). He also talked about the rise in suicides, and told us that the most spectacular suicides were those of leftists who could not deal with powerlessness and disillusionment.

He reminisced about the atmosphere before the referendum, the revolutionary spirit one could feel on the streets, how they would sing OXI ['no'] at the subway exit, how the people were really willing to make sacrifices in order to change their lives, and how "we thought he was one of us, but now people are disappointed with everything".

Today he said that no one believes Greece will pay the debt, and that everyone expects the meltdown, prepares for the collapse.

Raúl then remembered who coined the term 'anthropocene' and how, in his opinion, what one should do was to stop pretending to change an irreversible ending, and rather ask ourselves seriously how we want to spend our final chapter on Earth. Raúl said that he felt that coming here, from our countries, was like coming over to witness a process of shutting down, of parting, of mourning. I asked myself how to ease a collective mourning of a Left whose heart is broken: where to start to heal the wounds caused by the conclusion that legitimate hopes were put on those one already knew beforehand would not keep their promises? I also remembered the illusion that their referendum awoke in other parts of the world, in many faraway and very distant places, in so many other leftist parties that also needed healing, in me and in so many other people who had been recovering from similar disappointments, asking ourselves how to connect again with the possibility of collective change.

The uncertainty and melancholy enfolded us, but they were discreet feelings, even lovely ones, probably because we felt part of the right crowd, above all when contrasted with certain extreme local landscapes described by Orestis and because we were together. In the end we managed to comprehend the subtle manners in which despair manifests itself among the people who had up until then seemed enthusiastic, open, and very kind. The little Kipseli Square itself didn't seem to evidence this somber disposition with its well tended gardens, lively cafés, and neighborhood kids playing all around. We spoke of depression in cheerful surroundings.

We were focused on learning from this new context when suddenly there was a dry, hard, very violent thud. We turned around to check where this was coming from and could see a leg going back to its original, vertical position right after flexing and quickly stretching out to reach and kick a pigeon as if it were a soccer ball. The man who almost killed this animal turned around in a bad mood while the woman who accompanied him smiled. The pigeons flew away quickly. One of them probably died a bit later with its internal organs ruptured, I don't know. What I know is that I felt a deep chill that vibrated through my entire body, filling me with an anguishing energy while I shared my pain with Sol, Gris, and Raúl. Our looks met undaunted in this moment of confusion and unrealness. Some people around us commented on it, some laughed at it, Gian said "that's how the Balkans are", and I thought that I was really ignorant about that, if that episode could shake me like nothing else I had seen during my time in Athens. Not my previous encounters

with junkies; nor the rests of their precarious belongings in the parks; nor the sidewalks lined with condoms, needles, and hypodermics thrown around; nor the unstoppable flux of clients going in and out of well-known whorehouses; nor the fictions of shelters made with recycled material under which people slept on the streets; nor the bloody hand I had seen a few days before after an apparent fight on a street used only by men. I don't know if it makes sense to make such a list as that, above all because since I began writing this text new things have happened that could fit perfectly alongside those events; despite all of that, nothing up to now has managed to shake me quite as much as that kick.

Orestis' kindness managed to recover our concentration and we kept talking for a long time, until I realized it was the scheduled time for a Butoh event I wanted to attend.

#### From 8:30 pm to the void

In a space called Kodo the Spanish dancer Marianela León Ruiz was going to perform. The place was completely silent and Marianela had all the attention of the small audience. She moved slowly over a chair, lying down and retreating over herself, never settled, never stable. Her body controlled the situation, but at the same time seemed to be considering whether to fall into some kind of void that we began to intuit around her. And that in a little while we'd realize she made us inhabit.

The chair ended up between her legs, accompanying her in a relenting, difficult walk, as if it were a prosthetic limb of some invisible extremity that made its way into the material world at her expense. The sensations that watching her produced in me were somewhat familiar. I know. Clarice. Clarice Lispector. *The Passion According to G.H.* ("I've lost something that was essential to me and it's no longer so. I don't need it anymore, as though I had lost a third leg that up until then kept me from walking but made me a stable tripod. I've lost that third leg. And have gone back to being a person I never was. Back to having what I never had before: only two legs. I know that I can walk only when I have two legs. But the useless absence of the third leg makes me long for it and it scares me; it was that leg that made me able to find myself, and without even having to worry about it".)

When she freed herself from it, the movements began to enfold all of her body, but the path to greater freedom was not simple, nor fluid.

There was something in her that seemed to arise in the midst of a quarrel whose anguish we couldn't fully grasp, despite noticing it physically and sonorously by certain noises Marianela made—or rather they came out from her as if she couldn't help it. Her laboured contractions alternated the expansion and the opening of herself, with gestures from which sprouted forth this other self that seemed to be demanding to be born from itself. The sounds that reached us through her made me think of some nonexistent bird, while her body remained undecided between throwing away or protecting these other identities that inhabited it. Again, the word 'anguish' came to me and also resorted to my body. Something of the feeling of the pigeon who was kicked while walking around inadvertently also took hold of my body. Outside a baby cried incessantly. The weeping made the feelings that came to me more pungent, but again some familiarity about the ritual we had witnessed led me to a book that had touched me deeply: Octavia. Butler. Bloodchild.

("Terrans should be protected from seeing." I didn't like the sound of that—and I doubted that it was possible. "Not protected, I said. "Shown. Shown when we're young kids, and shown more than once. Gatoi, no Terran ever sees a birth that goes right. All we see is N'Tlic—pain and terror and maybe death.")

It was as if Marianela had been showing us what it's like to live inhabited by death. The death we get closer to every day we live, the death of those we love and that we mourn as if we could avoid it, the death that surrounds us and that we choose to face indifferently in order to cope with our impotence. It was as if watching her we could understand something about the lack that constitutes us, as if by watching her we could make vibrate this lack in each one of us. Not to understand it rationally, nor try to locate or fixate it, but to embody it, at least for a moment. That is to say, to accept better our lack of understanding. Our inability to understand lack and death, above all our own.

("No. All intense understanding is, finally, the revelation of a deep lack of understanding. All moments of discovery are a loss to oneself. Maybe it has happened to me, an incomprehension as total as ignorance, and from that I emerge, as intact and innocent as before. Any understanding of mine will never be up to this comprehension, since merely living is the height I can reach, my only level is to live.")



Marianela walked towards the window of the third floor we were at. By then she had already rid herself of her clothes and her body, thin, somewhat hairy, climbed on the lintel leaning of the chair of a spectator, who probably didn't go there thinking that at some point all the eyes in the room would be turned to her. Much less imagined, at the start of the day, that later she'd have Marianela's pubic hair close to her face, and that she'd be taking part in the complex joke being played on us. And of course it was funny to see her with half her body out of the window, and think of the passers-by suddenly seeing an ass in the air during their stroll through touristic downtown Athens. But it also produced a kind of shiver to know she was in the exact limit between self-preservation and free fall, at the edge of such possibility (even if metaphorically). Her body was there, it fitted exactly the height of the window, as if the architecture had been waiting to offer itself to her as material for resignifying. If she really had wanted to jump, what would have made sense to say? Would it have made sense to try to stop her? What would have been more violent: the fall, or the attempt to prevent it? These questions surrounded me and I did what I could to get them out of my mind. Did she by any chance intend to make us think about that? Did she want us to think thinkable, verbalizable, transmissible things through something like a gesture or movement? Did she want us to look through our normal capacity for judgment?

("Life and death have been mine, and I have been monstrous. My worth has been that of a sleepwalker that simply moves forward. For 16 hours of doom I had the courage to not compose nor organize. Above all, of not foreseeing. Up until then I hadn't had the courage to let myself be guided by what I didn't know, in the direction of the unknown: my predictions determined beforehand what I'd see. They were not the conjectures of my vision: they already had the size of my precautions. My predictions closed the world off to me.")

Marianela was now in a corner. She managed to fix our attention to a toilet paper roll with which she was dancing, starting from the farther end of the room until she got close to the audience. She got so close we can see her skin in detail, let ourselves be disturbed with no other distractions, even if my head turns towards books—this time, straight to *Testo Junkie*. I wonder if she is also her own guinea pig, like Paul Preciado cheered us all to be around 2008. I observe her furriness and remember that potent invitation to de-identify ourselves with the genders that were attributed to us, as well as Preciado's insistence that, more than penises

and vaginas, the voice and body hair are what make us more easily identifiable as men or women. Marianela exhibits a hybrid nudity that issues a challenge from a much more frail and uncertain place than that of the revolutionary pharmacopornocapitalist critical philosophy. There are no speeches, conclusions, or second-person interpellations in her performance, maybe because the first-person itself is not even evident. How many people inhabit that first-person? How can we give sensible shape to these other forms of being, that extrapolate the word *I* in the singular? Maybe despite the difference in employed languages, there's much in common between how that book and that dance interpellate, challenge, seduce, and confound us. Both result in a disturbing invitation to ask oneself about the multiplicity of possibilities we carry in our bodies. And they're both the result of meticulous work, consistent with vital bets that concretely demand a challenge to the ingrained habits that keep us locked up.

Ruíz continued the sequence of movements that had us mesmerized, inventing her own rituals with the help of a toilet paper roll. When she finished, my Spanish friends went over to congratulate her. I was still trying to process what I had seen when someone called me. I found myself to be lost for words when they introduced me to her, and soon it seemed unreal that the body that had just publically shared the density of its experience in such a hypnotic and disturbing way could return my look with such a twinkle in the eyes and such a generous smile. Alex, Kike, and I could barely speak while she looked at us with attention and joy.

We walked back to the Exarcheia neighbourhood, talking. We ate a 1,30 euro souvlaki. Exchanged some opinions about *documenta*. I was tired and stimulated, wanted to re-read Clarice, Octavia, and show Benvenuto's work to the others. I wanted to learn to establish a dialogue between the wounds in history and the wounds in my body, like he does, and explore that as if it were both mine and alien, like Marianela did. I got home and wrote in my calendar what I had done that day and looked into what to do in the following days. The next week would be diverse: a queer re-reading of Nietzsche and Kavafis, organized by Studio 14 for *documenta*, a concert by an old-school Greek experimental music legend, the gesture study workshop of Alexandra Bachzetsis, and also my birthday.

## Interview with Sol Prado about Endless Waiting Game

Raúl Hott

Raúl Hott: Your previous works have approached the relationship between capitalism and depression, with many references to the influence of the pharmaceutical industry on the current production of subjectivity. You soon started to inquire about different psychiatric disorders and about how they relate and are linked to capitalist consumption culture. It'd be interesting to know how the interest for immigration issues arose, and in what way that's related to the previous themes.

Sol Prado: Two previous projects, undertaken in collaboration with Franco Castignani and called *Like 50mg* and *International Consumer Pole (ICP)*, approached the idea of neoliberal subjectivity; a subjectivity that is mobilized by and built upon debt and the affective pair anxiety-depression. These projects have been developed from my personal experience as a body medicated with antidepressants and inserted in the cognitive-creative work-market. When I entered the process of depression I already practiced the political exercise of inhabiting my own frailty, which allowed me to adopt a sensitizing approach, far away from the habitual pathologizing of depressive states. It was a daily and collective exercise of building up agency and empowerment starting from vulnerability, and avoiding taking the position of a victim.

My search resided (and still resides) in how to compose new sensibilities and open creative horizons from the cracks of normality. In my case, the first pharmacological treatment for depression had as a consequence that I was able to build a body clearly focused on short-term satisfaction linked to productive work, since the use of these drugs debilitates my empathy and annuls the possibility of feeling sexual satisfaction—which obviously frustrated my sexual-affective relationships. This experience made me question a lot of things. With a little bit of attention I could notice the way in which my body and my

psyche were being tamed by the voluntary consumption of technologies of control. In parallel, I resorted to key texts during this period, including *Testo Junkie* by Paul Preciado, which helped me understand the power of big pharma and how it exerts control over populations. *The Uprising*, by Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, was also essential: in this book he approaches depression as a form of social imposition of discipline.

RH: If there are innumerable islands in Greece, and therefore innumerable entry points for refugees, what prompted you to focus specifically on the island of Leros?

SP: An Argentinian friend, a student of the work of Félix Guattari—Diego Sztulwark—recommended me the book *De Leros à La Borde* when I told him I'd be coming to live in Athens during 2017. It's a very simple book, a kind of diary in which Guattari tells of his trip to the island and his experience resorting to the psychiatric hospital of Leros. The trip happened as a consequence of a very controversial piece that the *London Observer* published in late 1989. The piece, entitled 'Leros: Europe's guilty secret', publicly exposed for the first time the inhuman situation ailing the psychiatric patients of the island. I soon started investigating further and discovered that currently there's a refugee camp in the same building as the old abandoned hospital, and so I decided to go to Leros.



RH: To me it was always very interesting that in each of our conversations you always spoke of the superposition of realities operating on the island, and you mentioned that it had had a very particular 'function' during history.

SP: So it is, it has to do with the history of this island and its destiny as 'human warehouse'. The island was occupied by Italy in 1912 during the First World War, and they built huge buildings to lodge their more than 40.000 men. When they left in 1943, these buildings were used as a technical school for a brief period; later, in the period of the Greek civil war and of the dictatorship, they were used as prison centres for political dissidents. In parallel, in 1953 some buildings were used to install a psychiatric hospital (then called 'Leros Psychopath Colony'), since the psychiatric hospitals of Athens and of the other islands were full. The authorities decided to put patients there who didn't receive visitors or those whose irregular status made their identification difficult—basically, they were 'forgotten ones'. The number of patients varied between 1.000 and 4.000 patients in abhorrent and miserable conditions, with the local inhabitants—ex-fishermen, generally—working as caretakers in the hospital.



RH: When was the refugee camp opened?

SP: There was a lot of empty space in these abandoned buildings as the hospital was permanently closed in the early 2000s, and that how it should be. Today the refugees don't arrive directly at Leros, but generally come to the island of Farmakonisi, a military island very close to Turkey. Because they must be rescued by the Greek Coast Guard to enter European territory, they prick leaks in their lifeboats when they're close to the coast. Risking death is the beginning of the legal application for asylum.

RH: It's very peculiar, this insular space that turns a prison, psychiatric hospital, refugee camp, etc. into a place for tourists. I had never heard about a space with such a degree of exclusion and seclusion. This may be connected to our incapacity (on a human level) to see reality as it is. In this case, we dispose of everything we don't want to see. This is what this island is: a 'trash bin' where one throws away what is not supposed to be seen.

SP: I think this is a clear example of what we do as human beings on a variety of levels. Why don't they want refugees to enter? Because they don't want to see the results of their war-mongering in other people's homelands. It's about excluding others and avoiding to see them. It's a constant process of categorization and dehumanization, where the different person will remain different, excluded, made invisible.

To this exclusionary system, it's despairing that this mass of people 'invade' their privileged grounds, that they try to have rights and invade their streets. To this system, imprisonment and physical and emotional abuse are ways to maintain the privileges of their population.

RH: Do you plan to keep traveling to the island and, if you do, what will you look for during the next trips?

SP: Yes, I'm going there next April. This time I'll be accompanied by Anna Papaeti, a Doctor in Musical Therapy from Crete who has been researching the use of music as a torture tool in detention centres during the Greek dictatorship. I'm interested in the collectivization of this project with other people who are approaching similar themes.

**RH:** How would you describe what you did with your performance *Endless Waiting Game*, and your use of irony?

SP: I think the clash of materials and realities I use with different filming techniques is ironic, but... to be honest, I don't believe that the satire in my work comes from any place other than the real, I just juxtapose preexisting material. I believe that the biggest possible satire is having normalized so many dehumanization, having crystallized our empathy towards the suffering of others—and our own, for that matter.

But going back to the question of the ironic composition of the material, I work with assembling/disassembling, and with manipulation. I'm interested in thinking and working the image as sensation-equalizer. These are acts of controlled manipulation that don't allow you to completely enter a fantasy territory, because I rupture it before that happens. At the same time it has the capacity of showing you that you are part of the mechanics of manipulation on a daily basis.

I believe that it is, as they say in Argentina, a *montage that shows its loose thread* to trigger you to pull at it and see how the reality production machinery works.

To show the crack, to open escape routes.

**RH:** Can you describe what happened during the performance?

SP: The performance *Endless Waiting Game* took place on 12 November in Athens, with the collaboration of Open Form. It was a presentation consisting of four chapters, with the aim of breaking with the possibility of believing in a single story. It presents a fragmented theatricality that operates on the constant borderline between fiction and reality. I wanted to deliver a story or narrative that is not closed, to avoid self-reference as if I'm the enunciator of some truth. For this reason I do not resort to 'truth' formats such as documentary, since this is a work linked to an attempt at artistic reflection. The first chapter is called 'Lépida' and is a looped introduction where I present on four occasions in the same video each of the stories of locking up different human groups that have occupied the buildings of Lépida Bay, Leros. In the second chapter, 'Abandoned Hospital', I use the format of a videogame to enter the old hospital, where the camera simulates a tour inside the psychiatric corridors, and on another screen a girl is

shown performing ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response). Again, the use of an entertainment structure that does not correspond directly to the classic format of the documentary produces a tension in the pairing of entertainment/truth. The third chapter is a video filmed with a drone that makes a zenith shot of the deserted coast of the island, while I sing 'I am Free' by The Rolling Stones live in front of an audience. The fourth chapter is another drone video that travels around the tourist beach with the song 'Shiny Happy People' by R.E.M. I am very interested in investigating the use of pop culture devices to build, manipulate, and modulate desires, and the consumption of a Western colonial imaginary as part of the motivation for migratory movements to Europe and the United States.

It's a 'freedom' that we—as bodies from the colonies—are able to consume in the form of culture and products, but not in the form of actual rights.

**RH:** During our stay in Athens we got to know many Greeks who asked us how the refugee crisis is covered by international media, since the local media seem not to cover it at all. What's your opinion regarding the visibility of the refugee crisis in the media?

SP: I believe that there is a political will to refrain from showing this migratory crisis, especially after the agreement made between the European Union and Turkey in March 2016. They decided to suppress the migratory crisis between the Turkish coast and the Greek islands; to put a lid on it, basically. At the same time, a good part of the NGOs are currently accused judicially of collaborating with human trafficking by participating in rescue operations in the Mediterranean, are pushed to eviction and even losing funds for the maintenance of their work around the camps. During 2017 the Greek government took control of these detention centers. The funds and aid are withdrawn, however this does not mean that the crisis has been overcome, just that it has ceased to be profitable.

As part of this "procedure", it is contemplated that people expect an infinity in these islands, getting sick psychically and physically. These are policies and techniques of greater discipline and oppression, and that is connected with depression. When we are 'depressed bodies' that cannot collectively politicize our discomfort, we are more permeable to manipulation, because we are in search of acceptance, of sense

for our life. I believe the depression of the 'social body'—not only referring to the migratory crisis—is a government strategy. This way of governing through fear is a way to weaken a specific population. We constantly receive information and alerts to be in a 'total state of fear'. All your emotions are transformed into chemical material within a control system. It is very complex. Where are we going?

**RH:** That question is never present. I really think it's one of the most fundamental questions not only at this time, but always. I do not see a desire or conscience to generate a discussion, or a real global assembly where people can express where we decide to go.

**SP:** That's because they have taken away the possibility of us thinking we have agency about the future.

**RH:** So the question is how do we resume and re-appropriate that agency? What has to happen then? What do we have to do?

**SP:** I wish I had the answer, but I believe and practice the way of inventing, of erring, of continuing to prove sabotages. The embrace of error as a war machine. My artistic work is one of my few tools of sabotage, and it's there that I ruminate on the idea of an imaginary occupation of the future. To once more occupy the idea of the future: what could be the affective relationships at the dystopian horizon of shortage of work, the proliferation of free time together with a lack of cash and cut credit?

Do not let others do and build the future, dispute that practice of creation. Without us, they cannot make the future. That is the key we mustn't forget.

*A Spanish version of this text was previously published at Lobo Suelto!.*  
See: <<http://lobosuelto.com/?p=18496>>

## I don't write diaries: On backlashes, eggshells and reverse warrior

Yara Haskiel

The *I don't write diaries* series is an open format. Found footage text passages float together with personal and shared experiences in a non-linear collage. It's an invitation to embrace an audio-visual and textual experiment on the notion of fragility and precarity in relation to micro- and macro-politics and the psychological symptoms of love and crisis.

### 1. Meta or Prologue

She turns on the radio while an old e-mail appears on her screen, dated September 2015:

"My video-diary series in two parts titled *I don't write diaries: On Love and Crisis and the Power of Fragility* spins around a question of fragility as personal and shared experience and attempts to localize the points that trigger these experiences. The points of departure were discussions that took place within the sphere of intimate relationships, as well as research into contemporary philosophy dealing with the problems of uncertainty and being powerless. An interplay of audio and visual methods is used to incorporate autobiographical and subjective elements into a broader perspective coloured by memory and experiences of my social environment.

In the current state of uncertainty, the connections to the people we love are becoming ever more a matter of existential urgency. The precarity that pervades the conditions of living is not just a phenomenon linked to the exploitation of labour conditions, it is also affecting and pervading our love stories and friendships.

Falling in love with someone, for example, catapults us into a state of dizzy desire that stimulates and changes our imagination of a possible future, but simultaneously produces and reinforces the feeling of uncertainty and fragility. At the same time, the overly repeated notion of 'crisis' becomes blurred by the ways of relating and belonging to



the intimate context on the one hand, and the context of new forms of collectivity, arising from social movements, on the other.

We're situated in the 'backlash' of a new 'no future' generation. Disillusionment and dissatisfaction also trigger us to become resistant beings. They mark a psychological moment in society in which precarious existence as a norm is projected into the future. Do we have to actualize a love ethics in our everyday life in order to put the focus on care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, and knowledge? This is one way of dealing with 'desensitization to the presence of the other', the loss of empathy as an autistic trend in the sphere of communication, and it is where Franco 'Bifo' Berardi finds the roots of contemporary precariousness. Do we have to rethink what it means to be committed and how existence means depending on one another? How can we get rid of the 'I' in the singular and start thinking the 'I' as multiple?

*I don't write diaries* is an intimate dialogue that touches on the concerns of daily life and is constantly interrupted by suggestions and visions of how to deal with these questions. Interjected short monologues aim to expose the inner voices of the filmmaker or to give small hints about the broader scenario that the two people in dialogue are entangled in.

Between the lines, sometimes concealed and sometimes directly, the following questions are raised: What role does (dis-)placement play in the production of desire? How is desire produced in relation to a possible future? Where and how and with whom do we want to live? Is the social bond that we have with others the grid that supports us in the struggle against the everyday exhaustion of life? How does uncertainty produce anxieties that affect our intimate relationships? What are the forms of commitment and models of support in reference to our social-political practice and to precarious life conditions? How can the position of fragility be transformed into a position of resistance?

## 2 Assembly of Goddesses—An Episode from 2017–2018, Berlin

Dressed in her pajamas she crosses the street diagonally to reach the bakery. Rough roasted coffee beans, a cappuccino is 2,50 euro. The foam has no heart today, she thinks as she carries off the cup. She sits down in one of the chairs among three round tables outside. Cigarette. She gets up, crosses the street diagonally, stops at the next car, and

slides down to the ground. What happened to her legs? Blackout. Gravity drags her down, in one millisecond. Her legs hit the ground. The warm leftover of coffee spills all over her. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. As she slowly regains consciousness, she thinks: is it my period? No. It's a general body strike. The street turned a blurry fluid grey, slow shadows and silhouettes crawl down the street. A Ghost Hero Girl passes by and helps her climb up the stairs.

Sweat. heat, cold, sweat. 12 hours of sleep.

Something follows her into the deep seas of her pillow:

Finally she created false papers for her mother and herself.

This is how it started: she will be named 'Kapetanissa Stella' and becomes the head of the female platoon at one of the ELAS Regiments. But at this point she doesn't know anything about it yet.

The forced workers on the dusty streets are kept under surveillance by the Bulgarian army. Lucky ones manage to escape and get Christian papers or flee to the mountains to become partisans. The Rabbi from Athens disappeared. This is the sign that it's time to escape. In Thessaloniki tickets to Poland need to be paid for, to feed the lies about 'relocation' in the Ghetto. Someone buried potatoes as if they are a valuable stone or even a beloved one.

**Kurukulla:** Hekate called to this voice. Do you understand anything?

**Ghost speaking through Hekate's body:** I can't remember.

**Kurukulla:** What are you talking about?

**Ghost through Hekate:** No, it's a desert made of asphalt. Layers of bones are underneath it.

**Hekate:** You have been saved from forced labour, because they wanted to build this desert.

**Kurukulla:** Who?

**Ghost through Hekate:** Ancestors...

**Hekate:** Today this desert is called the University of Thessaloniki.



**Lillith:** Thank you for joining me and welcome to this reading for 19 to 22 October 19. I'm doing daily readings on Twitter and I have insights for you at the Archaeological Service or you can check in with the Eurodac Data System for more information. Sorry for the delay, but the Red Cross is currently out of order because it was hit by a serious virus, as you know that has happened in the past before.

Here is a tarot card for the central theme of your weekend, in the New Moon at 26 degrees of Libra. The Chariot. Okay, that's good, so this is all about overcoming, business, success, really coming to terms with things from the past and moving forward.

**Kurukulla:** Lillith is a demon. They banned her from the Talmud.

**Ghost through Hekate:** Are you talking about Kathy Acker?

## 2.1.

She wakes up in the dark. The half moon shines brightly into her room, the light crosses her sweaty toes, while a bus rumbles down the street. She stumbles out the bed, picks up a glass of water, and the radio mumbles:

"The subject of reparations has strained German-Greek relations for decades. Experts from the Greek Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank in Athens calculated the amount of reparations. The total claims are estimated between 269 and 332 billion euro. Especially in the acute times of the euro crisis, Greece repeatedly calls attention to these claims. The German federal government, however, thinks of the compensation issue as settled. An agreement made in 1960 by the federal government at the time provided for the payment of 115 million Marks...."

**Lillith:** An agreement that was avoided by strategic maneuvering and changed with the so-called 2+4 Treaty during the reunification process of Germany in 1989. Who was researching this?

**Ghost through Hekate:** I can see burned villages. Raids across Europe. Tears, pain and death.

End of Scene 1.

## 2. Backlash Episode 2016–2018, Barcelona–Berlin

The world has turned black and white. Grey shadows are everywhere.

She tries to remember what she read that day on the airplane. She was in a disastrous state due to the final showdown of a heartbreak, like in a stupid Hollywood movie. A flashback of this feeling, of this thought, as if it was a spell: please can you just crash, you fucking airplane?! She lost the marked passages of that day. She remembers that she tried to focus on the text, while angry tears rolled down her face. She secretly drank red wine in the airplane toilet, as the stewardess told her to be more calm.

It was 6 July 2016, while:

"Desire remains in a relation to the distantness of the star, entreating the sky, appealing to the universe. In this sense, the disaster would turn us away from desire with the intense attraction of the undesirable impossible."

Maurice Blanchot

Desire just seemed an empty word. An empty vacuum-cleaner, sucking the last liquids out of her body until the fluid fluxes stop completely. Dry-out. Hangover from reality. Crash. Anxiety.

**Ghost through Hekate:** I can see neoliberal causes in everything, or is that too easy? I mean, what's the point of multiple and polyamorous relationships when they turn into something that creates pure exhaustion, pain and re-traumatization between the actors? Multiple lovers—multi-tasking relationships, having good conversations with this one, and this and that with the other one. When intimacy creates codependency and results in cycles of stress, exhaustion and sadness. Daily stumbling over the emotional perplexities and hunting for a broader common ground of easy encounters. Underneath something much deeper. But I guess that I'm just one ghost among many. We are in this together, but we're not the same- on- and off-stage and in between. What are the flight lines of these dramas, that are causing so much damage?

**Hekate:** Skip the question of love relationships and human capital.

**Kurukulla:** Real friends—adopted family, community. Putting the pieces together and rearranging them. Working through your own baggage.

**Lillith:** Kathy Acker taught us about the symptoms of female masochism within heteronormative patriarchal society, remember?

The now grumpy goddesses decide to leave the stage together.

### 3. Episode from the script of *I don't write diaries: On Love and Crisis and the Power of Fragility*

"Because love today is a condition of narcissism, because we've been taught possession or materialism rather than possessionless love. Those people in days of yore didn't have proper language, that is, correct Great Culture. They were just confused and loved out of confusion. Today, our teachers call this confusion 'poetry' (and try to define each poem so that the language's no longer ambiguous), but in those days poetry was reality. Today, only the knights who're mad enough to want to love someone who loves them maintain this order of poetry. I'm such a knight."  
Kathy Acker

"I had a good job and lots of money and then I lost it. I couldn't pay the loan of my flat anymore and they evicted me. Actually that's when my girlfriend broke up with me."

X. (Barcelona)

**Y:** Vampires are seductive masters of the art of manipulation.

**M:** Aha, and full of sexual energy, or what?

**Y:** If you present yourself on a plate maybe the vampire loses his interest,

or just swallows you up in a second, so a masochist wouldn't even be fulfilled by the pleasure of getting sucked. Or is the vampire a parasite?

A parasite can be a metaphor for the systematic destruction, absorption and expropriation of people's lives, territory and lifetimes.

(Sounds of sirens)

What kind of autobiographical story would you like to hear?

Maybe the one of the cat who went to prison after falling in love. She is also known as Myna by the ones she met on the Mexican border. She crossed the border using digital devices that showed her the tricks and water resources on the way. Then she took a bus and she found a permanent residency card on the floor with her name on it. She sold it on the black market when she married a Romanian Jew in New York. Some years later she met her Alter Ego on a trip to Paris and fell in love for the third time. She then decided to sell her books and went to Greece. On the way she lost her socks on a train and went back to find them.

#### 3.1.

11 May—sounds from the television, sounds of messages  
her telephone stands still  
couples are everywhere  
they're celebrating themselves with selfies

We need to reconnect with our experiences, now. Just a quick note:

"We're writing an article about the Romas who are evicted and forced to move to the outskirts of Athens and we're planning to write an article about anti-semitism in Greece. Will come tomorrow, but I first have to work at the post office at the airport. Three hours to go and to come back every day. They pay 400 euro, the contract lasts one month. Wir sind Leiharbeiter."

S. (Athens)

**O:** Yara, Nikos' grandfather has been to Makronisos, these small islands that were used for exiles.

**O:** He was a communist.

**Y:** Prison island?

**N:** An island near Chalkidiki, yes, a prison island. But he didn't stay, because he signed a paper right away, the paper that he had to sign...

**O:** The declaration! To denounce your beliefs.

**Y:** And then? He was freed?

Simultaneous voices:

Mantra

To keep your posture means not to lose your nerves  
 To keep your posture means caring about the people that surround you  
 Distinguish between the negotiable and the non-negotiable  
 To keep your posture means to decide on your limits  
 Don't negotiate the non-negotiable  
 Negotiability becomes impossible within a status quo of social-political  
 settings carried out by the participation of many to maintain the status  
 quo as truth  
 To keep your posture means to be aware of a situation  
 To keep your posture means self-discipline  
 To keep your posture means disobedience of the everyday  
 To keep your posture means to get drunk and keep your posture

"Shut down my bank account two years ago. They are stealing every  
 single cent, because of my debt. When I get my salary I go to the bank  
 immediately and take out all the cash at once. Last time 13 euro was left,  
 they just took it."

X. (Barcelona)

### 3.2.

**M:** I think you're not really a filmmaker.  
**Y:** You carry an image of me, I carry an image of you,  
 I thought we started to make a movie.  
**M:** Maybe you're doing something else, who knows...  
 What are you doing? What are you working on?  
**Y:** I don't know, maybe on bio-politics, love and crisis  
 or just reproduction.  
 Or maybe just ways to escape various crises.

"You never know, how it's gonna go,  
 How it's all gonna end up tomorrow  
 You gotta try try try.  
 Girl, you better get a job, oh girl, you need to work real hard."  
*Get a Job, The Gossip*

**MI:** This is gossip and a 'yellow press', you don't find any other country  
 with so many daily sports newspapers as in Greece.  
**Y:** Eight daily sports newspapers?

Yes, this one is from Thessaloniki and supports PAOK, this one  
 supports ARIS, this one PAOK again.  
 Then this one doesn't support anybody—it supports the system.  
 This one supports Olympiacos and has fundamentalist ideas, it's very  
 fanatical.  
 Look at this headline, "Orthodox Truth", and here are four orthodox  
 business newspapers offering books about the saints and dvds.  
**Y:** And which paper is this, with a girl in underwear on the cover?  
**MI:** That one is for finding jobs.  
**Y:** Finding jobs?  
**MI:** And it has one section with naked girls...  
**Y:** Finding jobs?  
**MI:** You take this one and afterwards you're looking for jobs.

Simultaneous voices:  
 How does economy enter in our intimate relationships?  
 What role do time, place and economy play?  
 We always fall in Love with worlds, the world is turning all upside down.  
 What crisis arrives when we fall in Love?  
 Call it transformation, call it fragility, being entangled with the world.

Precarity makes the body frail  
 Precarious Love  
 How would one describe it?

### 4. Aftermath

She started to assemble pictures of abandoned mattresses. She felt  
 these objects inhabit so many unimaginable stories of encounters,  
 movements and/or loneliness, all at the same time. But for her these  
 imagined stories were not at all about rest or restorative sleep. The fact  
 that the mattresses are lying on the street marks a change or movement  
 within the subjectivities of their former owners. Two years later she  
 threw her mattress out onto the street, without taking any picture of  
 it. The abandoned mattress disappeared the same night, as it was  
 light as a feather.

Since then the old knots and memories sometimes appear and make  
 their way through to another stage, made of eggshells, were she falls and  
 holds onto a knot or two, while hoping for the inevitable transformation

of the relationship between them. When trauma echoes back and forth through her body-memory and is pushing to reenact itself, she tries to sit still to embrace the sensation. The symptoms are not always transformative or different, but there are slow changes and that's what she holds onto, maybe just for one minute. To keep her posture means Viparita Virabhadrasana. The Reverse Warrior as a form of healing. A yoga pose for a peaceful and a focused mind that might have the power to connect with the body, to challenge vulnerability as the true courage. One flight line of healing. Although still in an economy that creates individualized Freudian therapies and/or isolated models of dealing with multiple- and trans-generational traumas, she believes that other practices like art and poetry are powerful tools to challenge the rigid borders and limitations within the system and the repressive machines and their symptoms of the madness of this time.

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## Precarious voodoo

Rodrigo Andreolli

compositions found in the city work as magical keys rendered by the accumulation assemblages of chance and intention charging symbols slightly disrupting realities in everyday gestures situations composed by small **precarious** pieces practice of *hechizo* creation of fetishes for fiction urban **voodoo** conferring power to matter affections effect of materials choreography of trashed meshes written spoken words producing worlds in ventions and clandestine prosthetic *gambiarras* dubious delicatetricky revealing process of transformation embedded objects uncertain unsteady unstable appropriation witchcraft hand made technological apparatus queering margins disobedient imperfect damaged use less basic rural luxurious imagination abilities desired knowledge coding to transform limits of real rayo campos 2017

**how to undo a to-do list**



## There is comfort in recipes

Vasiliki Sifostratoudaki & Susanna Browne

### Recipes

In late October the oranges on my tree start changing colour. Half green, half orange

Getting ready to become full. Seasons seem to follow a recipe.  
I bake a cake with a friend in a different continent so I can write, with.  
Flour and butter, my hands are made of mud.  
Building up the components of my b o d y  
Inside where the promise is, I am.

*The warmth of the oven heats up our Transatlantic kitchen. A line between.*

There is comfort in following an instruction  
As a woman I have been trained to know this.

In times of chaos I turn to the oven so that I may be told gently what to do,

I am taught this is chemistry, that in science there is sureness.

Mediums: flour, sugar, salt  
I fill my cup.

*The house a woman creates is a Utopia.  
She can't help it—can't help trying to interest her nearest  
and dearest not in happiness itself but in the search for it.<sup>1</sup>*

Time in the kitchen passes forward  
Choosing,  
cutting,  
deciding, placing, tasting.

The properties of the ingredients are re-formed in order to nurture  
(nature) my b o d y.

### Wartime wacky cake

mix the dry ingredients together; cocoa etc.  
dig two small holes in the bowl and fill with vinegar, mayonnaise.  
Stir  
then burn to a crisp in a heart-shaped pan, *don't eat*.

My pleasure in the domestic brings me little joy  
But sometimes it is better than looking at my phone

*as soon as the grief as soon as a ghost begins to shake  
me from the inside<sup>2</sup>*

Wherever I go I make ntolmadakia. Now, it is more ritual than recipe.  
leaves, onion, rice, oil, mint, salt, pepper:

**Find out where to buy the vine leaves** or better, collect them yourself  
in the right season.

I am always looking for small ones as they make the smallest bites—  
slow eating—tasting time.  
I soften them in warm water—in the blink of an eye—otherwise they  
become too weak to hold the rice.  
Too soft to keep the memories. Time is fast in its slowness.  
Prepare the rice, coarse rice.

### Onion

Onion deserves a paragraph on its own. I see the shape of my  
grandmother's hands which held it—tightly. Her bond to my body. I see  
her ring with the two initials of her grandmother's name, I see time and  
continuation, I see the scientific accuracy of the repetition of flavour.

I cut the onion by holding it tight in my palm, slashing it thin as a  
breeze: first, vertical cuts, then horizontal cuts; the tiniest cubes,  
invisible if not for their aroma.

Mint, a lot, trimmed as thinly as possible.  
Olive oil—the One who cures my hands, treatment.  
An idea of salt and pepper.

In the recipe I find a piece of harmony, like in Chopin's music. I read it over and over again. In its repetition I find the history and it becomes firm as a stone of gold.

The recipes carry the smell, taste, HER  
Like cooking, birth moves only forward.

### Jewels

I was thinking of writing about jewelry,  
how I received it instead of toys when I was a little girl.  
(A kiss on my hand, asleep in the night)

Growing up, gold was a small appreciation.

*I was lying down in my aunt's bed on a puffy blanket, with an image of a huge lion in front of me.  
Looking at it made me dream of where it came from.  
I knew nothing about Africa then, nor about the doorkeepers in Mycenae.*

*My aunt would lay in front of me a handful of small golden rings.  
I shared two feelings: sorrow and amazement. Sorrow because it was not a Barbie, amazement for the feeling of the lion and its golden colour.*

*The rings would vary in shape and the rocks would be purple, white, green and light blue.*

*Always shining. I would pick them up one by one from the pile, or all together, to hear the sound they made. Trying them on I would dream stories of their possibilities, firm in my tiny fingers.  
I felt pure joy then in choosing, because now they were part of my dreaming.  
I wish I remembered more about those not chosen.*

At a silent auction in my grandma's care home one Christmas I win a tiny golden ring. So tiny it is sharp, with the smallest diamond I have

ever seen. I think the auction has been rigged. Even as a young girl I mistrust the gift.

*My first diamond.*

Playing is playing. Playing is laughing is cheating death—my hands filled with mud but my ring always there, shining.

It gave me security. As does the chemistry of my body.

*I had to turn and look at my ring often, my diamond glance, to make sure that I hadn't lost it. Once my body was in sight, I returned to a stable condition of knowing myself. Where I was. I was there.*

As a girl I learned that I would take care of others. As a woman I try to include myself in the care.

*I was the keeper of the ring and vice versa; suspended between materiality and offering.  
Keeping it safe was my duty and/or my playing of trust, you might say.*

*I bought my own ring when I was of age. Pure gold in the shape of a U, holding my finger, surrounding a round white shell in the shape of a circle, penetrated with a golden nail. From India, it becomes the valuable stone that covers me like a blanket. Balance always. Over the blue of the sea, over a warm cup.  
Mistrusting the gift of oneself.  
mother, grandmother,  
aunt,  
me.*

Am I an I?  
I become a name.  
We wear each other, gold and the sea.  
The she is blue and the air as well.

*Hey Power, how did a horseshoe turn into a girl?*

*The amber. The story of a forest. Most important was the instruction that came with it. "Always keep inside wool so that it doesn't lose its shine". Again the recipe, the blanket, the instruction, the loan.*

## The Body (and Language)

The languages of the bodies before me are a keen and potent legacy  
I cannot escape.

*In the outskirts of town a sign says, "SINGLE MOMS OIL CHANGE"*

I write through them and with them; they become my nature.

*I am heavy with the weight of silenced inner lives  
what did they hum while they worked?  
In ancient times there were hits, too.*

*Even now  
My eyes that hurry to see no more are painting, painting  
Faces of my lost girl. O golden rings  
That tap against cheeks of small magnolia-leaves<sup>3</sup>*

In Modigliani's drawings, I see the penetration of the sign. I know only  
the outline of the women; the material is pencil, history, his touch.  
No desire for naming, often I see inside my own line, and try to speak  
the names.

## Animals

My mother says, *and no ship exists to take you from yourself.*  
Is our East your South?  
I write fast; the texts serve our common landscape. An ongoing walk  
with you across the sea, but before the offering, the loan. WE PAUSE.

As a child my unknown relatives became animals  
My aunts, cipher cats  
animals know their duties: safety, eating, mating; they claiming  
their existence.  
Does protocol protect memory?

I listen to the text's voice, when you read would you listen too?

In the text itself the safety is found between the spaces of the letters,  
like the ring between my fingers, like the blue who dresses us all.

My grandmother lunches with the queen.  
I stick a sock into the back of my pants: a tail

*"Flowers do not think of competing with other flowers.  
They just bloom"<sup>4</sup>*

In her house there was a kind of solarium.  
Right in the middle the ceiling was clear glass, reached straight  
through to the sun.  
Fake teal plants and ceramic animals, everything blue and white.  
Can the light be imitated? Does physics know how to  
be the sun?  
*I become a fish but my gills disgust me.*

The care system  
Small Duralex glasses cut like diamonds at the breakfast table.  
Dry cakes, old roasts, chef Boyardee in the microwave.  
*I choose to dance in a home where the floor is made out of stones. The  
flank of the constructions holds firm its use.*

*But will he (she) know where to find you,  
Recognize you when he (she) sees you,  
Give you the thing he (she) has for you?<sup>5</sup>*

*Do I want to know the animalistic convictions of my body?  
Can I give you the stories of my components? Can I offer you the  
history of me, the women, the men?  
Can their teaching be measured in an educational project or is it  
different?  
Like: A rose is a rose when she is of a rose cut, a loan diversifies my stories.*

## Notes

1. Marguerite Duras, 'House and Home', in: *Practicalities*. Grove Weidenfeld, 1987. p. 42.
2. Alice Oswald, 'Tithonus: 46 Minutes in the Life of the Dawn,' in: *Falling Awake*. Cape Poetry, 2016.
3. Powys Mathers, 'Black Marigolds', in: *Love Songs of Asia*, translated from Sanskrit of Chauras (Chaura-panchasika, 1st century). Knopf, 1946..
4. Seen on a sign at the entrance to Burkeville, British Columbia.
5. John Ashbery, 'At North Farm', in: *A Wave*. Carcanet Press, 1984. With writer's own interjections.

## **“Any sense of liberty can only be meaningful if it is set against a wall”, an interview with Roe Rosen in the context of his participation in documenta 14**

Eliana Otta

EO: How was the process of growing up in Israel for you, experiencing how masculinity is constructed there, while being progressively more conscious about your critical position towards that?

RR: I think that partly, even as a child, you are intuitively aware of certain things being constructed, and you feel that you are not compelled or convinced by them. In Israel there was a growing sense of a kind of virile, militant and patriotic masculinity, which was very much put forth in opposition to the image of the diasporic Jew. That Jew was passive, learned, religious, docile, not combative, and therefore could be killed. I grew up in the 1960s and the '70s, so I was four years old when the Six-Day War happened, and it was followed by a huge military euphoria, praise of military power and local patriotism. I remember being totally detached from this image and more in tune with what I perceived to be this, let's call it 'victimized Jew of the *Shtetl*', of the villages of Eastern Europe, which was also imaginary of course. I did not have any authentic first-hand experience of it, but it was a kind of fantasy that also had to do, maybe, with the identification with my father, who was a child in Europe during the Holocaust.

Later, when you grow up, you begin to contextualize these intuitive feelings into a more intellectualized, researched-based consciousness of how these things actually evolve. But the other point that I want to make is that when my work [*Live and Die as Eva Braun*, 1995-1997] was first shown and knowing that it was going to be polemical in Israel, it was crucial for me not to play the card of being the son of a survivor. I did not want it to appear as if this fact gives me a special privilege to be more bold or provocative, or to have any kind of permission, because I thought that what the project had to offer should

be viable as part of the discussion and a bodily experience regardless of this fact. When the polemics erupted it was so aggressive that during one live radio interview a politician called me a Holocaust denier, and then I said, I cannot be a denier, my father is a Holocaust survivor. So from that point on it became an explicit aspect, there was no point in artificially covering it.

**EO: And how did the reception of that work influence your subsequent decisions about what to show and how to show your work?**

RR: I don't know that it did, because it was a shock. In 90% of the cases we visual artists are quite protected, as provocative and risk-taking as we may be. There might be direct confrontation with aggressive politicians, like Vladimir Putin against Pussy Riot, but to have a public debate which plays out in the mainstream media, that goes into the details of the position that you are engaged in, also aggressively, is not an experience most of us have had. It was shocking, but it was not something that I felt was wrong. I knew that it was not going to happen with each and every piece that I do, but I think that politicians attack an artwork when they think they are going to gain something from it.

The importance of the Holocaust in Israeli discourse is at the heart of it, because it's a political issue that not only addresses how we can speak about it, but also how can it serve as some kind of political instrument of leverage that justifies military violence. If you assume the position of the victim—"I'm a Holocaust survivor who came to Palestine"—, then of course you will defend yourself. Even though there is a mighty army who is fighting a minority, you are in fact in a victim-position.

The Holocaust has a national aspect, an educational aspect... There are multiple layers to the instrumentalization of this collective trauma. I knew it was likely that my work would be contested, because at that particular time in Israeli history, the Holocaust issue was having a political revival. In the nineties a lot of survivors were still alive and some of them were politicians. There is this strange bifurcation in Israel's awareness; on the one hand there is a lot of silence and things that are left undiscussed, and on the other hand it's a culture with an almost necrophilic consumption of the Holocaust, to an extent that it's almost pornographic. My project suddenly appeared within this dichotomy, demanding from Israeli spectators to consider the possibility that the

victimizer is within them, instead of the other way around. By considering the victimizing potential that you have in you, you are denied the relatively easy identification with the victim, and the relationship is disavowed in favour of something that is fragmented, self-contradictory and potentially morally corrupt. It was a very uneasy project for Israelis at this point in time.

**EO: You studied philosophy and comparative literature and then made a transition to the visual arts, how was this process for you?**

RR: I didn't experience it as a transition, because I began to write and draw when I was a very young child and I went to an art school that was well known, but I was arrogant and a megalomaniac. I was certain about my capacities as an artist, I felt that I didn't need to study art, that I needed to study other things such as literature and philosophy. Then at a certain point I was juggling my work as a waiter with studying and doing my own work as an artist, and I felt it was impossible. So after an intense commitment to philosophy I went to New York to study Visual Arts, but it never felt like a real shift. Another quality I had early on and that I could later explain intellectually, was the feeling that there is something artificial in specialization. I don't mean that you don't need to be an expert at what you do, you definitely do. If you make a painting or use a language you should do it at a very high level and set yourself criteria, but I can't see a reason to limit yourself to one medium of expression.

This seemed false to me, especially when I perceive the efforts of the high modernists (because of course there are alternative modernisms such as Dada and Surrealism). If you think about the genealogy and discourse of abstraction, it was about purity, minimal economy, less is more. You have to specialize in your own medium and also find your 'idiom', and the prime example is perhaps American abstraction.

My sensibility was almost in opposition to that, a sensibility of excess, of abundance and of minor positions. What I mean is to be interested in illustration as much as in oil on canvas; in comics and pop music as much as in classical music; in television... To see culture as a fabric that denies a clear hierarchy. Because it was intuitively felt I used both popular culture and high culture as models or sources of inspiration. Part of popular culture at that time was about gender fluidity, masquerading, denying the opposition of authenticity and artificiality, and so on. Even though I was quite alone in what I was doing, I did

not feel that way. I felt there was a community or a world out there that provided a context for positions like mine.

EO: It was interesting that you mentioned David Bowie yesterday,<sup>1</sup> because when I looked at your website and was checking the story of *A Different Face* (2000), suddenly he appeared to me. The face of the character resembles the face of the girl from *Hilarious* (2010) as well the old cartoon character the Yellow Kid, and I thought about Pippi Longstocking too... It was exciting to find all these different references from pop culture. In *Confessions* (2008) there is a pile of books and a fluidity of codes that are in dialogue, like at the end of the credits of *Hilarious* with the printed t-shirts. I'm also interested in how to avoid this separation between what is supposedly high culture and low culture, and between mass culture and the art world. It's like going all the way from a fluidity of identities to embrace flexible positions within cultural codes as well...

RR: Just to complicate things a bit more, I can say that flexibility is a word that I find very ambivalent because what I do also has a strict or ascetic quality that goes against the grain of some things... If freedom or flexibility are to be attained, it can't happen easily. People like Paul Preciado know this from their personal experience, they know that if they want to elasticize their identity, they will have to confront different systems. In art that there must be an analogous difficulty if you really manage to attain something that is flexible. It's not just the same as being able to watch or do everything, which is what new age and capitalism allow us to do. You know, with cable tv you can flip through the channels and identify with the weather report or a stand-up comedian, and believe that by doing so you are being flexible.

I think that any sense of liberty or flexibility only can be meaningful if it is set against a wall, against something that tries to block you; those are the places where flexibility has to be negotiated and attained. Those walls are also internal, so to challenge your own notions of flexibility you have to ask yourself, where am I not flexible? Where don't I want to be flexible? What is my difficulty when I think about the borders of my identity? For this reason, my works are in a liminal moral zone, a zone where questions don't always have clear or singular answers. There are often several answers that exist simultaneously. It's very abstract because we are talking about all-encompassing principles for a position, but of course it becomes concrete with each given premise.

EO: I am interested in this rigor, because I see you are in control of every small detail in your works. How do you decide what needs to be controlled? What happens when you notice that there's something out of control, something that surprises you in the process?

RR: In many of my works research is crucial, not only in the intellectual but also in the visual sense, because they engage with a history of making things and visualizing things. I did a research project on the artist Justine Frank, whose work can be historically situated in the context of Surrealism, but also in the painterly tradition of

Palestine, where she moved, and in French literature tradition as well, because she was a pornographer, and there was a very rich tradition of pornographic French literature. There are also other histories, such as the history of the representation of women, of the Jew and anti-Semitism, the history of Zionism, so all those histories have to be considered alongside the position of art making.

I did not want to fabricate her as a Surrealist, because I did not want to totally disavow myself, but rather create a meeting point where the work would be absolutely realistic for a woman who lived in the 1920s or the '30s. It had to be attained on the level of minute detail, because the idea was not only to fabricate a character, but to create someone whose historical position makes it possible to claim she was real. Even if she's not real, she makes a viable claim, she should be real. This requires a lot of work. It necessitates intensive labour and time-consuming engagement, which in the art world is not to be taken for granted, because we live in a very hectic community, the profession demands you to often show new work. A piece like *Justine Frank* takes five years to fabricate, so I took a five-year break, I didn't show anything for five years, which is a big price to pay, but I think it is necessary to attain things like that.

*Vladimir's Night* (2011-2014) is another example of a fictional character, and he was Russian. I didn't speak Russian, so I felt that I had to begin by learning Russian, because he also wrote and I had to write Cyrillic as part of the illustrations. Concerning your question about mistakes or the things that you don't control, the demand that I put on myself is really crazy, because you cannot really consume Russian in three years, it's impossible. Walter Benjamin wrote that if you are not Russian you mustn't even dare to write about Russian culture, and he



was much smarter than I am, so mistakes invariably happen. Most of the schemes that I create already have a mistake as an innate condition. For example, in *The Blind Merchant* (1989-1991) Charlotte is blind, so the drawings on stage are blind drawings, then there are obvious mistakes; the eye appears outside of the face...

In *Confessions*, if the confessors do not speak Hebrew and read a transliteration, they're bound to make mistakes. They make very interesting mistakes. Instead of saying "the corpses are rotten" which is the original Hebrew, someone said "the cheese is rotten". So very interesting displacements happen, and in retrospect everything seems tightly put together, but the process itself has its chaotic stages.

**EO:** Now that you have mentioned these works, and because you have been working for a long time with strategies of using different female characters or women that actually exist, to speak through them or add your words or gestures, I was wondering how you think about these experiences in retrospect?

RR: I never saw it as a strategy. It is also a strategy to assume different positions, but it began in a very intuitive way. I think I wanted to be a woman as well as a man, or to be a third thing in between. I felt that art might allow for that to happen, so the initial realizations of those positions were kind of androgynous self-renditions, very much in the spirit of David Bowie. It became more 'strategic' as you say, with the *Martyr* paintings. I did a series of Christian martyrs, using close friends and often using gender reversal, men for women, women for men, and casting myself as a Christian woman. I was also engaging with history, albeit a Christian history with a particular geography and iconography, but from a Jewish position, like a saboteur, and from a feminine position. Then right after the *Martyrs* there was a book called *Lucy* (1991-1992), with a male protagonist that appears as a child and has a female name.

Only then came Justine Frank, as a kind of bona-fide outburst of female identity, and by the time I did *Confessions* it was an all-women affair, because after using so many female effigies it made sense that my confessions were only for the female gender. But I began to question if that had become a kind of a safe zone, and that's why the next fictive character was male.

**EO:** The first time I saw *Confessions* was after a talk about translation,<sup>2</sup> and translation is super important in that particular film. It made me wonder what your process of writing is like? How do you deal with thinking and writing, whether in Hebrew or English?

RR: I emigrated to New York City, lived there for twelve years and also got married to an American woman. I went there when I was 23 years old, quite young, but I was one of the oldest students in the BFA. I was very self-assured, I had already done some interesting works and had written a lot of texts in Hebrew. So language was definitely my identity and my home, but then I was in a place where people could not read it and they also couldn't care less because the context was so different.

It was a very crucial moment for me, and I asked myself, what is interiority without exteriority? How are the two negotiated? Why would someone else care about the things I care about? What does it mean if they think more about the other or at least as much as I think about myself? It's also a position of becoming a double of yourself: you have two languages, and the relationship between them is very unstable.

For example, *The Blind Merchant* was a piece I did at a moment where I felt that I could only write theoretical texts in English, because I was studying art history in English, but poetical texts were something else. So I took the absolute paradigm of the British canon: Shakespeare, and sort of parasitically clung to his textual body, with my English which was very good, but it wasn't a language I was comfortable in, it was not a home.

Ever since then, I think that the employment of language is like all those other experiences which have multiple levels of existence and awareness and are never singular and cohesive. It gets very interesting when you use languages that you don't understand, like Russian. Although I studied and was working with Russian, it is a very difficult language and I didn't have the time to really immerse myself, so I put myself almost in the same position as the migrant workers in *Confessions*; speaking in the first person as a Russian, without understanding what they say. So there also was a degree of self-parody. The choice of language is a very interesting one, because the answer is never clear. It is always a question, to work in English or in Hebrew, and in fact I did both in different circumstances.

EO: How are your interests in Surrealism and psychoanalysis related? How can these different tools address an expanded way of living our desires? I'm not sure if tools is the word I'm looking for... There are these elements in your drawings that have a lot to do with sexuality and defying gender roles, and combine playfulness with a darker side. They relate to things addressed in psychoanalysis, like repression, and the way our culture removes us from a pre-symbolic world where, before we make our way through conventions, we are children who supposedly feel no pressure or boundaries regarding what may be enjoyed or desired.

RR: I am trying to imagine a pre-symbolic world where there are no borders... [laughs]. I think that the 'we' or the 'I' is very questionable, because I think that we are structured by impositions from outside, not only in terms of ideology or the proper way to behave or whatever, but also by things that are objectively true, like the distinction between masculine or feminine. I am one of those people who believe in what Kaja Silverman called "dominant fictions", because what men and women were 800 years ago was scientifically different from what they are now, but they were universally true for western men and western human beings then. Only the truth changed, so she calls it dominant fictions.

There is no doubt that the notion of libido as a primal force that sublimates itself into other cultural forms was a dominant fiction of the twentieth century. This is only one example of the multiple, beautiful narratives that we invent that became very influential. They are more than simply tools, it's really reenacting something that's been imprinted on you, that becomes part of you. Lacan has this famous saying, "the unconscious is structured like a language", which might seem counterintuitive because it's supposed to be this pre-lingual free zone of forbidden desires that are repressed. So what does it mean that it is structured like a language? I think that Lacan is saying that our primordial ties are always already structured by the symbolic order, where language is the prime expression, perhaps the most important vehicle.

EO: We talked a lot about the importance of written language in your work, but what about your relation to music? It also seems to be pretty important in your videos, especially in the choice of the musicians' presence and visibility.

RR: I'm trying to be loyal to the notion of self-reinvention, self-questioning... I came very late to filmmaking, only in the mid 2000s. I've always been an avid viewer of moving images, but I was very disenchanted with the way that music and sound served as an ambiance, servient to the image, the text, or the narrative. I thought that music should be as much as a potent carrier of meaning as everything else in the film. If it's not substantially justified, you might as well not use it.

I still feel this way and I still really appreciate video art pieces and cinematic works in which music is not just supposedly making the experience more intense, what's scary scarier, or the funny thing funnier, like when the violin plays when you're supposed to be sad. That's not what I want at all. So it becomes another medium that I approach as I do writing and painting.

Even though I've been painting from an early age, and I love it and I think I do it quite well, I believe that painting has to be justified. It cannot just come to be. I don't know if this is a good position, because sometimes you should be more permissive, but it's the way I operate. For instance, *Vladimir's Night* can be perceived as an excuse to return to painting; because Komar-Myshkin was an illustrator I am allowed to sit and paint for three years. But this painting has to be revived under specific conditions, it has to belong to a Russian tradition, and be aware of Ilya Kabakov, and refer to other things that Roee Rosen does... It also has to do with what I wasn't comfortable with, for instance the idea that gouache is kind of a stupid medium supposedly for children, but I really love it and Maxim Komar-Myshkin loves it as well.

I approach language in the same way: it's not very clear what the books I write are; they're like a machine that needs to invent itself afresh. *Justine Frank* is and isn't a novel, a biography, or an academical treaty; it's all of that and none of that, it's a hybrid. *Confessions* is a similar kind of text that is meant to be read without understanding, like a text-machine that operates in a different way. The piece I contributed to *South* magazine is an image-text-machine, a double text in which I circled letters, so when you read it you actually have two texts, one that is the complete text and one text of the circled letters. Something similar happens with music in my work: I love it and I want to use it, but there needs to be a justification for it, which changes from one film to the next.

The presence of musicians is another issue. First of all, I think it is very potent to show the people that actually produce the sounds as part of the image of the film. *The Dust Channel* (2016) assumes a more radical position, because of the question whether, for example, people from Sudan and Eritrea should portray the infiltrators of the house. It was an important decision to have the musicians acting all the roles, which meant they often had more than one role and played both invaders and maid servants, police men and themselves as musicians.

It's also a way to disavow being in the position to allow the victim to be seen... It's a problematic issue and so it was clear to me, early on, that I wanted the setting to be the world of the homeowner, which is being infiltrated. I didn't want it to be a collaboration with the person who is supposedly the infiltrator; the refugee... It was very important to me that it was not like a project by an activist or a conscious artist who reaches out to the refugee, but that it was about reflecting on the making of the consciousness of the one who lives in the country that is 'infiltrated'. That's why the musicians play all the roles.

**EO: I also want to ask you how you decide when to address things that are going on directly, I mean contemporary, complex problems? What drives you to address them in an explicit way?**

RR: It's funny because I always saw myself as very self-indulgent, narcissistic, dealing with philosophy, poetry and psychology more than sociology, economy and politics directly... But I was experiencing a kind of argument within myself which led to a point where I looked back and was surprised to realize that my work was highly political.

*The Blind Merchant* is about the trauma of Judaism in Europe. It's not addressing the Holocaust at all, but goes back to Elizabethan times in England and the canonical image of the Jew of Shylock, that later leads to a tradition of how Jews are represented. Attentive people could see that the trauma of the diaspora is in there too.

With *Eva Braun* I got to the point of becoming really explicit, addressing something that is politically and historically very explosive and central, and doing it head-on. It was like diving into deep water, because I really understood the people who avoided this topic, many good artists avoid it, and I hated almost everyone who did touch it because that often entailed strategies that I thought were corrupted.

So it was a very risky place to go and I decided to go there. I wasn't young anymore...

I never tackled such issues directly in the works I made after, it always came from a structure or a formal or poetic machinery. For example, for *Confessions* the starting point wasn't illegal immigration, it was thinking about speaking a language that you do not speak. When you do that you have a kind of double voice, so the perfect thing to betray myself would be confession, because my whole project was anti-confessional. Only then did I think of the right people to carry this out with alongside the building blocks of my biography, because I wanted to create a hybrid in terms of content, so that the sentences could be spoken by an aging male Jewish artist, and by an illegal female migrant. The whole text is structured like that, and it becomes very political.

I think that language and the body are already political to an extent and that it is a question of how conscious or alert we are to the political import that they carry. In many cases the political aspects of an artwork also have a strange relation to temporality. I began doing the Putin project [the works devoted to the Russian artist Komar-Myshkin] before Putin was in his second term, and nobody was speaking about him. Russians of course knew he would be back in power, it was quite clear. I felt, however, that I was going into territory that really interested me, but didn't interest many people. Then, because the project took time to realize, Putin was in his second term when the work was presented and everyone was talking about him. But when the project was conceived it wasn't about tackling Putin head-on. It undoubtedly deals with post-communist manifestations of power in the neoliberal setting and what constitutes that kind of construction of power, that's a crucial part of Vladimir's time. But paranoia is also a crucial part, and beauty, and the Russian migration to Israel. There are many different layers and one of them is this kind of global political precaution, but it was not strategically set up as the main problem that I wanted to tackle. It doesn't work like that, it can be a good way to work, but it is not the way that it happens to me.

**EO: Where does your desire of giving life to inanimate objects come from?**

RR: It has always been there in my work and it's there in Freud with the notion of fetishism as an excessive libidinal desire that's

directed to words and objects, which he connects to masochism. The notion of the *unheimlich* or the uncanny has had a strong presence in my work from early on, although I only realized it later through working with Anselm Franke, a curator with a propensity for animism.

We looked at nineteenth century anthropology and the practice of separating the rational West from the irrational other, the primitive, or the child who still believes that stones can speak and the rain falls because it wants to and doesn't make a binary division between subject and object, self and other. When Anselm initiated his project on animism and invited me, it was the point of entry for *Vladimir's Night*, but there were many living objects in my work before that. There are also many artists who influenced me, such as Mike Kelley, who not only uses soft toys as fetishistic objects that are partly alive, but also did a big show called *The Unheimlich*. So I'm certainly not the only one working with this notion.

I can speak about it in general but it comes out differently in each specific project, and in the case of the Komar-Myshkin project it's important to consider this essay by the Russian structuralist Sergei Tretyakov on the biographies of objects. In the Russian context this was a very important text that privileged the object over the subject as a literary topic and was a way to bring class relations to the surface, because Tretyakov thought that centring on subjects suppresses class relations. For example, if we don't write about Natasha or Sergei, but instead about the piano in the room, then we begin with the assembly line: how was the piano made? That was its birth, right? So then you're already considering workers and factories, wood and money. That specific project highlighted the liminal zone between object and subject, but a lot of animism could already be discerned in *Eva Braun*...

**EO: How do you see the Eva Braun work, here at documenta 14, twenty years after you first showed it and in such different exhibition conditions and in this particular context which is documenta held in Athens?**

RR: I don't know if I have something intelligent to say about it, but for lack of better words: it is really moving me, because I had a lot of doubts over the past five, six years... The work was shown in London a few years ago and in Tel Aviv last year where I had a kind of a retrospective, and in both contexts I could not sense a strong reaction

and I had the feeling that it might have to do with time, the fact that the Second World War was so long ago, many people are already dead, there's an apathy...

Now I am very moved, first of all because Adam Szymczyk insisted on showing the work, also because of the particular context of the Benaki Museum where historical narratives and minor or strange speculations are put together, and I'm also moved by the viability of the work. Maybe it's my impression, but it is a very effective installation with an element of surprise. Norman L. Kleeblatt, who curated the polemical show *Mirroring Evil* at the Jewish Museum in New York in the early 2000s which caused a great outcry because it showed Nazi imagery in contemporary art,<sup>3</sup> came here during the preview days and said, "you never showed these pieces, they are new!" It's great and really surprising that this work can appear as if it was made only yesterday.

## Notes

1. At Roe Rosen's presentation for *documenta 14* at the Parliament of Bodies, on 5 May 2017 at Parko Eleftherias, Athens, Greece.
2. The film *Confessions* was screened at the end of the Translating Europe discussion organized by Studio 14 for *documenta 14* at the Athens Conservatoire (Odeion), on 4 May 2017.
3. *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art*, The Jewish Museum, New York, 2002.

## pleasemyboss

Fabiana Faleiros

Please my boss

Please my boss  
tell me what do you expected from a poem

Please my boss  
let me teach you know you  
need to behaves  
to don't seem like a boss

Please my boss  
tell me who is the boss

Please my boss  
tell me who invited the another boss

Please my boss  
let me know who you think you are  
in that picture where nobody is you

Please my boss  
let me suck one of your fingers  
while you use your hand on the cellphone

## Neratzinha is my cup of tea

Fotini Gouseti

The first time I had that feeling of puzzlement was around 15 April 2015 in Brussels. It was the presentation of the ECF Princess Margriet Award to two European art institutions, one of them the Athens Biennale. I'm not based in Belgium and these kind of trips usually take time and organization. Like many others, when I evaluate an event as highly important, I have to save money and time and jump into—preferably—a train. Each time I find myself among an international audience, more or less familiar faces, among which very few Greeks. At this moment I should mention that I am not based in Greece either. Greece is some kind of island in terms of accessibility in comparison to the conditions for travel that the countries around central and western Europe offer to its inhabitants. The ticket prices in Greece are much higher than in other core destinations, a fact that contradicts the low local incomes. As a result, most Greeks travel less than other Europeans. Accordingly, the familiar Greek faces I encounter at big international events mostly belong to the Greek art diaspora. The lack of Greek representatives at these events corresponds with the likelihood of Greek artists participating in big international exhibitions. That night was different though—and now I take you back to Brussels in April 2015, when that feeling of puzzlement occurred.

It was the first time I was witnessing such a consistent audience. Many Greeks related to the Athens Biennale flew in to share the happiness of the moment in support of the honoured institution. There were also a large number of renowned representatives of the Greek art scene. The composition of not-yet-existing coalitions and the overwhelming percentage of highly prestigious Greeks present was confusing in terms of space and context. I felt as if Greece is positioned somewhere between Belgium and France. At some point during the speeches that were part of the bestowed honour, chief curator of *documenta 14* Adam Szymczyk came onstage. His inspiring speech announced a new chapter for the Athenian art scene. His curatorial plan to share the ground of *documenta 14* between Athens and Kassel, as well as the announced

collaboration between the paramount institution and the Athens Biennale were groundbreaking news. Everything became clear this way.

Even if that enigma was solved, the following period my puzzlement turned out to be persistent and it expanded to Athens. Since the very beginning of the Athens Biennale, one of its goals was to put the—then ignored—Greek art scene on the global art map. Obviously this mission had now been accomplished. But what happens when an overlooked local art scene suddenly gets the artistic spotlight?

Athens unexpectedly got onto the contemporary art rollercoaster, not only because part of the *documenta* team moved in and thereby became host to the biggest art residency ever; but also because numerous representatives of the international art scene were present there, at the right place and the right time. What the general population perceives as cheap rents and low living costs made it an affordable adventure for many. The sudden interest of such an overwhelming amount of newcomers to the—until that moment—very local art scene, along with their well-informed interpretations of the alternatively flourishing crisis conditions, generated feelings in many locals that could be depicted by a raised eyebrow.

While research, experiments, hard work, opposition, criticism, coalitions, broken coalitions, strategies, lectures, drama, gossip, presentations, provocations, critical approaches, misunderstandings, performances, parties, events, openings, talks, so much information, endless meetings and many worries were taking place, a sense of bitterness was often felt. Athens became the complicated field that emerges when the global meets the local, and theory meets praxis. Add to that the intense meeting between the privileged and the angry. There has been so much written about this field that I don't see any reason to elaborate on it further. But I need to say that in my view, *documenta 14* only took place in Athens, and consisted of the preparation period, the programme itself, the reactions and counter-actions that were provoked, as well as the effects of the venture on the local art scene. The endeavor created the actual basis for most of the activities that that have recently kept the art community busy and forced broader understandings among its members.

The activated whirlpool changed Athens into a field of 'opportunities' where art world members developed different attitudes

and ways of moving around. These dynamics generated a fiery aura, but a part of the local art scene decided to ignore the elephant in the room, which surprisingly proved very possible. This plethora of *modi operandi* I wanted to comprehend for its different ways of being actively present in the art world during an era of encounters between politicized localities and the burgeoning need to regenerate global knowledge. Among this intense crowd there was a group of newcomers that set up a residency, which I liked the most for their research process and networking. These Capacete guys had been invited and that's probably why they didn't act like chancers. The Capacete group in Athens consisted of South Americans and two Greeks, both of whom had developed their careers internationally. Their working processes incorporated a research field as broad as their network, and they were actively present, as much as many others were. Now I realize that, contrary to the general norm, they became *included*. Throughout tough times, they created friendships and they reached and engaged a warm audience for their events during a period in which everybody in Athens was sick of art-gatherings.

As part of their engaging programme they launched 'neratzinha parties' and they kept on serving neratzinha at their public meetings. Actually, they are the inventors of this striking cocktail, which in my view is an equivalent of their ways of being present in Athens. Neratzinha is the Greek equivalent of caipirinha. To make this cocktail, cachaca is replaced by tsipouro, as those spirits taste similarly and share common connotations. Lime is replaced by neratzi and brown sugar makes the other ingredients bond. Neratzinha made a strong introduction in the artistically hyperactive city.

Neratzies are bitter orange trees that can be found in almost every single street of Athens. They line the streets on the left and right sides and with a few meters of distance between each other. They fit in the identical square gaps of absent paving stones that cover the Athenian sidewalks. These short trees are covered with shiny leaves of a deep green colour. It's not easy to find information on why neratzies are decorating Athens. It seems that their proliferation is based on their prettiness and durability, while they also contribute to cleaning the heavily polluted atmosphere of the city. Their fruits, which look identical to oranges, have a tendency to stay on the trees for very long periods, because they are considered inedible. They are extremely bitter and for that reason nobody harvests them. Or rather, almost nobody, as these naratzia fruits often are used as ammunition in street fights



among different groups of kids who play aggressive games. Generally the Athens' neratzies are so familiar that they are taken for granted, even though their blossom evokes a sense of gratitude as it magically covers up the odour of the city's contaminated air. This fragrance starts somewhere in April and lasts for a period of about three months. It fortuitously accompanied the Athenian edition of *documenta 14*.

The neratzinha cocktail created conditions for dialogue and functioned as proof of a respectful effort to actually look into the host's eyes, away from preconceptions. This playful cocktail evolved on the ground, from a very familiar element of the Athenian urban landscape, and it created openness. It also confronted the locals with the realization that what prevents them from eating those fruits is a cultural choice. Moreover, what is identified as inedible is simply a matter of taste; after some quick research I found out that neratzia are tasty ingredients in other cuisines.

During those Capacete encounters, we all disregarded our bio-eco-food concerns and consumed this distillate of Athenian pollution with joy. In my understanding, neratzinha is a manual for how to land, engage and connect to a place, as well as how to exchange and have something to say (individually or under a group-umbrella) in the ongoing globalized arena. In this time in which local communities are confronted with puzzlement because of unexpected and often imposed meetings with others, I personally choose to move around in a neratzinha-manner.

## Só podemos confiar na poesia

Rodrigo Andreolli  
Atenas 2017

só podemos confiar na poesia

não haverá provas em jogo  
este é um evento científico, mas não haverá provas no final.

é a natureza da ciência, assim como das artes, partir do  
impossível  
para fazer a realidade  
pense nos cientistas que conhecemos.  
pense nos artistas.  
eles criam perspectivas ao especular sobre a verdade e a realidade.  
exercitando teorias de existência.

portanto, não haverá provas finais  
mas nos colocamos inteiramente na condição de fé  
não a fé em algo fora, pois a partir daqui não haverá fora nem dentro,  
apenas algo que já está entre nós, e este "algo entre" é,  
ao mesmo tempo, nós

conseguiremos imaginar juntos a partir de uma premissa  
apoiaremos nossas ideias sobre tudo o que pudermos

nós lutaremos na impossibilidade de agarrar  
a materialidade desses assuntos,  
mas nós os encarnaremos  
e em nossos corpos  
eles serão matéria

nossos corpos como dispositivos primordiais de comunicação  
expandindo capacidades perceptivas  
para atingir níveis sutis nas trocas de informação

está tudo aqui,  
mas nossos corpos,  
educados e disciplinados,  
são restringidos por certas arquiteturas estabelecidas  
pela história  
sociologia  
antropologia  
logos  
lógica

pensamos em tudo isso e somos tudo isso  
e sonhamos a mudança,  
valorizamos o sonho tanto quanto valorizamos a cama na qual  
dormimos  
e tomamos o concreto como fantasia e o sonho como o real  
imaginando espaços onde múltiplas realidades podem jogar  
e insinuar-se  
sem chegar a uma definição

estamos em busca de qualquer pequena alteração que possamos  
alcançar  
para tecer um fio  
cordas vibrando formas e formas,  
esquecendo e lembrando como um,  
uma multidão de formas  
um tudão  
infinito potencial de existência

o espaço curvo  
tempo não linear

podemos escolher um ponto  
na malha do espaçotempo,  
podemos escolher um ponto

partes das mesmas partículas,  
divididas e isoladas no espaço  
respondem da mesma maneira aos estímulo que a outra recebe  
estado profundo da empatia

não somos pequenas peças provenientes de uma grande explosão?  
de um pequeno, extremamente denso, ponto de poeira?  
então, somos todos, seja lá o que for, humano, animal, vegetal,  
mineral ...  
...o que mais?....  
... somos todas reminiscências da mesma coisa  
estamos todas emaranhadas, então?  
o que acontece com uma, acontece com todas?

pensamentos tentando escapar do conhecimento estabelecido  
enquanto se abriga debaixo dele

a contradição é a única coerência possível?

vamos nos incorporar às contradições do tempo  
e de lá, mover-se para criar e recriar realidade

esta é uma prática para treinar a imaginação do corpo  
rumo a uma subjetividade coletiva  
treinar para estar em contato com algo que está aqui, suspenso,  
treinar nossa sensibilidade para sentir as variações do ambiente  
treinar para ser ambiente também  
treinar para deixar de ser nós mesmos  
treinar para destreinar o que treinamos  
entrar em táticas tácitas para existir

como teorizam os cientistas  
como ficcionam os artistas  
(ou talvez seja o contrário)  
de qualquer jeito, importa

permitimos que o espaço nos diga  
nós escutamos profundamente  
o espaço somos nós mesmos  
arquitetos invisíveis  
nós lemos sinais  
acreditamos  
e agimos

pois isso será um exercício  
um começo para uma exploração neste campo

nós vamos nos mover no espaço e no tempo juntos  
tentaremos tornar tangível o imaginário  
construiremos esse espaço comum para a subjetividade coletiva se  
alinhar

tudo o que está aqui é uma chave,  
é apenas uma entrada possível  
uma síntese das acumulações de encontros que acontecem  
em torno desses pensamentos

isso é uma dança remota

## Biographies

**Eliana Otta** (Lima, 1981) is an artist with a Master in Cultural Studies. She coordinated the curatorial team of the Lugar de la Memoria in Peru. She has taught at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Corriente Alterna and Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes. She co-founded the artist-run space Bisagra (<[www.bisagra.org](http://www.bisagra.org)>), and is an eternal amateur DJ, known as DJ Flaquita.

<[www.eliana-otta.com](http://www.eliana-otta.com)>

**Jari Malta**, born in Montevideo, was part of Capacete Athens.

**Musa Michelle** Mattiuzzi (Bahia, Brazil) is a performer, writer, and researcher, who holds a bachelor degree in performance art from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. Her works appropriate and subvert the exotic place attributed to the black female body by white cis-normative imagery, that transforms the body into a kind of aberration, an entity split between the wonderful and the abject. In 2012 and 2013 she collaborated with Bahia's GIA and Rio de Janeiro's OPAVIVARÁ! art collectives. In 2017 she was a resident artist at the Capacete programme in Athens. She lives and works in Salvador.

**Marina Miliou** is a performer, writer and researcher based in Athens. In her work, she delicately orients herself around definitions of the body and its sexuality within prescribed milieus. She focuses on the moment when (un)belonging acquires sociopolitical dimensions, she then deconstructs it and filters it through abstraction. Her work has been exhibited in venues including The Megaron Athens Concert Hall,

Greece; ROMANSUSAN, Chicago, IL; Vienna Ballhaus, Austria; Figure One Gallery, Champaign, IL; Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago, IL; the Comfort Station Logan Square, Chicago, IL; the Den Theater, Chicago, IL; Dfbrl8tr Performance Art Gallery, Chicago, IL; as well as the Cook County Jail, Chicago, IL. In 2015 she was awarded the BFA/Post-Baccalaureate Fellowship from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as well as the 2014 George Roeder Undergraduate Award in Visual & Critical Studies. Miliou co-founded the quarterly online curatorial platform Tamaas / سامت / επαφή, and was a 2016 Hatch Resident at Chicago Artists Coalition. She recently held the position as ASFA liaison and Curatorial Assistant for documenta 14, which in 2017 took place in both Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany. She is currently the Production Manager for the choreographer and dancer, Alexandra Bachzetsis.

**Rodrigo Andreolli** [yo-wasser] was born in São Paulo in 1984. He is an artist who transits through the performing arts, and is especially interested in playing with the body as an element for the sensitive activation of visible and invisible layers of public matter. He acts by developing production structures in multidisciplinary art projects.

**Nikos Doulos** (Athens, 1978) is a visual artist, curator, and co-director of Expodium in Utrecht—an urban do-tank investigating the role of the arts in urban transition areas. He's interested in the investigation of new pedagogical modes for inclusive knowledge production, framed by site-specific research trajectories. Walking plays a predominant part in his practice.

**Gian Spina** was born in São Paulo, Brazil. He likes to write and sometimes works as an artist. He's taught in places such as the International Art Academy Palestine, Escola da Cidade (São Paulo) and the Ionion Center for the Arts and Culture (Greece). Today he is learning Arabic and is constructing an interdisciplinary body of work on the materialization of power in the public sphere.

<<http://gianspina.com>>

**Gris García** (Monterrey, Mexico, 1986) is an artist and independent curator. Her work centres around contemporary practices and those hybrid productions that emerge from dialogues and correspondences with the other. She studied Visual Arts at UANL, Mexico. She has exhibited her work in Mexico, Spain, Russia and Canada. She obtained an MA in Artistic Research and Production from UB thanks to a study grant offered by FONCA CONACULTA. She also took part in MACBA's PEI (Independent Study Program). She has curated projects such as 'Balmes 88' for a3bandas, 'Las condiciones posibles' in Barcelona and 'Casa Entera' between Spain and Colombia. She was curator-in-residence at Lugar a dudas in Cali, Colombia, from September 2014 to March 2015 and project-mediator at Sala de Arte Joven in Barcelona. She taught at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of ITM in Medellín. She took part in the Capacete residency in 2017, which was framed by the context of *documenta 14*. She is a member of TuerCo, a multidisciplinary team exploring the intersections between art and technology.

**Fabiana Faleiros** a.k.a. Lady Incentivo, is an artist and poet. She takes on the role of a singer and public persona with the pseudonym Lady Incentivo, which satirizes the Brazilian 'Lei incentivo', a law that allows the private sector to write off tax money by investing in culture. She is now developing her longtime project 'Mastur Bar' for the tenth Berlin Biennial.

**Alkisti Efthymiou** is a non-disciplinary researcher, informed by the intersections of gender, sexuality, art, and affective politics. She has worked with several cultural institutions in Greece and abroad—most recently in the position of education producer for *documenta 14*. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Athens), writing on love in/as crisis through encounters of art and theory.

**Sol Prado.** Artist, independent researcher and performer. Current resident of Hangar (Barcelona), she also participated in Capacete - *documenta 14*, Athens – Kassel (2017). She studied at the Independent Studies Program in Barcelona, Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA), directed by Paul B. Preciado. Her art practice and her collective research focus on the creation of fictions (writings, performances, installations, workshops) through the use of ironic and parodic procedures to dismantle, by an intensification method, the perverse structure of the neoliberal paradigm.

**Franco Castignani** was born in Bragado, Argentina. He was graduated in Political Science, and also studied Philosophy and Literature at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). He is currently an independent researcher and fellow of the Independent Studies Program (PEI) at MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona), the city where he lives. He has participated in residences and research-groups in Buenos Aires (MACBA, Haroldo Conti Cultural Center, Hiedra Gallery-along with Sol Prado), in Barcelona (Hangar, El Café de las Voces), Navarra (Idensitat / Huarte Contemporary Art Center - together with Francisco Navarrete Sitja), Huarte (Diversario Festival) and Madrid (Art Center Reina Sofía National Museum). He also works in some art projects and collaborative and transdisciplinary works, linked to local contexts. His current research is focuses on mutations in the contemporary workfield, new sensitivities and the politicization of discomfort.

**Raúl Hott** is a Chilean architect, artist, and educator. He designs built environments and collective experiences that seek to spark awareness and joy in the participants, under a logic of re-integrating the erotic, the political and the spiritual in a collective whole. Raúl holds a Master of Fine Arts in New Forms from Pratt Institute in NY. He has been particularly drawn by pedagogy, teaching in different Art and Architecture Schools since 2007.

<<http://raulhott.net/>>

**Despina Sevasti** is an artist and educator usually based in Athens. She pursued her studies at the Dutch Art Institute (MA in Art Praxis, 2017), Goldsmiths College (MA in Contemporary Art Theory, 2006), the Athens School of Fine Arts (BA in Sculpture, 2004) and the University of Athens (BA in Archaeology and History of Art, 1999). She is working with performance, text, painting, video, sound, and whatever else makes sense, trying to queer her longtime obsessions: the ideology of Greekness, crisis, white democracy, the politics of teaching, feminism, archaeology and other fun stuff.

**Yara Haskiel** is a video artist, researcher and activist. She experiments with found footage, new media and performative formats in her video essays and multi-screen installations. She studied Experimental Film, and Art and Media at the University of Arts in Berlin and Hamburg. She took part in the Program of Independent Studies at Museu d'Art Contemporani Barcelona (MACBA). Haskiel holds a master degree in Museum Studies and Critical Theory from the Universitat Autònoma, Barcelona. The connections between memory and the (dis-)placement of minor and forgotten narratives and their social effects are central themes in her works 'Memory Extended' (2011) and 'Tsakalos Blues' (2014). She deals with practices of mourning through storytelling and the effects of precarity in relation to love from a feminist perspective in her works 'It's late, a mourning spell' (2017), and 'I don't write diaries I, II: On Love and Crisis and the Power of Fragility' (2016). She presented her works at international film festivals and exhibitions, including the gallery Àngels in Barcelona (2015), Dimitria Festival in Thessaloniki (2015) and the Athens Biennale (2016). In the past she presented lectures and screenings at the University of Thessaly, Alice Salomon University in Berlin, the University of Perugia, the University of Vienna and at the Centro de Fotografía y Medios Documentales (CFD) in Barcelona. She lives and works in Berlin.

**Vasiliki Sifostratoudaki** (Greece, 1979) is the founder of *Yellow Brick*—a project space/residency devoted to artists' research and a playground or testing ground for exhibition making. Her personal work entangles materiality through methodologies of exploring, collecting and archiving, resulting in the creation of sculptural manifestations around the idea of topos. For Sifostratoudaki, materiality is a broader term for framing geography, objects, humans, language, gestures and sculpture as a moving organism.

**Susanna Browne** (b. 1987) is a Canadian artist based in Vancouver. She received a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design (2010), an MFA from Piet Zwart Institute (2015), and has also studied at McGill University and Parsons Paris. Browne's multi-disciplinary practice spans video, digital collage, installation, sound, text and performance. Her perspective is that of a magpie; through a mining of pop culture tropes and an elevation of quotidian fantasies she conflates subversion with infatuation, skepticism with desire. Calling on the sentimentality of everyday emotional languages, symbols and representations, Browne leans into the commoditization of the 21st century lived experience. Her work has been exhibited in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada. Her writing has been featured in *Setup* and *General Fine Arts*, among others. An artist book, *Country War Songs*, was published by Publication Studio Vancouver in 2011.

**Fotini Gouseti** is a conceptual artist and PhD researcher in anthropology. She studied art at the Athens School of Fine Arts (BA), the Dutch Art Institute (MA) and she is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology at the University of Thessaly, Greece. Accordingly, her practice is research-based, socially-engaged and quite often called political. Her learning process derives from her connection with others, while she focuses on the role of art in negotiating issues of memory. She is the initiator of the art project 'Renkonto'. For the past few years she has been engaged in the research projects 'The Present as a Result of the Past' and 'The Least Wanted Travel the Most'. The artistic outcomes of her projects are presented in various contexts worldwide.

<<http://www.fotinigouseti.com>>





