

2014

I'm not afraid of what we dream



September 2



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

The Bride of Thermaicus 
A journey of realization and transformation

Valentina Paraskevaidou



MARCH

The eyes, that you remember, don't change their color, and we can feel pain that's lost yet we and we can feel pain, their color.



The eyes, only the way of four friends

The emigrant, Sweet Catalonia, homeland of my heart, being far from thee, One cannot but die, from logs

Degree Project, Master of Fine Arts in
Contemporary Performative Arts
Spring Semester 2016

NOVEMBER



2015

Degree Project, 60 higher education credits
Master of Fine Arts in Contemporary Performative Arts
Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg
Spring Semester 2016

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Title: *The Bride of Thermaicus - A journey of realization and transformation*

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ABSTRACT

"The Bride of Thermaicus" is a project about the Crisis in Europe (financial, cultural, social, ethical) and some relevant phenomena such as violence, emigration and alienation. It includes a series of street live art performances in Thessaloniki (Greece) and Gothenburg (Sweden). Its methodological core is collective silent walking in an artistic context.

This book is a "performative diary" about "The Bride of Thermaicus", an attempt to "enact the affective force of the performance event again".*

* Peggy Phelan

Keywords:

Art activism, art solidarity, collective art, European Crisis, live art, performance art, performative, performative writing, political art, re-enactment, site-specific, street performance, time-specific, transformation, walking project

Instead of prologue

Dear reader,

You are holding my *Performative Diary* (October 2014 - March 2016). It is a *bricolage* of my own texts of different writing styles, quotes, references, pictures and other material which I hope will allow you to *experience the journey* of my project. Following strategies of *performative writing*, I tried to create a world of events, images, memories, imagination, reflections and feelings. I invite you to *walk with me into this world and enjoy "the interplay of reader and writer in the joint production of meaning"*, in a similar way a spectator and a performer interact, co-create and share the *experience of the transformative force of a performance*.

Bricolage

(In art or literature) construction or creation from a diverse range of available things

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bricolage>

Performative writing is a form of post-modernist or avant-garde academic writing, often taking as its subject a work of visual art or performance art. It is heavily informed by critical theory, but arises ultimately from linguistic ideas around performative utterances. The term is often applied to a bricolage of other writing styles. It is claimed to be politically radical, because it thus 'defies' literary conventions and traditions.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performative_writing

Performative writing is an attempt to find a form for 'what philosophy wishes all the same to say'. Rather than describing the performance event 'in direct signification,' a task I believe to be impossible and not terrifically interesting, I want this writing to enact the affective force of the performance event again.

Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp.11-12.

Performative writing is evocative. It operates metaphorically to render absence present—to bring the reader into contact with "other-worlds," to those aspects and dimensions of our world that are other to the text as such by re-making them. Performative writing evokes worlds that are other-wise intangible, unlocatable: worlds of memory, pleasure, sensation, imagination, affect, and in-sight. Whereas a mimetic/realistic perspective tends to reify absent referents in language and language encounters—the interplay of reader and writer in the joint production of meaning. It does not describe, in a narrowly reportorial sense, an objectively verifiable event or process but uses language like paint to create what is self-evidently a version of what it was, what is, and/or what might be.

Della Pollock, "Performing Writing", *The Ends of Performance*, ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane, New York: New York University Press, 1998, p.80.



From realization to action A journey in the years of Crisis

"The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions and without becoming disillusioned. [...] I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will".

(Prison Notebooks by Antonio Gramsci)

The era we are living in could be described in one word: Crisis. And maybe the financial crisis is the most discussed and featured, but there are so many other types of crises closely related to the financial one such as political, social, cultural, psychological and even existential, which together seem to create a "net" around people and lead them to a sui generis dissociation. During the past few years in Europe many citizens have found themselves losing their dignity, their ideals and their faith in the future. They struggle to define their personal, national and European identity. In the large European cities people appear to have been edging away from themselves, from other people and from the urban environment itself. We are gradually losing our capacity to see, enjoy, maintain and develop the inner and outer beauty and at the same time we are becoming passive and indifferent while being hemmed in the habit and the daily routine. We are experiencing an almost autistic identity crisis which seems to be both the source of the problems and the starting point of a solution.

Two years ago I started experiencing Crisis as a walk between two parallel lines: my personal life and the life of the people around me. A series of events that were simultaneously happening showed me that sometimes our personal life is so tied in with society that it seems mirror it or vice versa. My personal crisis tied in with the financial, ideological, political, social and cultural crisis of my country.

People that I loved and trusted betrayed me. Hypocrisy, lies, deceit and a big "question mark" in my head. Suddenly, I feel that I have been living in absentia and that I'm losing myself between what is true and what is false... Psychological disability.

I'm experiencing loneliness, sadness, interruption of communication and creativity.

I'm losing weight and my dignity. I'm shrinking. I feel weak and useless in my big safe(?) artistic family.

I'm wearing black clothes. I'm mourning the people I have lost and myself that I'm losing.

Sometimes I feel that I'm choking because nothing good happens neither inside me nor outside. I'm crying.

People that believed in and trusted ideologies, parties and politicians are betrayed and fooled. Hypocrisy, lies, deceit and a big "question mark" in everybody's head. Suddenly, people feel that they have been living in absentia and they are losing themselves between what is true and what is false... Psychological disability.

On the streets and on public means of transportation people are unusually silent and sad. They look so lonely.

The country and the people are losing their dignity. They feel weak and useless in their big and safe(?) European family.

Employees hang black flags out of the buildings of the National Theatre of Northern Greece, of the Greek public television and other public services. They demonstrate for their right to have a job, a salary and dignity. They are mourning their future that they are losing.

A girl, a teenage student from Serbia, was choked by the smoke coming out of a braiser that her mother used in order to warm her up. There was no electricity in the house because they had no money to pay the bills. On the news I heard that in the last year 1.500 people more than in previous years live without electricity. The girl lived in my neighborhood. I'm going to the funeral. Everybody is crying.

October 2014

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I'm becoming more and more sensitive about things happening around me. I'm getting angry, irritated. I'm complaining about everything. I have the feeling that I am living in one of the worst countries in Europe. The more sensitive I get, the more egoistically I behave.

I feel that I want to leave.

People are more hot-tempered, angry, impolite, indifferent and egoistic. The "personal" has become "social" and the "social" has become "personal".

Young people are leaving Greece. The ones who stay envy the ones that are leaving.

The distance between the two parallel lines started getting narrower and narrower and finally they met and blocked my walking. I felt that I needed to escape but I knew that nobody can escape from themselves. I remembered the lyrics of a song:

[...] Everything is here
And everything forever
And further from yourself
Is only you.

You create the sea and you construct the boat
You are the "here" and you are the "there"
You are the celebration of the return,
The tear of the separation.
And your journey is you.
You are the wave and the island.
You are the wind, the sail
And the white handkerchief.

You are leaving and you are going.
Where are you travelling to?
Open streets,

Your borders are where you can't stand going further.
Everything is somewhere else
And everything is for a short time,
When you don't understand
That your route is you.

("Your route is you" by Alkinoos Ioannides
Translated by me)

I realized that there was no need to escape - there was a need to start a journey from myself in order to be able again to meet people and try to overcome the obstacles together and move forward.

The need for solidarity and a collective effort to solve the problems resulting from Crisis have become imperative. A fundamental requirement is to rediscover ourselves and to re-establish communication in order to be able to have an active role as citizens. Understanding that **realization** is the first step to improvement I wanted as an artist to share this idea with people through my art and this is how the journey of my project started.



Ο Όμοιος σου είναι εσύ! (Your route is you.)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4dEeyDc-L4

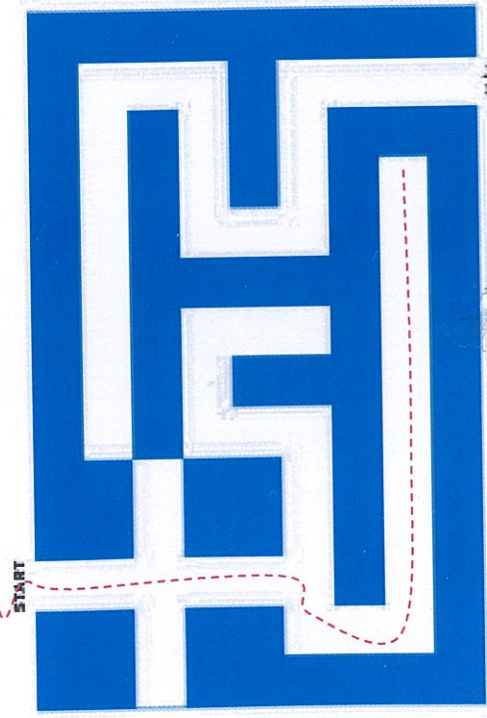
Tonartshöjning
i schlagerbråket



»På ett sätt har balansen blivit seglat
upp som ett coctailhållning.«
Lina Ekström

FOKUS

SVERIGES NYHETSMAGASIN
18-24 MAJ 2012



START

MÅL

Grekisk problemlösning

SVERIGES HEMLIGA PROPAGANDASOLDATER



Aunt Maritsa used to say... (23.10.14)
a story inspired by the book "Blindness" by José Saramago

Aunt Maritsa was at the beach and she was looking at the horizon. She sighed. Like an echo another sigh was heard from somewhere close to her. A man wearing big myopic glasses -it was he who sighed. "The eyes that you don't often see are soon forgotten"*, aunt Maritsa mumbled, and using this banality she tried to move forward the conversation that the sighs started. "The eyes that don't see (which are "blind") soon forget", the male echo replied in Portuguese. Neither aunt Maritsa understood what he said nor Zoze understood what she said. And they sighed again - but this time they did it in unison.

Aunt Maritsa is a fictional character that I created three years ago. Her cousin, whom I gave no name, remembers her sayings and his experiences with her and brings them to the present in the form of short stories of Folk Wisdom. Aunt Maritsa is my excuse to write and share my own manifestos about life. Aunt Maritsa is pretty much inspired by and is dedicated to my grandmother Maria, Aunt Maritsa's namesake...

* greek proverb



What is "The Bride of Thermaicus"?

Originally, my plan for this project involved a much wider context, both thematically and geographically, and it included performances in several different countries. The project was all formulated around the idea of "The Bride of Thermaicus". Later I had to do modifications and the project changed as it progressed.

But what was "The Bride of Thermaicus" originally? In my first project description I wrote the following:

The Bride of Thermaicus: a modern Nereid

In Thessaloniki, the city where I come from and live, all the Crisis phenomena appear to be quite intense. The city and its citizens not only look for their identity but also for their own soul. In these years of Crisis it seems that the need to rediscover ourselves, to re-establish communication and to have an active role as citizens has become imperative. Thessaloniki, which in the past was given the name "the bride of Thermaicus" due to its exceptional beauty that is slowly fading away, was the basic stimulus for me to create a character, the *Bride of Thermaicus*, that symbolizes the soul of the city and its citizens. The Bride (a performer dressed up like a bride) comes out of the sea in order to rediscover the hidden or forgotten beauty of the city, to observe and interact with people and "highlight" what she likes and what dislikes.

Consequently, the Bride will visit other European cities in order to define her identity by observing and experiencing the similarities and the differences between Thessaloniki and other cities concerning the urban environment, the cultural background and everyday life. Starting from the southern border of Europe, Greece (Thessaloniki), she will finish her journey arriving at Gothenburg in the northern border of Europe, Sweden. It is interesting to mention that both Thessaloniki and Gothenburg are the second largest cities of Greece and Sweden, respectively, and they have big ports.

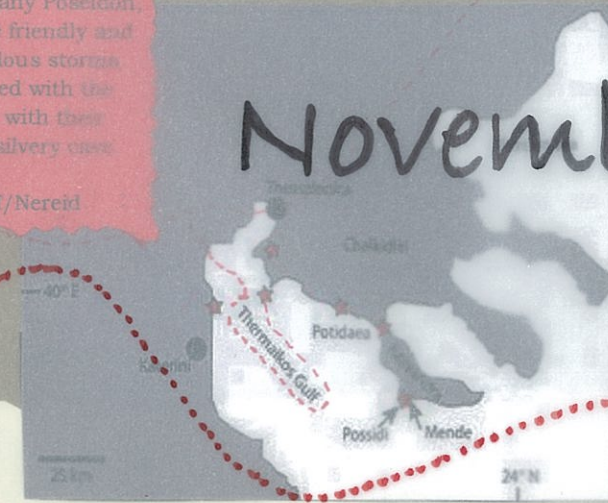
During this journey the Bride performs different street performances involving the local architecture, the monuments and the urban environment in general on the one hand, and on the other hand the citizens, the social behavior and the contemporary problems that people face in big European cities. Using the body as a means of expression and communication the Bride will try to convey her thoughts and feelings about crucial issues such as poverty, pollution, racism, loneliness, unemployment and estrangement through a series of street performances.

During autumn, before I started putting my project in practice I needed to make some changes in my original plan. One of the first changes I made was

In Greek mythology, the *Nereids* are sea nymphs (female spirits of sea waters), the fifty daughters of Nereus and Doris, sisters to Nerites. They often accompany Poseidon, the god of the sea, and can be friendly and helpful to sailors fighting perilous storms. They are particularly associated with the Aegean Sea, where they dwelt with their father in the depths within a silvery cave.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nereid>

November 2014



that I would perform only in Thessaloniki and in Gothenburg; I decided that I would present every live action first in Greece and the re-enactment of it in Gothenburg, which I called "mirror performance". It was practically and financially impossible to travel to different countries; the time I had was limited, I had no funding and I didn't have the necessary network. I thought that it was better to concentrate on the two cities where I lived and go deeper into my research about them; that would help me to organize my performances better and in more detail and use what I already had which was knowledge and experiences in these cities and, of course, network. I also decided to narrow the scope of issues that I would focus on, and consequently, the number of performances I would present.

Although my original concept was to present solo performances, I soon felt that this idea didn't really fascinate me at all. I realized that the most important thing in the theatre that attracted me and made me creative and happy was collaboration and the process of creating something collectively. I realized that all the previous years the fact that I worked exclusively in groups was not a coincidence or something that was repeated as a habit or due to random circumstances. It had been, even unconsciously, the core of my practice and eventually, it proved to be the fundamental expression of my own need to create art. I wanted to become more involved in this type of collaborative art but in a conscious way; I wanted to explore collectivity in performance art as a *method*, although I had never used the word "method" in my practice before. Learning a new vocabulary and articulating my practice in the academic context gave me the opportunity to realize both my impulses and needs as an artist and I could experiment on them despite my fears or insecurity about what was right or wrong. This process of realization was meant to be my own journey during and along the Bride's journey.

I kept the notion of "The Bride of Thermaicus" as a central idea for my character ("the walker"), as I considered it a significant figure, creating a meaningful context for the act of walking in these cities, as well as for the overall project.

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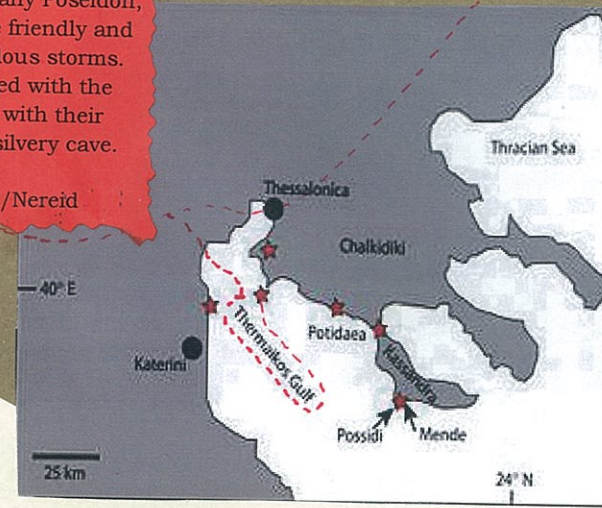
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Why am I walking? Reflections on the walking of the Bride

Why did you choose to use *walking* in your project?

Is it a method you want to apply to your practice?

Does it symbolize anything?

Were you inspired by other walking projects?

Since the beginning of my project the above questions were some of the basic questions I was confronted with and that I would keep trying to find answers to during my whole "projective time".

Concerning walking as an artistic method I had no idea of it and I had never before seen or heard anything about artistic walking projects, "walking as art" or "the art of walking". In the beginning, since I wasn't really familiar with what "artistic method" means -I was just a *doer* that hadn't had names for my tools-, I couldn't say if walking *was* my method. Reading about other walking artists' work and gradually understanding what a method is I was able to say that "yes, walking is a method I use for my project"; still, by that time I considered my project more site-specific rather than a walking project. Along the way I researched and learnt more about walking as an artistic method which was very helpful also for the structure of my walks, because I could identify the things I read and elements of the walking experiences of other artists in my own practice, apply them to my work as well as be more engaged in performative writing through the texts of walking artists and theoreticians. I would say that walking as a method is also present in the way I write and have chosen to structure my texts.

When I conceived the idea of the Bride and her journey as a process of exploration and realization I was very much influenced by my personal need for a change in both a personal and social context. By that time I was feeling that there was a *demand* for a solution to many problems caused by my personal and the general Crisis and that "things needed to move forward". Sometimes, I felt that I wanted somehow to *escape* from these problems, even by walking away, which later on I acknowledged that it was more an action of ignoring them or denying my own responsibility rather than regaining my balance; this impulse which seemed to be quite egoistic and vain, at the same time, raised questions inside me that gradually made me understand what my real needs were and resulted in being a source of inspiration and creativity. So, I skipped the word "away" and I kept the word "walking" as an expression of my desire to move forward and share the need for change and transformation through my art.

Philosopher and contemporary art theoretician Bojana Kunst wrote "The Project Horizon: On the Temporality of Making" that is about the tendency in the art world to project time into the future. Projecting time into the future means that an event is temporally suspended and that a working process leads up to this event in the future. According to Kunst, projective time is an important notion that has to do with the temporal mode or attitude of working and living in the world of theatre and performance art that also brings a specific perspective on the kind of labor and dynamics of contemporary production. She explains that artists always work for something to come, but without moving. As there will always be a project in the future, the artists stay in a place where they are always anticipating the future.

<http://www.psimanifestolexicon.org/page/home/67/english>

The relationship between the idea for a walk, the walk itself and the physical evidence of the walk is the fundamental issue. The idea is vital in that it defines the structure for a walk. But the walk is equally important in that it realizes the idea, actualizing the structure as physical movement through time and space so that the work of art has a real -if transient- existence.

Paul Moorhouse, *Richard Long: Walking the Line*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2002, p.16.

According to the Philosopher Brian Massumi,

When we walk, we're dealing with the constrain of gravity. There's also the constrain for balance and the need for equilibrium. But, at the same time, to walk you need to throw off equilibrium, you have to let yourself go into a fall, then you cut it off and regain the balance [...].

Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery and Phil Smith. *Walking, Writing and Performance, Autobiographical Texts by Deirdre Heddon, Carl Valery and Phil Smith*, ed. Roberta Mock, Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2009, p.15.

Method, Artistic

the system of principles that guide the creation of works of literature and art. The category of artistic method was introduced into aesthetics in the late 1920's and has become one of the basic concepts in the Marxist theory of artistic creativity.

Rejecting all irrational interpretations of the creative act, such as the religious and mystical, the intuitive, and the psychoanalytical, Marxist science proceeds from the fact that, no matter how important the role of intuitive and unconscious moments in the artist's activity, the foundation of creative work is conscious and purposeful. This is shown by the internal logic of works of art and by a variety of indirect evidence, including theoretical treatises, prefaces, manifestos, and letters by artists, their conversations, and their advice to their students, all of which indicate the need and capacity of the writer, painter, composer, and director to grasp, formulate, and publicize the principles of his creative practice. The concept "artistic method," whose foundation is the philosophical category of method, emphasizes this consciousness of the basic drives of artistic thought, imagination, and talent.

Because it develops in a concrete social and cultural milieu, an artist's method, despite its unique qualities, exhibits a more or less profound similarity to the methods of other artists of the same period and the same intellectual and aesthetic orientation. The historian of artistic culture is, therefore, justified in abstracting the general structure of the artistic method of artistic schools and styles. Thus, for example, scholars refer to the artistic method of classicism, romanticism, critical realism, and symbolism.

Each artist develops his own artistic method as his creative approach takes shape. The method evolves under the influence of the artist's entire world view—that is, the system of his aesthetic, ethical, religious, philosophical, and political convictions. Of course, serious changes in an artist's world view lead to changes in his method. [...]

<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Artistic+Method>

[...] remaking the world, act by act, object by object, starting with the simplest substances, shapes, gestures. One such gesture -an ordinary one from which the extraordinary can be derived- is walking.

Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A Short History of Walking*, London: Verso, 2001, p.269.

In many ways, the cultural practice of walking has, historically, been a reaction against alienation and the fast pace of our industrialized world. In recent years, both activists and city planners have viewed walking as a subversive act that enables the transformation of order and power structures in society.

Cecilia Lagerström, "Activating Imaginative Attention and Creating Observant Moments in the Everyday Through the Art of Walking", *Nordic Theatre Studies*, vol. 27, no 2, 2015.

[...] in *The Crab Walks*, Phil Smith explains that via the act of walking, he "wanted to travel not just back and forward across time, but also across a little of the sensibility of this planet". By looking for his own story, he finds other stories: "this walk through nostalgia is a walk into the future, a pioneering wander through the familiar, only to find everything changed and full of endless wonder. But the wonder looks back at you, looks into you, and you look back at it".

[...] As Carl tell us in *Mourning Walk*, "When I walk, I go back and forth in an infinite journey between memory and imagination".

Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery, and Phil Smith. *Walking, Writing and Performance, Autobiographical Texts by Deirdre Heddon, Carl Valery and Phil Smith*, ed. Roberta Mock, Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2009, pp. 45 & 10-11.

For me walking was an action related to movement and consequently to change and transformation. It was an expression of our need to explore the world, meet other people and communicate, and become active; in contradiction to stillness that is more related to passivity and doesn't create the circumstances for interaction, but it is mostly a state of isolation. Walking was a way to move my art into space and across time and bring it into the world; it was an alternative of meeting the audience by *going to* it rather than waiting for it to come to me (as it usually happens in some "static" forms of performative arts or in the "classical" theatre). I wanted to re-experience the urban environment and current reality together with the spectators by sharing space and time and to create the circumstances in order to realize the impact of Crisis in our everyday life reflected in the surroundings; this shared experienced would ideally give the spectators and myself the opportunity to act and react collectively and discover the potential to transform our life for the better.

In human history walking has been the most common way of travelling and even nowadays that plenty of means of transportation are available there are still people that choose to walk either by choice or out of necessity. In my mind emigration, which was what the Bride would experience, was very much related to the images of people fleeing from their countries on foot from ancient times till now. This human activity that lingered through the ages connects the past with the present and gives a sense of perspective on the world in a similar way to what I wanted the Bride as a symbolic figure to do, while being engaged in *the performance game of memories and imagination*.

I didn't consider walking a symbol in the first place, but subconsciously I used it both as a metaphor and a symbol; it was indeed a symbolic *representation* of fleeing, emigrating and exploring. It symbolized the need to move forward and evolution as a result of "humanity being in motion". I realized that in my project walking could be understood as a metaphor for progress or for the passage of time or even for an onset of revolution. I was aware of the political character of my work and that the collective walks of my project, in combination with the use of flags, could be easily misinterpreted by spectators as protests or street demonstrations. The truth is that I considered the Bride's walking a symbolic action of a peaceful demonstration in an artistic context and I myself used the pattern of collective protest walk, but mostly as an expression of solidarity and collectivity.

[...] Pedestrian performance -the fact that the audience has to share the same space and time as the performers- is a stimulus, a method of encouraging spectators to rewrite and imagine their own city.

Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery, and Phil Smith. *Walking, Writing and Performance, Autobiographical Texts by Deirdre Heddon, Carl Valery and Phil Smith*, ed. Roberta Mock, Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2009, p.45.

The passage of time. The past is "behind" us, the future "ahead." It is as if we are walking from the past to the future. A period of time is "short" or "long" as if it were a distance to be walked.

JULY 2006 IN RICK ASTER'S WORLD
Walking is More Than a Metaphor

<http://www.rickaster.com/world/walking.html>



December 2014

Article from *The Economist* one day before my first performance in Greece

<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21636043-early-presidential-vote-could-spell-trouble-greeces-governmentand-future>

The Economist

World politics Business & finance Economics Science & technology Culture

Greece's crisis

Samaras's gamble

An early presidential vote could spell trouble for Greece's government—and for the future of the euro

Dec 13th 2014 | ATHENS | From the print edition

Timekeeper

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221

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A GREEK presidential election is not supposed to make headlines. The ruling party's candidate, typically a low-key retired politician, normally wins the required three-fifths majority after a three-round vote in parliament. In the 40 years since Greece replaced its monarchy with a republic led by a figurehead president, no big political upset has occurred. This time it could be different.

Antonis Samaras (pictured), the centre-right prime minister, has called a snap presidential election for December 17th, two months before Karolos Papoulias, the 85-year-old incumbent, steps down. This is at best a risky gamble. Sensing that political instability might rekindle the euro crisis, financial markets panicked. Prices on the Athens stockmarket plunged by almost 13% the day after the presidential vote was announced; yields on Greek ten-year bonds soared above 8% (see chart).



Mr Samaras said he was bringing the presidential vote forward to restore political stability, which he claimed was being undermined by persistent demands from the far-left Syriza party, led by Alexis Tsipras, a radical populist, for an early general election. Since it came first in the European elections in May, Syriza has kept a strong lead over Mr Samaras's New Democracy (ND) party in the opinion polls. Yet if Mr Samaras's candidate for the presidency, Stavros Dimas, a former European environment commissioner, fails to win 180 out of 300 votes in the final round, Mr Tsipras will get his way, as an early general election must then be held.

In this section

Samaras's gamble

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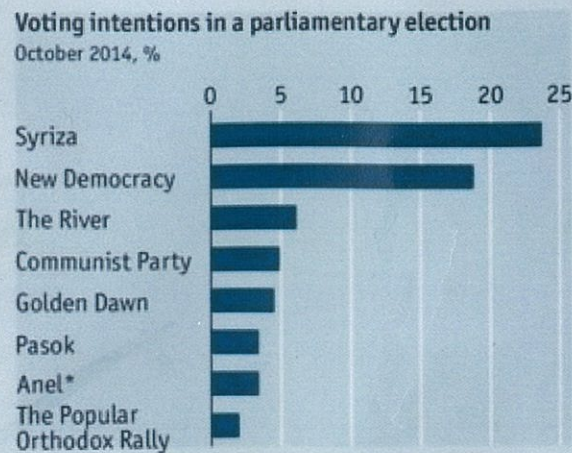
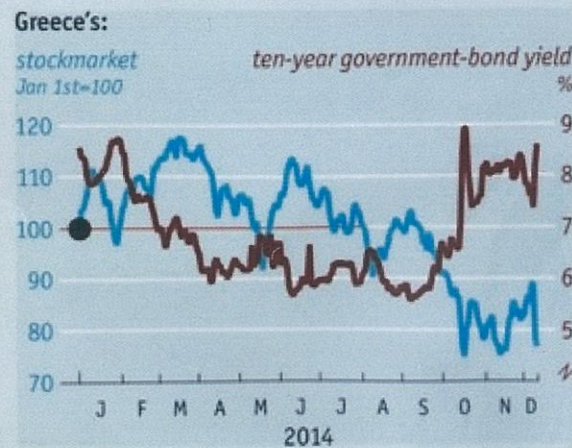
Mafia in the middle

Between great and so-so

Ships that pass in the night

Reprints

Troubled times



Sources: Thomson Reuters; Metron Analysis

*Independent Greeks Party

Mr Tsipras, a hero of Europe's far left, pledges to restore the minimum wage to its pre-crisis level, to provide free electricity and food to destitute families, and to reduce unemployment by hiring more civil servants. His promises resonate with austerity-hit Greeks, though it is unclear how a Syriza government would finance such expansive policies. Nor is it evident how they can be made compatible with Greece's euro membership.

Mr Samaras has already lost another bet. His plan to end Greece's four-year €230 billion (\$284 billion) bail-out this month and to resume borrowing abroad without a precautionary safety net of credit from the European Union and the IMF collapsed when markets reacted badly, briefly pushing yields on Greek ten-year bonds above 9%. On December 8th Greece accepted a two-month extension of its bail-out to give it time to complete negotiations on more reforms, including pension cuts and tax increases, with the unpopular "troika" of monitors from the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF. These would be the conditions for getting a fresh line of credit that would help to allay fears of a default if Syriza were ever to come to power.

The presidential vote is a bigger gamble. If Mr Dimas is rejected, the opinion polls suggest that New Democracy would lose the subsequent election to Syriza, while its junior partner in the governing coalition, the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok), might only barely scrape into parliament. Yet Syriza might not win an outright majority, raising the prospect of prolonged political uncertainty that could lead to even more market jitters.

Mr Samaras, a skilful tactician, has his work cut out. The coalition controls 155 parliamentary votes and can count on another 12 from the 24 independents who have left ND or Pasok in protest against different austerity measures. Another half-dozen independents could probably be persuaded to back the government. Getting the remaining seven votes would mean persuading lawmakers to defect from Independent Greeks (Anel), a fractious right-wing splinter group, or Democratic Left, a moderate leftist party that pulled out of the coalition last year when Mr Samaras high-handedly shut the state broadcaster without any discussion.

The incentive to break ranks and back the government will be strong: the independents might well lose their seats at the next election, while both Anel and Democratic Left could fall below the 3% threshold for entering parliament. It will be a tense Christmas holiday period: since Mr Dimas has no chance of winning the 200 votes needed in the first and second rounds, the deciding third ballot will take place on December 29th.

Greece's creditors and allies are watching nervously, from Berlin to Brussels. Some think that by calling an election that his candidate will struggle to win, Mr Samaras has already thrown in the towel. But Pierre Moscovici, the EU's economics commissioner, sounded a note of encouragement, saying he believed that Mr Samaras's gamble meant he was confident that his man would become president.



14 December 2014

Salvo Condotta (Safe Conduct) in Thessaloniki
The sunniest winter day

On Sunday the 14th of December 2014 I presented my first live action in Thessaloniki. It was the Bride's first walk in her city of origin.

The time

At 16.00, approximately one hour before the sunset.

Sunday, 14 December 2014
Sunset time in Thessaloki: 17.06'

<http://www.timeanddate.com>

The route

From the start of the seaside promenade to the Statue of Alexander the Great.

The props

- One Greek flag
- One flag of the European Union
- 16 small plastic bottles filled with a mixture of ketchup, water and patisserie red color (one for each co-performer)
- 6 meters of fishing line

The costume

- A white pair of trousers
- A white T-shirt
- A white shirt
- A white kerchief
- A white pair of socks

The participants

- 16 co-performers
- 9 people behind the cameras

Salvo Condotta was a collective silent walk lead by me who was also the main performer. I started walking alone holding the two flags bound together in front of my chest as if I was carrying the body of a person. Each flag had a fishing line of around three meters length bound on one of its edges. The lines were wrapped around my hands. Along my walk I made eight stops. The stops were equally distributed along the route of the walk. At each stop there was a pair of co-performers who stopped my walk and poured the red content of their bottles, which resembled blood, on different parts of my body. After every stop the co-performers who poured the red liquid followed me and they gradually created a group of silent walkers accompanying the Bride. After the last stop we walked together to the Statue of Alexander the Great. We stopped in front of the statue and I went alone towards the edge of the dock, I kneeled down, threw the two flags into the sea holding the edge of the fishing lines, in order to fish the flags after the performance, and I sat on the ground with my legs dangling above the sea. I started looking at the horizon and the sunset. The rest of the participants joined me and we watched the sunset together for some minutes.

Salvo Condotta (Safe Conduct)

Safe-conduct, procedure by which a person is permitted to enter or leave a jurisdiction in which he would normally be subject to arrest, detention, or other deprivation. Historically, the habit of princes in granting safe-conducts to foreigners who, as aliens, did not ordinarily enjoy the full protection of the host-country's law developed into the system of diplomatic immunity. Similarly, the granting of safe-conducts to protect freedom of commerce was the forerunner of modern treaties of commerce. Whether in modern times the granting by the authorities of a safe-conduct—as, for example, to a person enjoying asylum in a foreign embassy—entails any legal obligation under international or municipal law depends on the circumstances of each case.

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/safe-conduct>

For the title of the performance I was inspired by Jose Saramago's novel "Seeing" in which I read for the first time the term salvo condotta. The discoursed free movement of people in between the countries that belong to the European Union that became again a temporal subject due to Crisis and the consequent measures discussed in the European and other national parliaments seemed to me to be very similar to after-war-effects. This political emergency reminded me of the situation described in the above mentioned novel; in the name of democracy and public safety the government of a fictional state restricts a part of the citizens who are believed to be public danger and terrorists and isolates them in the capital city of the country. In order to travel out of the restricted area the dangerous citizens needed a salvo condotta. I found that the fictional dystopia described in the book had many similarities to the reality we have been experiencing in Europe during last years. So, I used the term salvo condotta as a sarcastic comment on the so-called freedom of movement in the European Union which is also one of its founding principles.



Photo by Pimintis Louvis



I wanted the flags to sink in the sea and start their own journey. With this image I wanted to create a visual metaphor of the Bride's journey and the common future of Greece and Europe; either we swim and survive together or we sink together. However, I didn't want to pollute the sea for the needs of my performance and I decided to find a way to drag them out of the water after the end of the performance. Of course, this choice changed not only the structure but also the content of the last part of my action. For me, the tied flags represented again the common fate of Greece and Europe; we may swim towards different directions but we are still bound together. At the same time the lines represented the standoff that Greece and Europe seem to have been experiencing and the feeling of incapability to escape from Crisis.

In my performances I always wanted to have a conscious reason for every small detail, for every choice I made, that would give a meaning to the actions or the objects involved. This meaning is *my truth* which I want to communicate with the audience. This doesn't mean that I am not open to re-define *my truth* in the here-and-now of the performance and through the interaction with the spectators. Still, I feel the need to define first any of my artistic choices, so that later I will have the opportunity to re-define them.



The Statue of Great Alexander in Thessaloniki

Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BC)

Alexander III of Macedon, better known as Alexander the Great, single-handedly changed the nature of the ancient world in little more than a decade.

Alexander was born in Pella, the ancient capital of Macedonia in July 356 BC. His parents were Philip II of Macedon and his wife Olympias. Alexander was educated by the philosopher Aristotle. Philip was assassinated in 336 BC and Alexander inherited a powerful yet volatile kingdom. He quickly dealt with his enemies at home and reasserted Macedonian power within Greece. He then set out to conquer the massive Persian Empire.

Against overwhelming odds, he led his army to victories across the Persian territories of Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt without suffering a single defeat. His greatest victory was at the Battle of Gaugamela, in what is now northern Iraq, in 331 BC. The young king of Macedonia, leader of the Greeks, overlord of Asia Minor and pharaoh of Egypt became 'great king' of Persia at the age of 25.

Over the next eight years, in his capacity as king, commander, politician, scholar and explorer, Alexander led his army a further 11,000 miles, founding over 70 cities and creating an empire that stretched across three continents and covered around two million square miles. The entire area from Greece in the west, north to the Danube, south into Egypt and as far to the east as the Indian Punjab, was linked together in a vast international network of trade and commerce. This was united by a common Greek language and culture, while the king himself adopted foreign customs in order to rule his millions of ethnically diverse subjects.

Alexander was acknowledged as a military genius who always led by example, although his belief in his own indestructibility meant he was often reckless with his own life and those of his soldiers. The fact that his army only refused to follow him once in 13 years of a reign during which there was constant fighting, indicates the loyalty he inspired.

He died of a fever in Babylon in June 323 BC.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/alexander_the_great.shtml

<http://www.lifo.gr/team/bitsandpieces/50858> (picture)

A conversation about *Salvo Condotto*

In February 2015 I was interviewed by Apostolos Karoulas who was responsible for the video documentation of my first live action in Thessaloniki and he decided to make a documentary film about my project.

- Tell us few words about your project and *Salvo Condotto*.

The project that was presented here (in Thessaloniki) is part of a project in progress I'm working on for my Master at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. In the original plan, if I can call it that, this performance was not included. This performance came up. Originally the project would include some solo live art performances on the street and silent ones. Along the way the loneliness I experienced in Sweden made me go back to what I had been doing all these years, which was purely collective performances in the theatre and not out of the black box. So, this is how this need emerged. The need to have a group of people on the street, even though I would be the main performer and create the prologue of my project. The project is called "The Bride of Thermaicus" - a reference to the city of Thessaloniki- and it has to do with the Crisis; social, financial, psychological and cultural. It is a call of the city to its own soul, to its own identity. An endeavor to find itself. So, this Bride asks herself to get out of the liquid component (sea) and to be redefined. The prologue takes place here in Thessaloniki because here is the starting point where the character I created will begin. I was very lucky because there is a group of people that not only participate in but also support it. Both people behind and in front of the cameras. And this is how a silent walk started along the seaside...

- How did you experience this collective walk?

I wasn't really aware of what was happening behind me. I was walking straight ahead, looking at a specific spot. I was just simply walking and listening. I was only *feeling* the people that were behind me. But for sure, I didn't feel alone. I didn't feel that I was doing a solo. I didn't even feel that I was in the spotlight. Although it was me who was holding the two flags, one Greek and one of the EU, I felt that we were all united and after a while, by listening to what people were saying, I felt that they became part of the action, as well. And that was my desire; the participation of people of the city.

- In your opinion in which way has the Crisis influenced the citizens of Thessaloniki and people in general?

I feel that the city is in a state that is ready to get out of the "autism" we have been experiencing over the last years. That is we have been looking inside ourselves (caring only about ourselves). People have started being more open. And this may be one of the positive effects of the Crisis. We started "repairing", refining and strengthening the social fabric. For me, this has always been moving; that people come closer to each other and become united as a result of a stimulus. I think passivity is our enemy.



Photo by Dimitris Tolis



Photo by Dimitris Iouis

- Your performance seems to make a clear political statement about the here-and-now of the situation. Can you tell us about the message you wanted to communicate through it?

I hoped the message would be as clear as possible. Of course, when you start you believe that what you do is clear and that everybody will get it. Along the way you realize that nothing is clear and that everybody perceives things differently. I believe that the project is indeed political, since it is related to what the country and Europe in general have been going through under the umbrella of the Crisis. The message was that Greece has been bleeding, dying... I don't know. We'll see... I hope not. Because essentially, the prologue was a call for a renaissance. It was not a funeral, although some people said that the walk looked like an *epitaph* procession. I don't see it like that. I didn't want it to be considered an epitaph. For me it is a rebirth through this pain that has been caused... through this decay in all fields, not only the financial one. For me, the Financial Crisis is the most featured. In my opinion all other types of crisis are more important. The reaction to it is very important as well. Even a "silly" comment is a kind of reaction. I wanted to provoke a reaction.



- The "blood" that your co-performers poured on you was poured on different parts of your body: head, chest, arms, legs... Is there a specific symbolic meaning?

The body parts that were selected to bleed symbolically were related to our mind, our logic, our emotion, our heart. Additionally, they were related to the feeling you have when you feel that you are helpless, that your arms and legs are paralyzed because you are placed in front of a dead-end... in a state of unwilling helplessness; a psychological one that for me verges on physical weakness. It can be perceived simply as a visual expression of how nowadays people feel and think. This sinking, this jellied red mush... However, some people perceived it in a different "political" way, according to some comments I heard...that it is a political campaign of Syriza. Well, it worked, since they (the party) won the elections. But it wasn't!

- Can you share with us some interesting or special moments you experienced during your performance?

Moments... Well... The most characteristic one was the comments said about the ketchup, that the "blood" was ketchup. "It is ketchup, it is ketchup", "no, it's blood". There was even someone who was totally convinced that it was indeed blood. He said: it smells like blood. Maybe it did. Depending on how someone feels or what they see.

For me something very strong, almost supernatural, happened; although I'm not in good shape, I held my arms in a fixed position for a whole hour and I felt no pain until I approached the end. Additionally, I felt that the time ran quickly, although the performance lasted one hour and also that it was in a safe environment.



Photo by Eleni Prasini

Epitaphios

A ritual lament called the "Procession of the Epitaphios of Christ" mourns the death of Christ on the cross with a symbolic decorated coffin carried through the streets by the faithful. Families attend their church to decorate the Epitaph (Bier of Christ) with flowers. In the morning of Good Friday, Christ's burial is reenacted in many churches and in the evening the Epitaph procession takes place.

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/common/orthodox-good-friday>

The Epitaph: Greek Orthodox Good Friday Traditions



<http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/04/17/the-epitaph-greek-orthodox-good-friday-traditions/>

The Coalition of the Radical Left (Greek: Συνασπισμός Ριζοσπαστικής Αριστεράς, Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás), mostly known by the syllabic abbreviation Syriza (a Greek adverb meaning "from the roots" or "radically", and sometimes styled SY.RIZ.A.; Greek: ΣΥΡΙΖΑ, pronounced ['siriza]), is a left-wing political party in Greece, originally founded in 2004 as a coalition of left-wing and radical left parties. It is the largest party in the Hellenic Parliament, with party chairman Alexis Tsipras serving as Prime Minister of Greece from 26 January 2015 to 20 August 2015 and from 21 September 2015 to Present.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriza>

- **Now that you mentioned “safe environment”, I would like to ask you if there was any moment that you felt that what you were doing was risky or if you felt any kind of threat?**

I didn't feel any kind of threat. Even when the police siren was heard while the police car was passing by, obviously because there was a jam, I didn't feel threatened. Not at all. I felt very safe because of the participants and other people around as well. I felt that the whole act was protected. That was one of the most moving things; to feel that the whole city, the heart of the city was beating as one. Water that is what gives us life washed our sins away and symbolically our past, too. This is what is going to revive us: realizing our common root.

- **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

No... To be well and meet each other and be creative inside and outside the theatrical context. To meet each other... Just that.

After Salvo Condotta

Although in the beginning *Salvo Condotta* was planned to be a prologue out of the original plan of my project, it resulted in defining the rest of the live actions that followed. The choices I made for this very first performance became the guidelines for my following performances and also formulated the general aesthetics of my project.

The time

I wanted the performance to take place during a day of the week that the majority of people would go for a coffee or walk for leisure, so that I could meet a larger audience which will be more open to interact with my performance. I was convinced that Sunday was the ideal day after some brainstorming with my collaborators.

The choice to finish the live action by the time the sunset begins had to do with my impulse to create at the end of the performance the circumstances which would allow both the participants and the spectators to share a common experience in silence and take time and space for thoughts as well as realization. Watching the sunset is already an activity that is very common for walkers and a reason to interrupt their walking and have some time in stillness and silence. Additionally, I wanted to use the sun as a symbol of hope that in combination with the notion of looking together at the horizon would create an optimistic or at least positive feeling for the upcoming future; the end of a day is also a *promise* for a new day that could bring a change for the better.

I decided that I would like to present the rest of my performances some time before sunset because of the feeling this shared experience created between the performers and the spectators. It seemed that this activity worked so well that I could use it as a method for my future practice and repeat the same ending in all my performances. From the beginning of my project I was

very much concerned about the end of my live actions, because I believe that the last act of a performance determines pretty much the general message/meaning of the whole. I wanted my work to generate hope and create a positive feeling despite the moments of realization of the hard times we have all been going through.

Another aspect of time that really influenced my future choices about the date or the time period during which each performance needed to be presented was the impact of current events on the way the audience views and relates to the performance. Since every action is perceived according to the context it is in, I needed to take under serious consideration the political and social current affairs before I create a performance. And of course, the fact that I wanted to talk about such an actual topic such as Crisis could only be possible and would be more effective if I was able to relate it to the present, the current reality and the main issues that people are concerned about. I also thought that maybe what was in the limelight was not only a source of inspiration but it could be the subject of my performances, since I wanted to provoke a reaction and a discourse about the current aspects and problems resulting from the Crisis.

The route

I chose the seaside promenade and specifically the part which starts right after the entrance of the port and meets the White Tower, the symbol of the city, as well as the Statue of Alexander the Great. I wanted to connect the Bride's arrival to the city with the arrivals of the passengers at the port -both the Bride and the passengers arrive at Thessaloniki via a sea route.

It was also important for me to involve the monument of the White Tower because, apart from a symbol of the city, it is a place which is related to the identity of the city and its long history; in that sense, it connects the past with the present. Similarly, the Bride is a character that comes from the past and tries to connect with the present. The White Tower is a fundamental element of the *psychogeography* of Thessaloniki which I needed to take under consideration in order to enhance the site-specificity of my performance. This is why one of the stops along the Bride's walk was in front of the monument.

Accordingly, I decided to involve the Statue of Alexander the Great which also plays a critical role for the city and the citizens, since Alexander the Great is very much related to our national identity and especially the identity of the Macedonians (Greeks of Northern Greece).

Of course the choice to follow this specific route had very much to do with the fact that this promenade is very popular with the citizens, who often walk along the seaside for leisure. The more people I could meet, the more I would be able to communicate my work to.

PsychoGeography: “the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.”

This concept was picked up and further developed by Guy Debord and practiced by the Situationist International where Debord was a leading figure. These ideas and the practice of the *derive*, a drifting way of walking and perceiving the urban landscape, have had a great influence on urban researchers and artists for decades.

In order to give an idea of how I understand the term national identity I would say that for me it is more or less

"A sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, and language"
(<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/national-identity>)

However, I would agree with Liav Orgad who suggests that

"Until not so long ago, European countries did not struggle with the question "who are we," or search for a bond to bind them together. National identity was a given, not something that had to be defined. But times have changed. The question of immigration, together with globalization processes and the rise of minority rights and multiculturalism, have led to a new reality where it becomes more difficult to know what it means to have a national identity, how legitimate it is to act upon such identities or impose them on newcomers. Immigration, more than anything else, has brought to the fore the question of national identity, encouraging nation-states to define themselves. As George Orwell rightly observed, "It is only when you meet someone of a different culture from yourself that you begin to realize what your own beliefs really are."

National identities have traditionally not been legal concepts. Perhaps for the first time in human history, states currently offer, or attempt to offer, a legal definition of their collective identity. Immigration law is the field in which this fascinating phenomenon is taking place.

[...]

What can immigration policy teach us about national identity? On one hand, some National identity debates end up with seemingly trivial issues, items of popular culture like movies, carnivals, and sports. This "Disneyfication of cultural difference," as termed by Will Kymlicka, may be the greatest indicator of a national identity crisis. Political leaders in the West declare the death of multiculturalism and seek to focus on "our" culture, yet cannot pinpoint exactly what this culture is. In a sense, they find out that the shared culture is, at best, a particular version of political liberalism.

[...]

Talking about the national identities in an age of globalization may seem a bit old fashioned. Trans-cultural diffusion is greater today than in any other period in human history. In the contemporary world, ideas come and go—through free markets, international media, and the Internet—and the notion of cultural exceptionalism faces multiple challenges. The "other" is present in national boundaries not just physically but spiritually. Cultures change, and they will continue to change more rapidly than ever. Even if states can control the flow of people, they can hardly control the flow of cultures. It is too early to predict whether we are witnessing the "swan song" of the old structure of national identity, or its transformation".

Liav Orgad, "Us' and 'Them': Can we define national identity?", 2015.

<http://blog.oup.com/2015/09/how-define-national-identity/#sthash.NOc0QfnC.dpuf>

The above thoughts and the resulted decisions I made gave me the opportunity to realize in which way I wanted to use the urban environment in my project. I considered the seaside promenade a place which I could use for all my performances. It would work as a symbolic reference to the Bride's origin and to the original idea of the water/sea as a component which connects people beyond the national borders. In addition, I thought that it was important for me to have the White Tower as part of my future routes and that in the future I could apply the idea of using the symbol of the city as a reference in my performances in Gothenburg, too. I thought that, since the symbols of a city are firmly related to its identity, the exploration of and the realization about the identity of a city, which was one of the parameters of the Bride's journey, needed somehow to be related to these symbols through the action of the performances.

The props

From the very beginning of the process to formulate the structure of my performances one of my main concerns was how I could convey, in a clear way, the issue of the Crisis related to Greece and Europe and how I could raise questions about the Greek and the European identity. I wanted to use a symbol that could be perceived, if possible, by all spectators and create immediate associations between the performative action and the theme of my project. I considered flags the most featured and recognizable symbol which the audience could relate to in any European city I would perform. Additionally, the way of using the flags, for example as a representation of a human body, would allow me to *materialize* ideas or situations and transform the objects into different symbols, according to the context and the theme of each live action.

The fact that flags have been used worldwide as symbols in order to express feelings and thoughts about people, states or even ideas contributed to my decision to choose flags as the core visual stimulus of my performances. Behind the choice of using specifically the Greek and the European Union flags there was, of course, a strong wish to participate in the current debate on the relation between Greece and the EU, the growing consciousness about borders and migration, and the discourse about (re)defining the Greek and the European identity.

The costume

At first, I thought about having a costume that would give a clear image of a woman who is a bride. I brainstormed with different people (actors, costume designers, directors) about the aesthetics and the symbolism of the costume and I was very much close to the idea of having a simple white dress designed according to the old traditional Greek wedding dresses as a reference to the past that my character brings along with her. When I took the decision to present my first live action I hadn't taken a final decision about my costume and there was very little time for the preparation of my performance. This practical issue made me reconsider the concept about my

costume in a different way. What was more important for me was the Bride's action rather than the character herself. I thought that the more neutral her appearance was, the less distractive for the spectators would be. I wanted the audience to focus on the performativity of the Bride and not on the character and the fiction related to her. I wanted the Bride to be a figure, a type of ghost, a messenger who is not determined by clothes or sex but by her performative body. So, I chose to use a non-gender specific outfit that would eliminate my femininity without making me look like a man. For the aforementioned reasons I decided to wear a white pair of trousers and a white shirt and cover my head with a white kerchief. The only relation to the wedding dress was the white color which is also related to the idea of the ghost and neutrality.

The participants

Due to *Salvo Condotto* I took the most important decision which changed fundamentally the identity of my project: I concluded that I wanted my performances to be collective and I gave up my original idea of solo performances. The experience of my first performance and the feelings and thoughts resulted from sharing that walk made me realize the importance of working collectively, especially for a project which aimed to raise awareness and contribute in strengthening solidarity. The idea of creating artistic communities which would work for a common artistic purpose and would show in practice the power of collaboration and solidarity fascinated me. Collaborating with artists who believe in the power of art to transform the world would give me the opportunity to create artistic communities in the performance context, encourage them to share their feelings and concerns with citizens on the streets and together create a larger community which would relive the experience of the world through the here-and-now of a live action.

For me, as a director and actress who has had a traditional theatre background, my first street live action was an experience which expanded my artistic horizons and gave the opportunity to use the concept of *mise-en-scène* closely linked to the idea of the event. My need to create performances that wouldn't be just spectacles watched in a black box led me to be engaged in performance art and in the creation of artistic actions that would be more fleeting events rather than *artifacts*. I consider *Salvo Condotto* my first attempt to approach performance art and specifically street art events as a process of transformation in the context of new performative paradigm within the arts, while I have been experiencing my own *metamorphosis* as an artist.

Staging creates a situation that stimulates action.

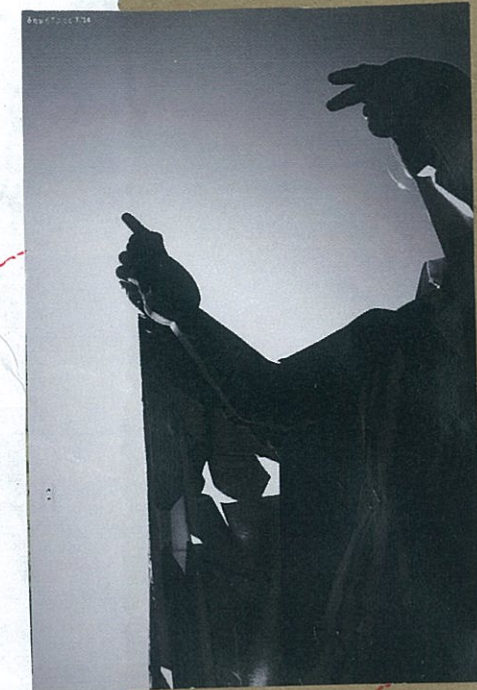
[...]

The staging process also develops the strategies aimed at exciting and directing the audience's attention. Staging is responsible for the performative generation of materiality in such a way that the appearing elements attract the audience's attention and simultaneously highlight the very act of perceiving itself. Staging brings about situations in which even inconspicuous and ordinary elements become remarkable and appear transfigured. Moreover, the spectators become aware that they are affected and transformed by their experience of movements, light, colors, sounds, odors, and so forth. The *mise-en-scène* can therefore be defined and described as a process that aims at re-enchantment of the world and the metamorphosis of the performances participants.

Erika Fischer-Lichte, *THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics*, Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.188-189.

Reflections

I asked the participants to write a reflection on the experience they had during the live action or send me some comments of people they heard on the street. The following chapter is a "composition" of their texts in combination with pictures taken by different artists that participated in or watched the performance.



The flag-bearer

You opened your arms
I thought you would fly
And you colored birds.

Red

Time flowed on you, it soiled you!
You walked on a stage full of smiley faces
I turned, I looked at you being now on an even bigger stage, a vast stage

Figures without faces, hanging bodies
It smells death, I said!

I entered the backstage area, I closed the curtain

Red

The sun caressed me and I fought off it

I looked at you

I dreamed of us playing in a park
Dirty feet, wounded knees on a seesaw.

And the flag at school was even higher

You run, you hang from the mast, you put the flag down, you bleed!

In silence you scream to make them look at you

I rip my skin to make you see that there is nothing inside me

Red

"People meet with each other, people separate from each other

And we got nothing from each other" *

And love?

Red

And love?

Emptiness

Gakos Sotiris (philologist, poet)

*Lyric by Tasos Leivaditis



I had the feeling that it was a ritual while we were walking and our parade became bigger because of passers-by following us... I could hear them mumbling "something is going to happen", "it is about Greece" and "it is ketchup, dude".



Dimitris Tsakas (actor)

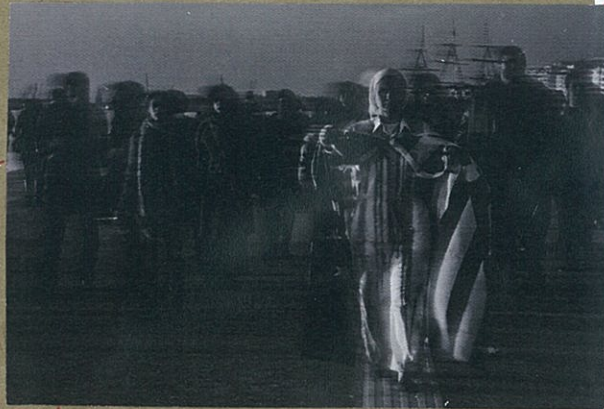


Photo by Dimitris Tousis

I remember some things I heard like:

- Oh! What is this that smells so bad? It is ketchup, ketchup. Oh, and it is spoiled...
- She is bleeding. What is she bleeding for? Well, ok, she is bleeding. What does this mean? Together with Europe?
- Is this a funeral? What is this?
- What are they doing? Are they shooting a film? Oh, these are not serious things... Is this a funeral?

In general people walked and it was as if they didn't notice me at all. A majority of them were bumping against me or they couldn't adjust to the fact that a guy, 1,83 meters tall, watching a monitor, was moving towards them. It is shocking that some of them didn't care at all about me approaching them... hahahaha... Those moments I was forced to move in a zigzag.

Thanasis Stathopolous (photographer, cameraman)



Photo by Dimitris Tousis

Even though I knew beforehand the plan and the concept of the performance, the experience of the action was very strong. What I felt was that something important was happening, despite the size of it.

As a filmmaker I felt the tension of shooting something that is taking place here and now and is unique. Although this type of art and human essence is not the same when somebody watches it on a screen and from a distance, still it is something that needs to be saved.

Despite that I was an "observer" I felt that I was part of this and I was moved by the fact that so many passers-by stopped even for a while and they also became participants, either by asking what was happening and what the action symbolized or by sharing silence or even awkwardness with a sense of humour.

Because any kind of reaction fights the indifference-necrosis to stimuli, the "automation" of basic thoughts and feelings of our everyday routine. It breaks the "norm" that has been imposed on us or we have imposed on ourselves or we have simply gotten used to. It was an eye-opener. In the end, I felt very nice and I was not in the mood to go back home, but I felt that the expression of what we felt and we still feel and what we are and our effort to communicate it on the street needed to be continued somehow.

That's all!

I hope that I didn't bore you stiff. I was very happy that the circumstances gave me the opportunity to participate and I will be waiting to meet up again on the streets in any creative way. For any new idea that will come up, if we can help, we will be ready for action!

Niki Sferopoulou (photographer, camerawoman)

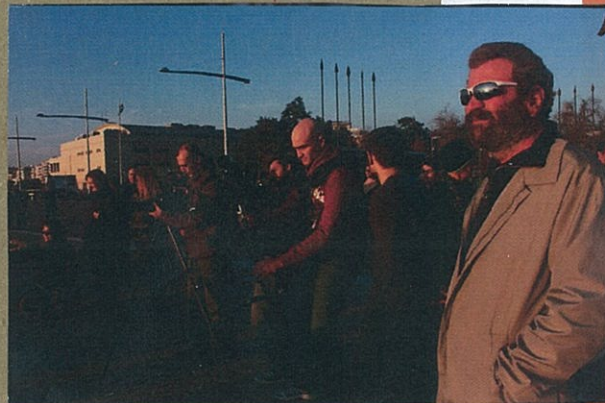


Photo by Christina Partsi

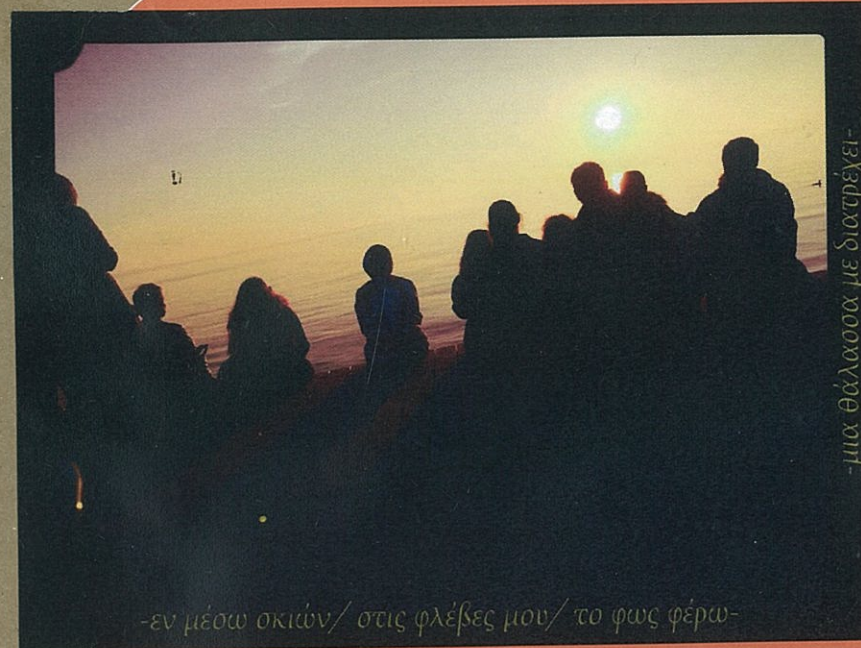


Photo by Dimitris Tousis





Photo by Dimitris Tousis



-μια θάλασσα με διατρέχει-

-εν μέσω σκιών/ στις φλέβες μου/ το φως φέρω-

- Among shadows / In my veins / I carry light / A road walked on me / My palms are soles/ I told you / I walked in red / With a wild gaze / I told you / A sea runs across me

Anastasia Gkitsi/in a silent walk/ 2014

Being touched by the silent scream and the sound of the footsteps in a joint walk towards the sea. Valentina Paraskevaïdou in a symbolic approach of the crisis of society and humanity...

Anastasia Gkitsi (theologist, poet)



Footsteps. Together
 Heavy. Together
 Waiting. Together
 Asking. Together
 Following. Together
 Wayside. Together
 Mourning. Together
 Bleeding. Together
 Being. Together
 Looking. Together
 Flying. Together
 Crying. Together
 Drowning. Together. Not



Photo by Dimitris Tousis

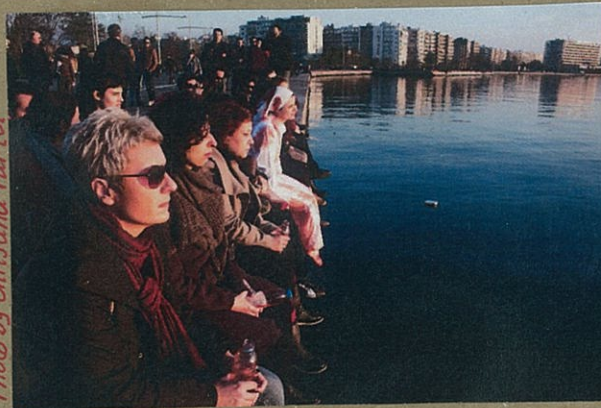


Photo by Christina Partsi



Photo by Smaro Platioti



Photo by Dimitris Tousis

Alexandra Tsotaniđou (dancer, choreographer, performer)



Photo by Dimitris Tousis



Photo by Dimitris Tzouzis

And you walk
and you bleed
and you insist
and you bleed
and you look straight ahead
and you bleed
and you have faith and you hope and you dream
and you bleed.

And you wonder who you are, what you do, what you want, where you go,
whom you are with, why you are with them
and you bleed.

And people around you.
People you know, strangers, friends, enemies, neighbors, people far away.
They talk, wonder, pass by, understand, tease, mock, follow, bleed.
They make you bleed.

And once you arrive at the edge.
If you fall in the water,
nobody will take you out.
You will travel evermore
without bleeding.

And the sun sets. Bleeding.
As much as you look at it, you can't stop its movement,
or bring it back.
It will make a round
and if you are lucky, you will see it again.
Rising, setting.
And maybe one day
the wound will be healed
and will stop bleeding.

Angeliki Arnaoutoglou (actress)



Photo by Dimitris Tzouzis

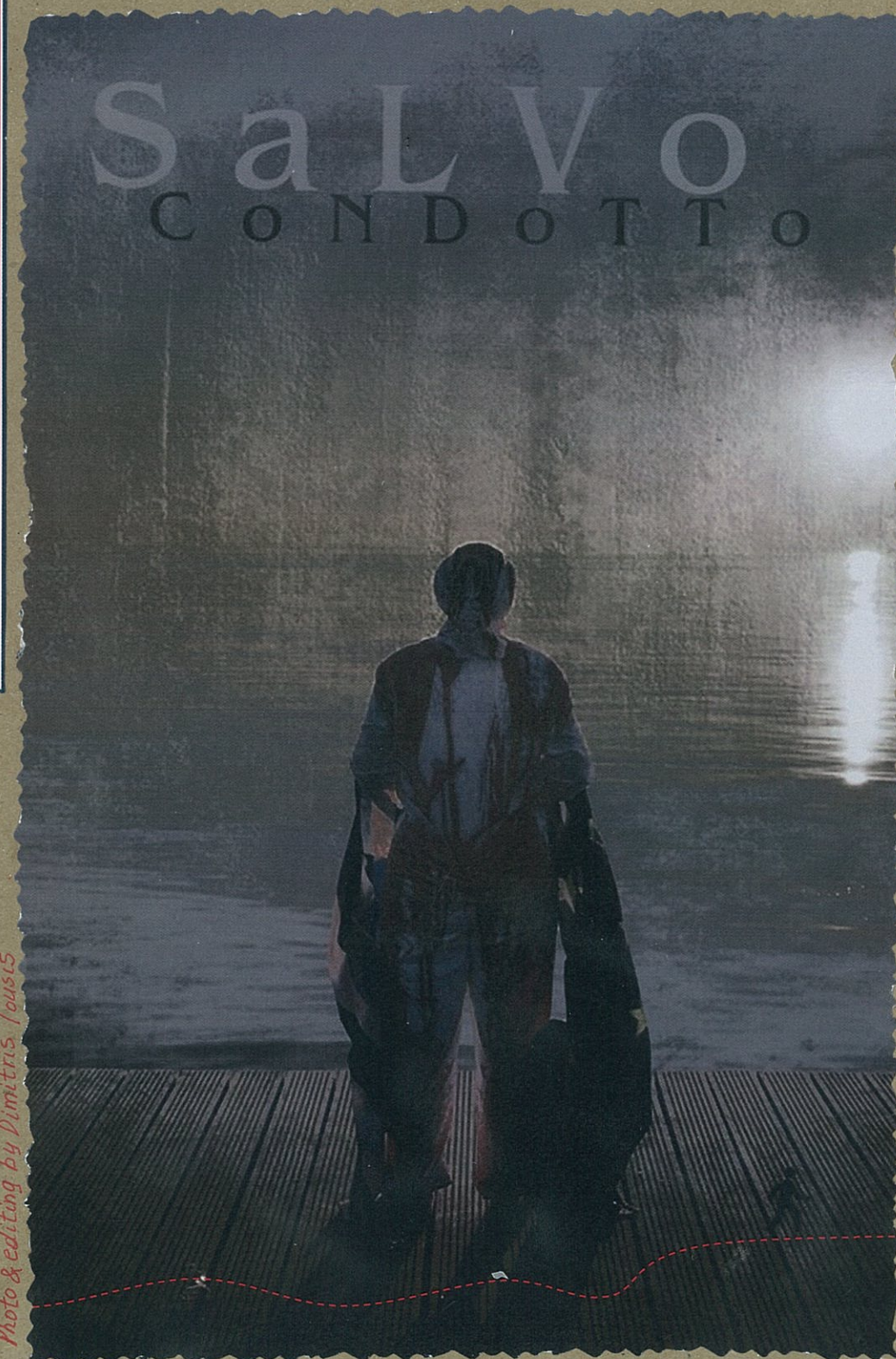


Photo & editing by Dimitris Tzouzis

- What are they doing here?
- There are shooting a movie.
- Possibly it is an advertisement.
- No, it looks more like a protest.
- Is blood what they are pouring on her?
- Blood! It must be ketchup!
- No, it is blood indeed.

- Where did they find so much blood? They killed two persons and they took it from them?...
It is blood. Can't you see its color?

These were some of the comments I was listening to behind my back without being able to see the people who were commenting. I was listening to them like I was in a dream because Valentina's imposing presence attracted my full attention from the first moment I noticed her in the crowd holding the flags of Greece and European Union. We stopped her according to the given instructions. I felt as if I was being hypnotized and for a few seconds I forgot what I was supposed to do. I couldn't see anything else but her. I couldn't see anybody else, although there were many people taking a walk along the seaside last Sunday. I felt as if I were somewhere else, in another dimension. We walked among the people for quite some time until we reached the end of the route. Everybody became silent waiting for what was to come. The flags dived into the water and started their symbolic journey while the sun created a special atmosphere, before it dived into sea, too. The magic was over. For me it was a unique experience that I will remember till the end of my days.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go beyond myself.



Keep walking...

Yiota Amanatidou (actress)

January 2015



Love 15.1.2015

People

using

love as a flag,

generosity as an accessory for the hair,

politeness as a vitrine,

having

forgiveness on the tip of their tongue,

using

patience as a fan.

So candid

exactly like the lie they serve.

So well-intentioned

exactly like the secrets that rot inside them.

So fair

exactly like the criticism that they sleep with.

So close to us

that their tears still wet our shoulders.



February 2015



Düsseldorf, Germany. 16 February 2015

A float depicts refugees in a sinking ship on the Mediterranean. The traditional Shrove Monday (Rosenmontag) carnival parade takes place in Düsseldorf, Germany. 1.2 million revellers lined the route. The Monday parades went ahead despite increased terror warnings which led to the parade in Brunswick (Braunschweig) being cancelled shortly before it was due to take place.

<http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-dusseldorf-germany-16-february-2015-a-float-depicts-refugees-in-a-sinking-78777802.html>



Racism in Europe: the Greece and Norway cases

PUBLISHED 04:40 FEBRUARY 24, 2015

UPDATED 04:40 FEBRUARY 24, 2015

After Breivik's attacks in 2011, politicians and journalists in Norway stopped using inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric.

By Dan Alexe
Contributing Editor, New Europe

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The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) today published its reports on Greece and Norway analysing new developments and outstanding issues, and providing recommendations to the authorities. The ECRI also published conclusions on the implementation of a number of recommendations made to Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg and Montenegro in 2012.

Concerning Greece, "despite steps forward – including the enactment of a new anti-racism law – problems persist, including worrying levels of xenophobia and violence against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and the ongoing segregation of Roma children in some schools, in spite of the European Court of Human Rights' judgements confirming the need to end this practice" said ECRI's Chair, Christian Ahlund.

The report welcomes the introduction in late 2012 of new special police units tasked to tackle racist violence; the appointment of public prosecutors for the prosecution of acts of racist violence in October 2013; and the enactment, in 2014, of a new anti-racism law, which amended existing provisions in the criminal legislation.

However, public and political discourse is widely permeated by hate speech against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, who often become targets of racist violence. The report also finds that the activities of the Golden Dawn party increased xenophobia and racism, creating a climate of racial hatred and fear that went unchecked for too long.

<https://neurope.eu/article/racism-europe-greece-and-norway-cases/>

Concerning Norway, "there are positive developments, such as the inclusion of the right to equality into the Norwegian constitution, but concerns remain, among others the dissemination of racism on the Internet and insufficient assistance to migrants in education and employment," said Christian Ahlund.

On the other hand, neither the public denial of genocide nor participation in groups that promote racism is punishable by law. Statistics do not provide a clear picture of the extent of hate crime, racism on the internet is not systematically monitored and victims of discrimination do not receive sufficient assistance to secure their rights before courts. The report says that the commission charged with drawing lessons from Breivik's attacks did not address the possible influence of public hate speech on his motivation.

The report also finds that by the summer of 2012, xenophobic elements had reappeared in public debate. Assistance to migrants in education and employment also needs to be improved, as well as the legal framework and awareness concerning transgender persons.

On the positive side, the report notes that just after Anders Breivik's hate motivated attacks on 22 July 2011, politicians and journalists in Norway stopped using inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric. In the Criminal Code, it has been made clear that hate speech on the Internet is punishable, and the Oslo police have set up a special hate-crime unit.

Furthermore, access to kindergarten and education has been improved for children with migration background, and the first ever action plan for improving the quality of life among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons has brought positive results.

March 2015



* There are people that will one day be scared

I took this picture
in February 2015
while I was in Thessaloniki

AV 5.3.15 (23.30)

I'm not afraid of what we feel and we don't talk about,

I'm not afraid of what we desire and we don't do,

I'm not afraid of what we dream of and we don't admit,

I'm not afraid of what will eventually happen,

I'm not afraid.

- Fear is the enemy of

Passion and Faults

-and as it is known,

we learn only

from our Passions and Faults.



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April 2015



Hector 21.4.2015 (13.00)

You follow him
You chase him
You bow him
You beat him
You drag him behind you

You think that whom you drag
you can also revile
and you can't
understand

that when it happens

He drags you behind him
He beats you
He bows you
He chases you
He follows you

For ever
Your revilement





1966, The body of a Vietcong soldier is dragged behind an American armored vehicle en route to a burial site after fierce fighting. (By Kyoichi Sawada)

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May 2015



1 May 2015

SALVO CONDOTTO (SAFE CONDUCT) in Gothenburg

The time
4.30 pm

The route

From the Poseidon's Statue to the port (Opera House of Gothenburg)

The props

- One Greek flag
- One flag of the European Union
- 4 small plastic bottles filled with a mixture of ketchup, water and patisserie red color (one for each co-performer)

The costume

- A white pair of trousers
- A white T-shirt
- A white blouse
- A white kerchief
- A white pair of socks
- A pair of brown boots

The participants

- 4 co-performers
- 3 people behind the cameras

According to my project plan after my first street performance art in Thessaloniki I needed to organize the reenactment of it in Gothenburg. I wanted to apply the knowledge I gained and the choices I made as a result of my first experience to the new "mirror performance". So, I focused on the three basic parameters of my work: collectivity, space-specificity and time-specificity.

Collectivity

I asked my friends, my classmates as well as other artists I knew to participate as co-performers in my performance or help me with the documentation of it. Of course, I knew fewer people in Gothenburg in comparison to Thessaloniki, but by that time I didn't consider a big number of participants important. It was rather the process of bringing people together and working collectively that I considered important.

Space and time specificity

Although I had made some thoughts about the route of my walk based on the decisions I made after my first *Salvo Condotta*, still the time-specific aspects influenced my final choices to a large extent regarding the space of my new performance. By that time I also realized how much these two factors are firmly related to and influence each other.

Concerning the space, I wanted to involve both the sea and the symbol of the city as I did in Thessaloniki. So, I thought that my route would start from

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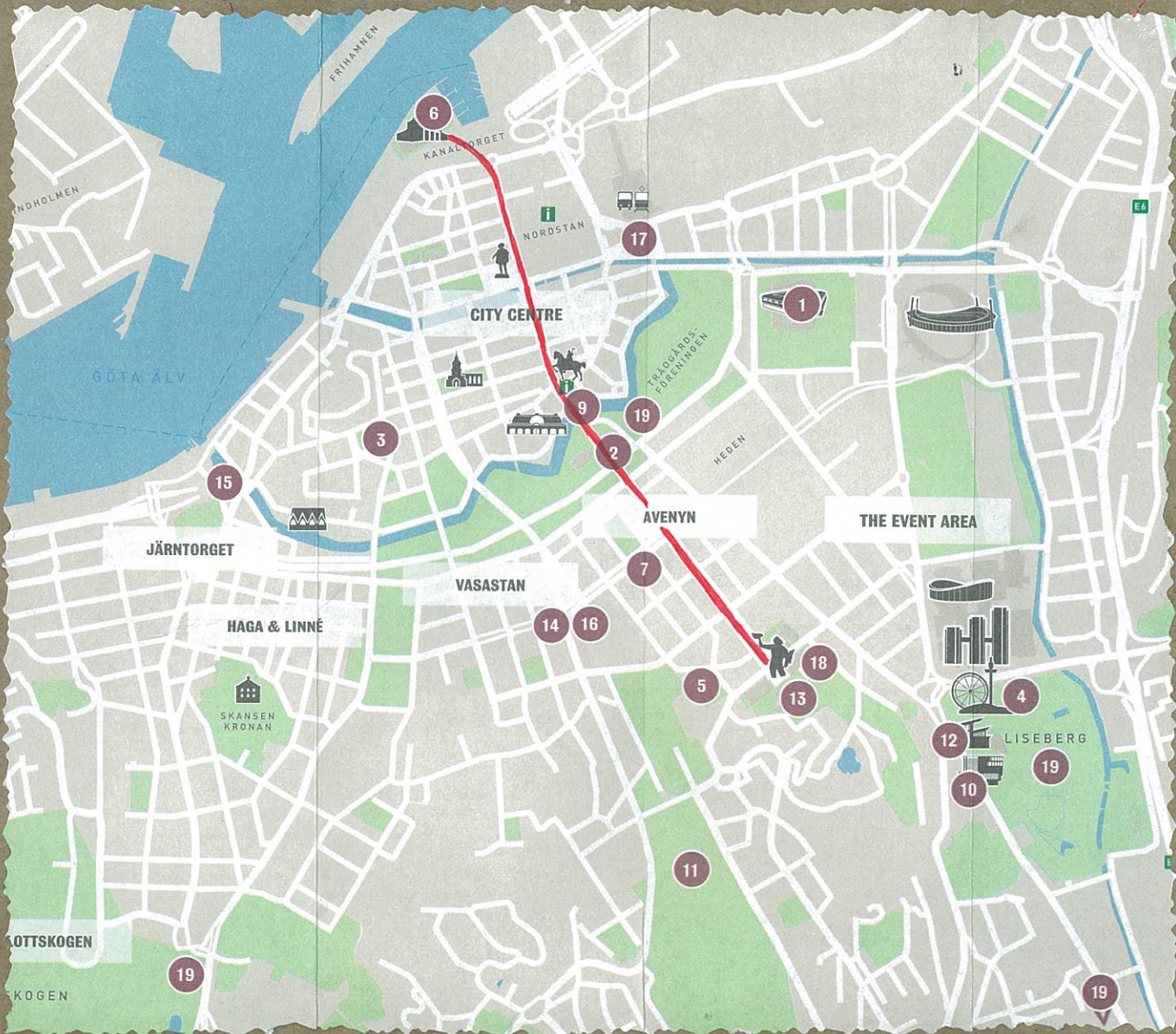
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May Day, also called **Workers' Day** or **International Workers' Day**, day commemorating the historic struggles and gains made by workers and the labour movement, observed in many countries on May 1. In the United States and Canada a similar observance, known as Labor Day, occurs on the first Monday of September.

In 1889 an international federation of socialist groups and trade unions designated May 1 as a day in support of workers, in commemoration of the Haymarket Riot in Chicago (1886). Five years later, U.S. Pres. Grover Cleveland, uneasy with the socialist origins of Workers' Day, signed legislation to make Labor Day—already held in some states on the first Monday of September—the official U.S. holiday in honour of workers. Canada followed suit not long afterward.

In Europe May 1 was historically associated with rural pagan festivals (see May Day), but the original meaning of the day was gradually replaced by the modern association with the labour movement. In the Soviet Union, leaders embraced the new holiday, believing it would encourage workers in Europe and the United States to unite against capitalism. The day became a significant holiday in the Soviet Union and in the Eastern-bloc countries, with high-profile parades, including one in Moscow's Red Square presided over by top government and Communist Party functionaries, celebrating the worker and showcasing Soviet military might. In Germany Labour Day became an official holiday in 1933 after the rise of the Nazi Party. Ironically, Germany abolished free unions the day after establishing the holiday, virtually destroying the German labour movement.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of communist governments in eastern Europe in the late 20th century, large-scale May Day celebrations in that region declined in importance. In dozens of countries around the world, however, May Day has been recognized as a public holiday, and it continues to be celebrated with picnics and parties while serving as the occasion for demonstrations and rallies in support of workers.

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/May-Day-international-observance>

the Poseidon's Statue and end up at the port in order to repeat what I did in Greece during the last act of my performance; I would put my two flags into the sea. The street that connects Götaplatsen, the square where the statue is placed, with the port is Avenyn (Kungssportsavenyn) which is also the most famous street of the city. Additionally, the fact that Avenyn is a busy street full of stores, cafeterias and restaurants contributed in my decision to walk along it in order to meet as many pedestrians as possible. Still, my final decision about my route was made after I decided the specific date I wanted to perform.

When it came to the date of my performance I thought that I would like to find a day that would have a special meaning for the Suedes and preferably, if possible, to have a relation to the current affairs in Europe. This desire of mine had to do with the fact that my performance in Greece took place during a time period that was very crucial for the country; it was approximately one month before the national elections that would influence the future of Greece in the European Union while Greeks had been experiencing the severe consequences of the Crisis and were politically alerted. I do believe that the way my performance was perceived by that time had very much to do with the political situation in Greece; the Crisis and the European Union were in the spotlight. Accordingly, I wanted my performance in Sweden to be in a similar *time context*. Consequently, I decided to present my live action on the 1st of May, the **International Workers' Day**, during which lots of organized street demonstrations and street marches take place and the people, that either participate or not in the activities, are more politically alerted or confronted with different political, financial and social issues.



In order to set the exact time and route of my performance I needed to know when and where the demonstrations took place. I found out that there was a march along Avenyn during the noon. At the same time, I quite liked the idea that my walk would start a few hours after the demonstrations and that I might meet some of the demonstrators along my route. The co-existence of a political parade and an artistic parade in the same time and space context was something challenging and intriguing. I thought that both parades used *the transformative power of performance* for a very similar purpose; to express the need for a world of solidarity and justice and raise awareness through a collective action in public.

I remembered what Oscar Wilde supported: "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life" and I thought that in many cases I don't know if there are any borders or distinction between Life and Art (and if they really need to be distinct from each other) and that I was glad to experience this challenging uncertainty through performance art.

VIVIAN. [...] Paradox though it may seem—and paradoxes are always dangerous things—it is none the less true that Life imitates art far more than Art imitates life.

Oscar Wilde, *THE DECAY OF LYING*

<http://virgil.org/dswo/courses/novel/wilde-lying.pdf>



The insight of a walk

Having in my backpack everything I needed for my performance I went downhill from my room to the tram station. I had constantly my eye on the sky trying to guess its mood which my performance depended on, although I had already decided that I would perform even if it snowed. But you'd better be careful with what you think because it is so easy to become a *Cassandra* of your own destiny...

The sun was fighting the clouds. I reached the tram station and I decided to have no more thoughts about my performance and try to be observant and open to the energy and the mood of the people, since I believed that this particular day would have a great impact on them. Quite so, the energy of the city felt like waves of wind that were moving to different directions. The people looked more vivid, more talkative, as if they were inexplicable alert. Through the window of the tram I could see groups of people that seemed to be part of a demonstration that had been scattered or would start. The fighter-sun contributed in the boost of the people's feelings...

I went off the tram in front of the Valand Academy. Before I started walking up Avenyn I heard slogans and I guessed that a march was approaching, coming from Götaplatsen. When I turned into Avenyn the front line of the march was only 30 meters far from me and the demonstrators were moving towards me. I started taking pictures and a wealth of thoughts and feelings were demonstrating inside me: I thought of my country and the street protests taking place by that time -parallel universes. How much more anarchistic and noisy they were... I tried to understand the slogans the demonstrators were shouting and the ones written on the protest signs (a few words were enough for me to understand: capitalism, communism, racism, fascism, European union, freedom, rights...). I was impressed noticing that among the red flags and other flags relevant to the day there were also national flags from other countries held by people who were fighting for the rights of their nation. The day, which was dedicated to the fight of the workers for their labor rights, became a symbolic day for everyone who fights for their own rights...

It was a peaceful march; "tidied up" and "politically correct", I would say. No violence, no tension, no extremities, no passions...

I thought that in a while I would walk on the footprints of the demonstrators -invisible but still present on the street- expressing through my own silent walk similar fears, dudgeon, concerns... I could almost see myself in the crowd walking towards myself... The march passed by me -or, if you like, I passed by it - and I kept walking towards the Academy of Music and Drama in the wake of the sounds, the images, the feelings and the thoughts caused by my encounter with the protest march... After a few time I realized how quickly my thought had moved to the practical issues I needed to solve concerning my performance... During these moments I feel like a little child: nothing exists if I cannot see it any more. Though, in the children's case it is

Cassandra, in Greek mythology, the daughter of Priam, the last king of Troy, and his wife Hecuba. [...] According to Aeschylus's tragedy Agamemnon, Cassandra was loved by the god Apollo, who promised her the power of prophecy if she would comply with his desires. Cassandra accepted the proposal, received the gift, and then refused the god her favours. Apollo revenged himself by ordaining that her prophecies should never be believed. She accurately predicted such events as the fall of Troy and the death of Agamemnon, but her warnings went unheeded.

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/Cassandra-Greek-mythology>





a matter of brain evolution, but in the adult's case it is often a matter of brain "dissolution"...

Although my preparation for the performance lasted a bit more than an hour, it seemed to be a short break between the march of the demonstrators and my *march* with my friends and co-performers. I felt that I closed my eyes for some minutes and in the meantime everything and everybody was at the right place, ready for action.

When I opened my eyes I was in front of the entrance of the Art Museum, opposite to the Poseidon's statue, and I was binding a flag of the European Union and a Greek flag together -my two companions in this journey of my project. When I finished I looked at Avenyn Street, all the way down the route I was about to follow. I looked at the horizon; the people of the march had disappeared. I noticed by using my peripheral vision that my friend who would do the video documentation had already started shooting. I took a deep breath, I thanked the sun which kept fighting to keep me company and I started.

I was looking only straight ahead, above my stretched arms that were holding the flags. I wore no glasses and no contact lenses and I felt that the tips of my fingers were the last thing I could clearly see. Above that point I could only see blurry colors and shapes of people and things. I had a normal walking rhythm which from time to time seemed to be either slower or faster - and that was very much related to what was happening around me or what I was feeling. And I'm using the word "feeling" because many times what I was seeing was less intense in comparison to what I was feeling. I felt the people's eyes looking or staring at me full of curiosity, surprise, indifference, understanding, empathy, dislike, annoyance... I was listening to some comments in a language that although I couldn't understand, I could still *sense* it... At different spots of the route my friends interrupted my walking and poured red color on my white clothes while they were giving me strength and courage to keep walking. They *were breaking* my silence and they were providing me with some seconds in a world that was safe and beautiful, a world of solidarity.

At the halfway point of my route I noticed that the sun had hidden behind some grey clouds that covered me and the horizon with their shadow. After a while I felt the first drops of rain on my face. I was hell-bent on walking as if the rain was what I needed to fight against. The rhythm of the pedestrians' walking changed when the rain drops touched them, too. After a few minutes the last beams *were drowned* into the water of the rain and I was feeling that, step by step, not only my clothes but also my soul was getting wet... I felt lonely and at the same time I thought that it was meaningless to protest or to perform in front of an invisible audience, while I was watching the streets getting empty....

Some of my friends tried to protect themselves for a while entering the entrance of a building and I felt unreasonably lonely, while the message of





my performance *was drowning* into rain water of futility. I felt my arms being tired and in pain. And then, I thought for a moment, for a very tiny moment, to stop. And right after I got angry with myself and I considered what I would do if I needed to carry someone alone who needed help in the rain... That exaggerated thought worked! Some positive and encouraging thoughts followed: I was performing for my friends and partners who were standing by me under the rain willing to follow me till the end of my route. I was performing and sending my message to the one and only pedestrian who stopped at the tram station to wait. I was performing and communicating with those few passengers in the tram which turned in front of me; those few passengers who looked outside the blurry window and saw us. We were performing and sending the message that everyday life is not something we are given or something we should take for granted, but something we can make or change even by walking under the rain for a common idea, a common purpose; for our belief in the power of solidarity. While having these thoughts the hail found me some meters far from the end of our route. I felt it on my face like small needles...

At our last stop in front of the Opera House the red color that my friends poured on me couldn't spoil my clothes anymore -the severe storm almost washed it off... Although I thought that by that time we would be the only people there, I saw a group of young people right in front of the entrance of the Opera House. They seemed to be doing something for fun, some kind of game or roleplay. However, my very first impression was that they had been waiting for us... That impression made me so happy, although I knew that it couldn't be true. I went close to the sea water and I symbolically rinsed off the flags into the sea as I had done in my first performance in Thessaloniki, "my city", half a year ago. I felt that that action connected Thessaloniki with Gothenburg in the same way as I had felt some hours ago when I met the demonstration. Time stopped being linear when the sea salt of Greece got mixed with sea salt of Sweden; the past and the present seemed to merge and I was experiencing the world being in a different time-dimension. And I cried... But the rain drops were stronger than my tears and washed them off.

We were all touched, wet and cold. We went to protect ourselves from the storm under the shelter of the entrance of the Opera House where the young people were. Only when we arrived there we realized that they were watching a friend of theirs playing theatre. Eventually, it was a day "playing in the rain" - but still, there was so much sunshine... so much sunshine...



Photos by
George Yokotos

JUNE 2015



Aunt Maritsa used to say... 15.6.15

It was noon. A warm and silent summer. I was sitting with aunt Maritsa on the balcony and we made silence feel even bigger.

- What is it with you?, she asked me.

- Aunt Maritsa, have you ever felt an inexplicable sorrow?

She didn't answer.

- Have you?, I insisted.

- Everything is passing, my child. Even the things that are inexplicable.

- Ok, but don't you first need to give an explanation about them in order to overcome them?

- When you are about to explain something, usually it has already passed. The explanation is the destination, the feelings are the journey and logic is the vehicle. But, you know, all these are getting often confused and you are found to travel using explanations or feelings as vehicle and having logic as your destination... and more of this kind of combinations....

- But still, you haven't answer my question: have you ever felt an inexplicable sorrow?

- You know the answer, but you are expecting the explanation...

By then, I realized that silence was the only choice.



July 2015



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Markets | Sun Jul 5, 2015 7:13pm EDT Related: WORLD, GREECE

Greeks defy Europe with overwhelming referendum 'No'

ATHENS | BY LEFTERIS PAPADIMAS AND RENEE MALTEZOU

PHOTOS OF THE DAY

Our top photos from the last 24 hours. Slideshow »

Afghan forces on duty

Greeks overwhelmingly rejected conditions of a rescue package from creditors on Sunday, throwing the future of the country's euro zone membership into further doubt and deepening a standoff with lenders.

Stunned European leaders called a summit for Tuesday to discuss their next move after the surprisingly strong victory by the 'No' camp defied opinion polls that had predicted a tight contest.

The euro currency and stock prices in Asia fell sharply in early trade, although dealers emphasized that markets were orderly, with no signs of financial strain. European stock and bond markets were expected to take a hit when they open for trading later on Monday.

In Athens, thousands of jubilant Greeks waving flags and bursting fire crackers poured into the city's central square as official figures showed 61 percent of Greeks had rejected a deal that would have imposed more austerity measures on an already ravaged economy.

"You made a very brave choice," Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said in a televised address. "The mandate you gave me is not the mandate of a rupture with Europe, but a mandate to strengthen our negotiating position to seek a viable solution."

The vote leaves Greece in uncharted waters: risking a banking collapse that could force it out of the euro.



<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece-idUSKBN0P40EO20150705>

August 2015



Poetry ex Machina/27.8.15, 21.00//VD

"It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind"

Sarah Kane (4.48 Psychosis)

One night he came again.
He always came when I didn't expect him.
On a bench, at a station of intercity buses,
I found him sitting
without a ticket
but still waiting
with all his body,
with all his soul,
so intensively
that I could almost hear him saying
"I'm waiting...".
-Jacob, I said, as if his name was a greeting.
He didn't react,
He remained seated at the corner of his mind.
-Jacob, I said almost begging,
what are you waiting for?
-Deus ex Machina, he replied.
I looked at the spot where his gaze was pointing to.
Nobody.
I spoke my thought out loud.
-Don't expect anyone else to come and save you, Jacob.
My God, how much despair is hidden
behind our realism...

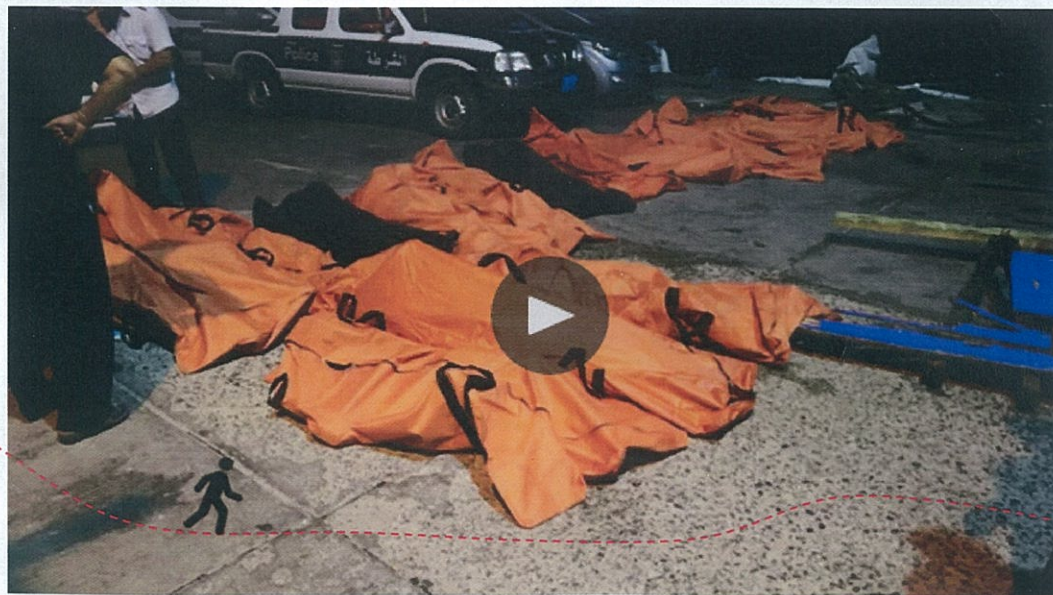
-I'm not waiting for anyone else.
I'm waiting for myself.

He came again that night.
Jacob ex Machina.
And I was left waiting
for myself.



Migrant crisis: up to 200 dead after boat carrying refugees sinks off Libya

Around 40 bodies found on boat and another 160 floating in sea about a kilometre from Zuwara, a port in western Libya



Up to 200 bodies have been discovered off the coast of one of Libya's main people-smuggling hubs, in the latest tragedy of the European migration crisis.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/27/at-least-30-dead-after-boat-carrying-migrants-sinks-in-mediterranean>

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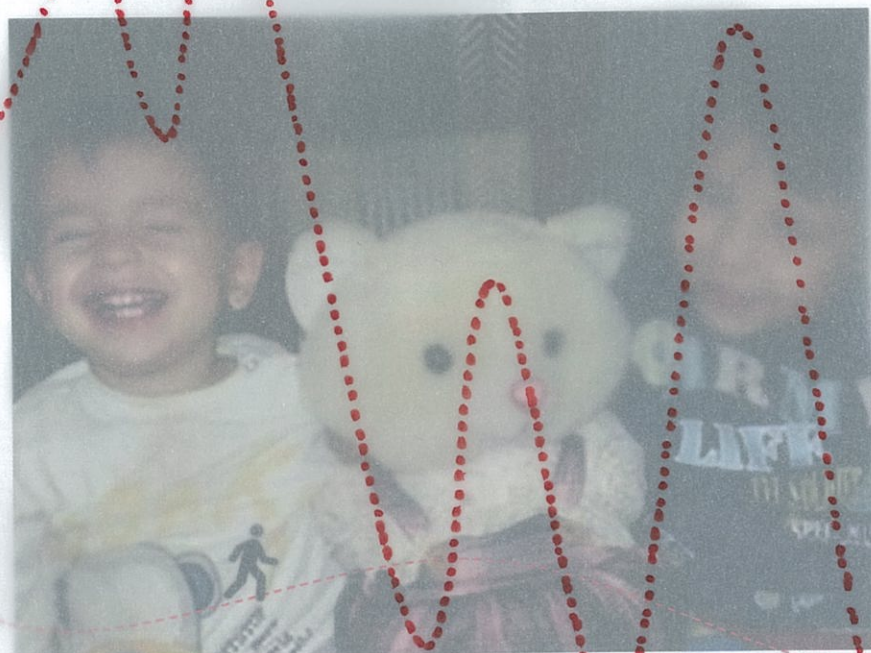
for myself.

September 2015

Aylan Kurdi's story: How a small Syrian child came to be washed up on a beach in Turkey

Adam Withnall @adamwithnall, Thursday 3 September 2015

More has emerged about the death of three-year-old Aylan, pictured here smiling with his brother, whose story has given a voice to the refugee crisis



Aylan Kurdi (left) and his older brother, Ghalib, died when their dinghy sank off the coast of Turkey Qattouby/Twitter

Surviving family members of Aylan Kurdi have revealed how the Syrian three-year-old came to be washed up dead on a beach in Turkey on Wednesday morning.

Aylan's distraught father, Abdullah Kurdi, tried and failed to hold on to his wife and two sons after their boat to the Greek island of Kos capsized. He has reportedly now said his only wish is to return their bodies to their home town of Kobani and then "be buried alongside them".

The family had been making the treacherous journey across Turkey to Europe in the hope of joining Abdullah's sister, Teema Kurdi, a hairdresser who has lived in Vancouver, Canada for more than 20 years.

The Independent has taken the decision to publish the image, which some may find offensive, lower down in this article because among the often glib words about the "ongoing migrant crisis", it is all too easy to forget the reality of the desperate situation facing many refugees.

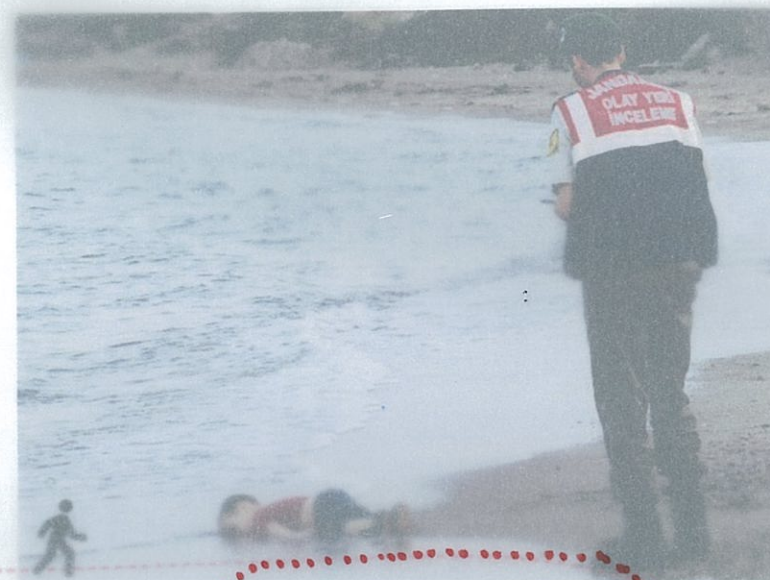
Speaking to the National Post's Terry Glavin, Ms Kurdi said she had learned of Aylan's death, as well as that of his brother Galip and mother Rihan, at 5am on Wednesday morning. The images of Aylan emerged in Turkish media at around midday, and have since sparked international outrage over the refugee crisis.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/aylan-kurdi-s-story-how-a-small-syrian-child-came-to-be-washed-up-on-a-beach-in-turkey-10484588.html>

Glavin told BBC Radio 5 live on Thursday that Ms Kurdi had heard from family members about Abdullah's desperate battle to save his family in the sea.

"There's a terrible story he told about swimming from one to the other, finding one [son] who seemed to be alright and then going to another, finding him drowned... and then going back to the first boy and finding him drowned," he said.

"He made it, but his wife didn't."



A young Syrian boy, who drowned in his family's attempt to reach Greece from Turkey, lies in the surf near Bodrum, Turkey

Jenan Moussa, a journalist with Dubai's Al Aan TV, said she had confirmed with sources in Kobani that the Kurdish family hailed from the recently-embattled Syrian city.

She said Abdullah was a barber originally from Damascus, who fled from Kobani to Turkey but "dreamed of a future in Canada" for his family.

Abdullah paid €4000 (£2900) for his family to get on a 5m-long dinghy from Bodrum to Greece. He borrowed money. This was not their first attempt to get to Greece.

"When in the dinghy, the sea got rough. Turkish smuggler abandoned boat, left passengers struggling. Boat capsized after one hour.

"After it capsized, the family clung to the boat. Mr Abdullah tried to hold his two children and wife with his arm, but one by one they were washed away by waves."

According to Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency, police have detained four suspected human traffickers one day after the three members of the Kurdi family and nine other refugees died in the short Aegean straight between Turkey and Kos.

Officers said the men were detained on a beach on Turkey's Bodrum peninsula and, according to Anadolu, they were suspected of acting as intermediaries for illegal crossings.

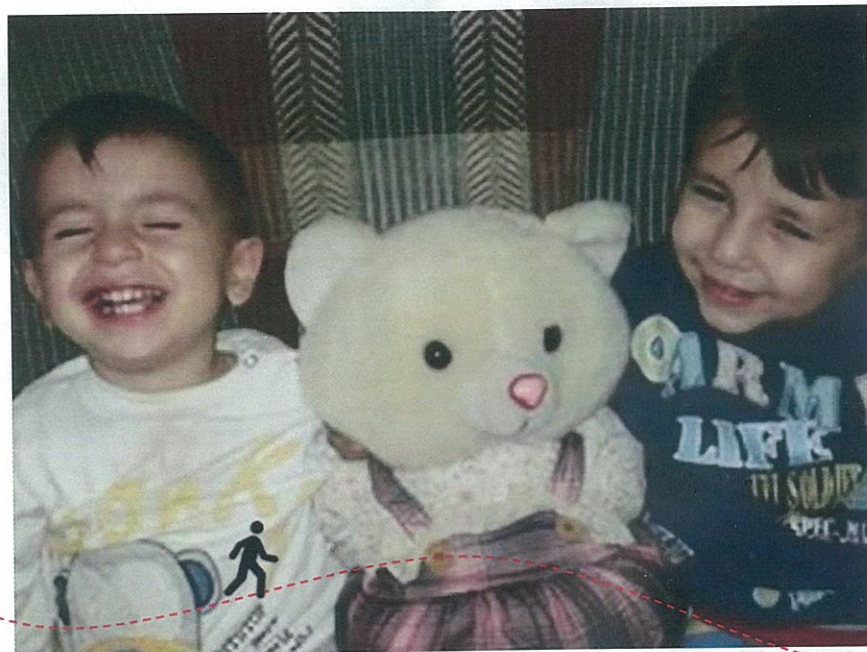
Three other children drowned in the same crossings as Aylan and his family, while seven people were rescued and two reached the shore in life jackets.

Thousands are making the same journey from Turkey to Greece's easternmost islands each day. It is considered one of the safest routes to Europe and beyond.

Aylan Kurdi's story: How a small Syrian child came to be washed up on a beach in Turkey

Adam Withnall @adamwithnall, Thursday 3 September 2015

More has emerged about the death of three-year-old Aylan, pictured here smiling with his brother, whose story has given a face to the refugee crisis



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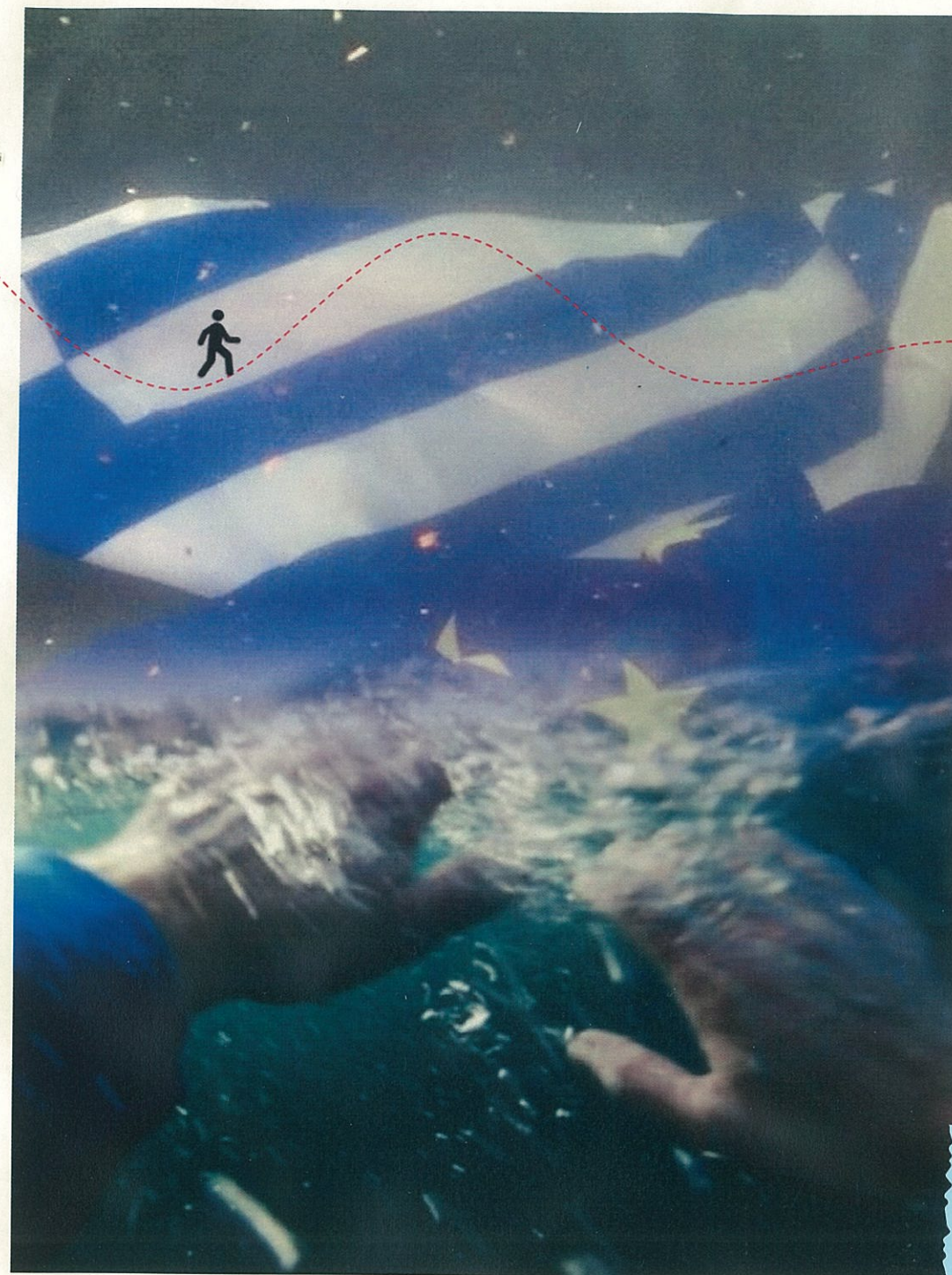
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Thousands are making the same journey from Turkey to Greece's easternmost islands each day. It is considered one of the safest routes to Europe and beyond.

As early as 1916, Wittgenstein states that ethics and aesthetics are one, that only through aesthetics and art can what is truly important in human life be shown.

B. R. Tilghman, *Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Aesthetics: The View from Eternity*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991, back cover.

DRown
To act or not to act: a live action as a reaction



Aylan Kurdi's death recreated by 30 people dressed as Syrian boy on Moroccan beach



A sand sculpture replicating the harrowing pictures has now been created on Puri beach in eastern India by famous artist Sudarsan Pattnaik.

DRown - Photo collage
 (poster for the live action DRown)

Original photos by:
 Smaro Platioti (flags)
 thevirtualtravelers.com (drowned man)
 Editing: Valentina Paraskevaidou



A huge graffiti artwork of toddler Aylan Kurdi by Frankfurt artists Justus Becker and Oguz Sen on a wall on the banks of river Main near the headquarters of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt



The sculpture entitled 'Until the Sea Shall Him Free', created by Pekka Jylhä (pictured)

Aylan
 [...] Giovanni Bonato, professor of music composition at the conservatory in Padua, composed the piece Aylan. [...] The idea of this piece arises from a real tragedy, the one of Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian four-year-old child, drowned while fleeing to Europe with his family. The picture of his little body, dumped on the strand, became viral on the Internet and travelled around the world at gigabyte speed. Aylan became the icon of the human tragedy of refugees who flee from war and from Daesh and that find often their deaths during their long way to European safety. Aylan in this orchestral piece is a symbol, he's the one who represents all the innocent victims of the overwhelming losses across our seas. The photo raised in him strong and contrasting feelings; first of all those of anger and compassion. To him, as a parent, seeing the image of that little body was as though it was the body of his son, dead because of the cruelty of warmongers. When he was asked to write the piece in occasion of Erasmus+ in Thiene, he wanted to compose it with the purpose of having everyone grow humanly and making people reflect upon this calamity.

<http://www.findyourwaythroughart.eu/thiene/aylan-for-every-innocent-victim/>

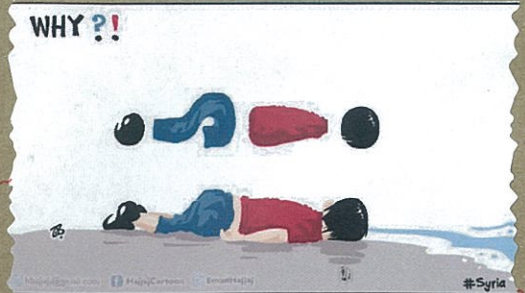


(Art)activists place the first rescue platform, duded Aylan, in the Med

The drowning of a child and the media circus that surrounded his death caused the hundreds of the refugees' drownings happening at the Greek-Turkish borders to come to prominence. The picture of little Aylan travelled all over the world and the child became a symbol. Lots of artists and activists used this symbol and the featured picture of the boy's lifeless body in order to create new images through which they wanted to communicate their own thoughts and raise awareness of the general situation.



Khalid Albaih (Soudan)



Emad Hajjaj (Jordan)



Jeremy Nell (South Africa)

Je me dis qu'on pourrait croire qu'il dort, qu'il va s'éveiller, qu'il est vivant, que la mer ne peut pas rejeter comme ça un enfant si jeune, j'imagine mon enfant à sa place, j'ai mal au cœur, j'ai mal au lit, je n'arrive pas à enlever cette image de ma tête. C'est l'image de la honte, celle qui nous dit qu'il est temps d'arrêter de PEURNER LES YEUX.

Mathou (France)

Ruben L. Oppheimer (The Netherlands)

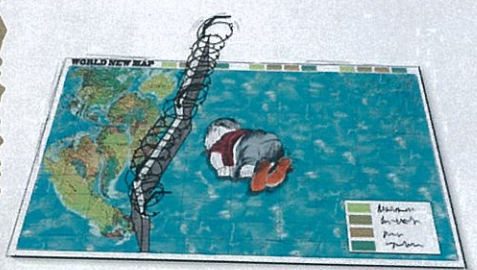


Murat Sayin (Turkey)

El Chico Triste (Spain)



Rafat AlKhateeb (Jordan)



Wissam Al Jazairy (Syria)



Julio Rey (Spain)



Yaser Ahmad (Syria)



Louison (France)



Satish Acharya (India)

Aimantoon (Saudi Arabia)



Just as the word "art" underwent significant changes in meaning, starting out as a synonym for "craft" or "skill" and ending up standing for the fine arts, so the notion of beauty underwent rather remarkable transformations. We are told that Plato's term *to kalon*, for which "beauty" is probably a mistranslation, seems to mean something like goodness in general or that which is to be desired and sought after. It is that attracts the soul to finer things. It is to be distinguished from the visual attractiveness of appearances. It is an idea that has far greater connection with intellectual and moral striving than with the arts.

B. R. Tilghman, *Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Aesthetics: The View from Eternity*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 22.

With regard to the power of art to configure the ethics (a word that according to Aristoteles is etymologically related to ethos, that is to the habit of people), it is worth mentioning the British poet Shelley who claimed that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" during exactly the same time period when the German philosopher Schopenhauer acknowledged that "music is the melody whose text is the world". The artistic creation undeniably offers to people role models, models of perceiving the world according to the point of view and the will of each individual artist. The individual reality or experience of an artist is communicated to the audience and this is how the personalized aesthetical experience of a creator is transformed into a social experience [...]

Of course, an artistic work doesn't always reflect the reality as it is. As I mentioned above the personal subjective angle of the creator on reality resides in every artistic work.

From the article *The intrusion of the ethical value in aesthetics* by Eirini Spyridaki (translated by Valentina Paraskevaidou)

<http://www.artmag.gr/articles/art-thinking/item/1320-about-art>

There were many people especially on the social media that regarded both the publishing of the picture and the relevant artistic or activist actions as truly immoral. A characteristic example is the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei who posed as Aylan on the Greek island of Lesbos; a photograph of Ai captured by India Today magazine was the toast of the India Art Fair at an exhibition called "The Artists". Ai Weiwei who has made the refugee crisis a major theme in his works said that his image should serve to raise awareness of the refugees' plight. The image drew both praise and criticism on social media; some people claimed that his reenactment of the child's death "was disrespecting Aylan Kurdi" and some others that Ai did it in order to flourish his career. The discourse about the ethics of using such a theme in an artistic context was something that deeply preoccupied me, when I impulsively felt the need to present a live action as part of my project firmly related to Aylan as a symbol.

Despite the dilemmas I had I didn't consider my need to mourn, to react and to share my thoughts and feelings through my art unethical and the occasional negative reactions, criticism or misinterpretations about my action didn't eventually prevent me from doing it. I have always believed that artists have to act, *to do*, and take the responsibility of their actions rather than stay silent and passive using as an alibi the brickbats or the socially constructed morality that divides art in categories such as good or bad, ethical and unethical, political correct and incorrect etc. In my opinion talking about death is similar to talking about life and the discourse about ethics that is a vicious circle has a meaning only if it contributes in the evolution -that is the *change* of humanity for the good- which historically and practically means to make people act. Accordingly, I decided to proceed in the creation of a new collective live action and transform my experience of the boy's drowning into an artistic re-action.

For me *Drown* is the most time-specific of all my live actions and that is why there was a meaning to be presented only during that specific time period because of its topical subject (I refer to the perished child and not to the refugees' drownings that at the moment that I am writing are unfortunately still topical) and I didn't repeat it afterwards in Sweden. It was presented only once in Greece, on the 13th of September 2015, ten days after the death of the little boy.



Chinese artist Ai Weiwei imitating the lifeless body of Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi on the Greek Island of Lesbos. (Rohit Chawla for India Today)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/01/30/chinese-artist-ai-weiwei-poses-as-a-drowned-syrian-refugee-toddler/?postshare=89614541817tid67212&=ss_tw

"Ai Weiwei's Aylan Kurdi image is crude, thoughtless and egotistical"

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/02/ai-weiweis-aylan-kurdi-image-is-crude-thoughtless-and-egotistical/>

"Ai Weiwei Hits a New Low by Crassly Recreating Photo of Drowned Syrian Toddler"

<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/ai-weiwei-reenactment-drowned-syrian-toddler-417275>

I want to make the wholly unoriginal claim that art is and ought to be something important to us in ways that quite transcend recreation and cosmetics. I do not intend this remark to be taken as a call to artists to paint pictures that are more relevant to our life or for them to become propagandists or ideologues on behalf of popular taste and prejudice, for I am not so much interested in the social role of art as I am in what might be called the ethical role of art, that is in the role it can have in the life of an individual apart from public trends and trendiness -not that these two things are altogether distinct. I intend it rather as a suggestion that we take another look at our thinking about art, as a way of gaining a better understanding of how it is that art does and can enter into our lives.

B. R. Tilghman, *Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Aesthetics: The View from Eternity*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991, p.6.



Photos by Aleka Tsirogi

The Bride of Thermaicus... DRown

In *DRown* the Bride of Thermaicus followed a seaside route similar to her first walk -space and our routine may remain the same, but time and circumstances change and consequently change our experience of space, too. That time I wanted her walk to be more ritualistic having as a reference different rituals related to funerary ceremonies such as the Easter epitaph of the Orthodox Church. At the same time I wanted the walk to symbolize the journey of life and death not only of the perished boy but also of the people who flee away from their country and they are obliged even to swim in order to reach a new land. Thus, the participants had a double role representing two different situations that all people could possibly experience: on one hand to be relatives and friends of people who lost their life during their journey and on the other hand to be the travelers themselves.

I and two students of mine carried a red T-shirt, a blue pair of trousers and a pair of brown shoes similar to the ones Aylan was wearing when he was found drowned. Along our walk some other students of mine stopped our walking by standing in front of us and threw water on us - a symbolism of the refugees' struggle against the waves and the obstacles that in general have been facing during their emigration including the countries refugee policies. Similarly to my previous performances I used the Greek and the European flags which I carried together with the child t-Shirt. In *DRown* the two flags represented the Greek-European borders where hundreds of drownings have been happening as well as the co-responsibility of Greece and Europe for these deaths.



At the end of the walk I lied down on the ground at the edge of the waterfront adapting the body position of the drowned boy as shown in the published pictures. The co-performers put the clothes of the child on the back side of my body: *his* T-shirt on my back and *his* pair of trousers on mine. My intention was again to express the double role of each us: we all carry the responsibility of the child's death on our shoulders but we could also be in the shoes of this child, drowned in the surf of an unknown sea. On the ground in front of me we placed the flags and on top of them the child shoes: a symbolic image of the borders that many refugees don't succeed to cross and a metaphor of the drowning of Greece and Europe in the wild sea of humanistic Crisis.



Photo by Aleka Tsirogi



Photo by Aleka Tsirogi

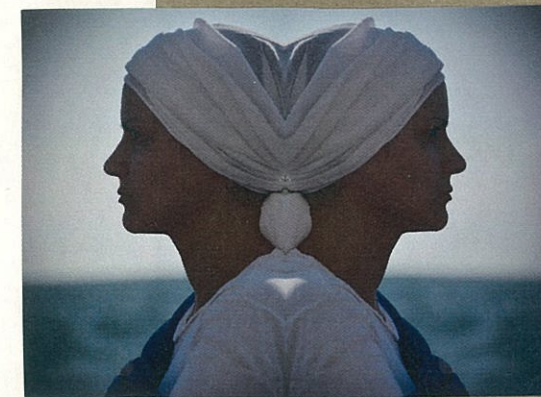


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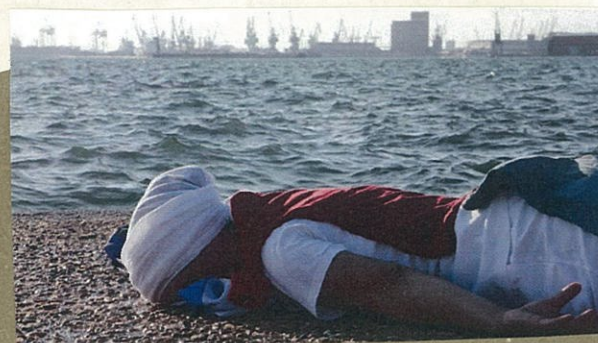



Photo by Apostolos Karoulas

A Conversation about DRown

In October 2015 I was interviewed again by the filmmaker Apostolos Karoulas for the needs of his documentary film "The Bride of Thermaicus Project" 

- Tell us few words about DRown... What was your source of inspiration?

Drown is part of my project "the Bride of Thermaicus". Its topic was one of the topics that were already chosen to be performed. It had to do with immigration. Of course, some months ago the subject "European Union and immigration" was mainly related to the immigration inside Europe, the movement of people from European countries like Greece that have serious financial problems towards other countries which are believed to be wealthier. But reality preempted us and now EU and Greece are facing the problem of immigration in a different way by receiving immigrants coming from non-European countries. It was something that I couldn't let go. Accordingly, the performance focused on the drownings that happened and unfortunately are still happening across the European-Greek borders.

I used the image of the child that became widespread on TV and in the media of social networking as a symbol. Still the performance refers to all the drownings and to the general situation that creates a feeling of choking, provided that water is a characteristic element of the project, since the concept is that water unites us, that is all the European countries. So, we are all swimming into the same "pool", but we are not alone. There are many other people swimming and they can't make it. The responsibility of the EU, the responsibility of Greece for all these incidents taking place across our borders was a concern that I wanted to address through my performance. That is why it was not only about the drownings themselves but additionally about our responsibility for these drownings. Immigration is a subject that... I think that it is something intertemporal. But unfortunately apart from intertemporal it has been always topical, too. It (the performance) was something that spontaneously came up. This specific performance was organized within one week. Because I couldn't help not talking about it. I couldn't exclude this situation we've been experiencing over the past months in Greece and in Europe in general from the project.

- In a recent past Greece received lots of Greek refugees coming from Turkey. Was it something that you also considered or influenced your decision to talk about this forced flee of people to another land?


The connection between the immigrants-refugees from Syria and the Greek refugees-immigrants during the years of the "Asia Minor Catastrophe" was something that for sure crossed my mind, provided that I come from a refugees' generation from Pontos (Northeastern Turkey). I couldn't help not being influenced, not considering the past of my own ancestors and what happened. Once, I found two very interesting pictures placed one next to each other showing refugees that were going to Smyrna, I'm sorry, I meant to Syria, and people from Syria that are coming to Greece now. History repeats

Asia Minor Catastrophe (Disaster) is the name Greeks use for the defeat of the Greek Army in 1922 in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) - also known as the Asia Minor Expedition - and the subsequent expulsion of Greek presence from Asia Minor.

http://wiki.phantis.com/index.php/Asia_Minor_Disaster

itself even towards a different direction. The same problems both then and now. Drownings at that time, drownings at present time. Starvation at that time, starvation at the present time. At that time the Great Powers were indifferent or detached, same things now. People that have been voluntarily and selflessly helping not only from Greece... But there is no institutional policy by the official states in order to help these people. The same thing happened by that time. Hence, the comparison and the associations were inevitable.

- In both your first live action and DRown you chose to follow the same route, the sea site boulevard. Can you mention a striking difference you noticed between these two performances concerning the people-spectators?

During the second performance there were definitely fewer people (spectators) than during the first one. Approaching people when you are in a theatre that is when you want the audience to come, is completely different from going out on the street. Out there there're many imponderable factors. Of course, the more people watch something the greater the communication is and more people get the message. An artist always wants to address it to as many people as possible. It felt different not only due to fewer people but also because the circumstances were different. Even these few people had a completely different reaction. It was a different act and the people themselves live in a different time period compared to December 2014. 

- Tell us your opinion about the documentation of your live actions and the use of it in your own practice?

Concerning the documentation of the performance firstly it started because it was necessary for my archive in order to be able to show my work in terms of my Master program. Along the way, though, I was very lucky because I found people that believe in this project and they want to create something new out of it in the context of their art, which is cinema and video, and take the project a step further. Whether we like it or not, the image and the video are already part of our everyday life and they are one of the basic means to communicate something you do. A performance is finished when the performer stops, but the idea of it can be developed either in the spectators' mind or through a picture or a video. Raising the awareness, sharing, aiming to speak out about things happening to us can be achieved also by using a camera. After so many collaborations with people that have been dealing with the documentation of the performance I've been doing together with my colleagues, all these people have become an organic part of the acts and this could be further developed and we may create a new genre, live art performance video. It would be very interesting. It is something that is completely different. It doesn't eliminate the here-and-now of the live art. It makes it something else and communicates it to more people.

October 2015



- **Can you share with us a special moment you experienced during your performance?**

A very intense moment of the performance was at the end of it. The moment I had lied down, the co-performers put the child's clothes on my back and they poured water. And while I'm facing down I feel the water flowing from my feet towards my head and I feel the water entering my nostrils. And by that moment I realize and I say to myself: oh, this is how you get drown. It was a terrifying moment.

- **What was the reaction of the spectators? Could you pick out some of their reactions?**

There were many and different reactions from the people. There were many people that recognized the symbolism and they commented "oh, yes, it is for Aylan, the child that was drown". There were people that got moved and talked to me after the performance. A child got worried that something happened to me. I would prefer that more people were worried. I mean to be more sensitized when something bad takes place around us. But the child is innocent enough to conceive what happened as something real and to get worried. I don't mean that people need to get scared. I mean to become more sensitive when something happens to people next to us.

- **Your project looks more like a work-in-progress. Do you intend to continue it even after completing your Master studies?**

The more I deal with the project, the more performances are done, the more I see that there is a need to be continued, not to be completed. Provided that I decided the performances I'm going to do will be collective, that it is including other people as well, and due to the fact that people positively respond and participate in this kind of acts, I think that for the moment my desire is for the Bride of Thermaicus to continue her journey not only in Greece but abroad as well.



To act...

For me *Drown* was more than a performance, more than a protest, more than a ritual. This work raised many questions inside me and caused interesting discussions (inside and outside academia) about the ethics of art and artists, the artists' role in the society and the political art. In my opinion all art is political in the sense that all art takes place in the public arena and engages with an already existing ideology. Yet there are times when art becomes *dangerously* political for both the artist and the viewers who engage with that art. This happens often because of the conflict between the artist and the moral principles of the society or of a part of it. So, since this conflict seems to be an inevitable risk that lots of artists need to take -including me- I feel more and more the need my live actions to *press* "for human rather than political" responses as Ai Weiwei mentions in an interview referring to today's artists. This realization wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't taken the risk to act and go beyond both my personal ethics and the social morality and stereotypes. So, my answer to the question "to act or not to act?" is definitely positive...



Thessaloniki

I took this picture on a street of the city center.

18.10.15//02.00

One day we may learn
that there is
no place rainier
than the eyes of those who were betrayed,
no country foreigner
than the remembrance of those who remained silent,
no moment longer
than waiting,
no truth more unreachable
than the love we asked for.



I just want to be safe

"I just want to be safe"

This message was written on the wall of a tunnel in Gothenburg. A friend of mine, who knows that I have been collecting pictures with messages on city walls, sent it to me in October 2015. I was very happy because this kind of graffiti is rare in Gothenburg and I found the message touching and strongly related to the situation we have been experience in Europe.

Photo by Elpida Grammatikopoulou

WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS // WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS

2 months before the final live action in Thessaloniki...

I'm in Greece. I teach classes, I participate in performances while trying to organize the final performance of my project in Thessaloniki and in Sweden. At the beginning of the year I had decided that the theme of the final live action would be emigration which was one of the most serious repercussions of the Crisis in Greece and in Europe in general. Unfortunately, the events over the last months have made the above issue even more of a topic of interest.

I had decided right from the start that:

- This live action would be much more meaningful and dynamic, if I could achieve the participation of as many people as possible. First of all, the collectiveness that is one of the main aim of my work would be more profound both to the participants and the spectators if the number of people being involved was big. Especially in a crowded city center it is important to enlarge the stimulus one wants to give in order to make it noticeable. Additionally, I wanted this particular live action to look like an artistic demonstration, a sort of symbolic riot, and to create food for thought which is related to the masses of immigrants but also refugees that nowadays have been moving massively towards Europe.

- The objects-symbols I would use would be different kinds of luggage and passports. These two objects are the ones that come first in my mind when I think of emigration. A suitcase has always been a strong symbol of travelling and I, myself, have experience my emigration as a procedure of *wrapping up* my life and fitting it into a suitcase. Of course, the passport is also a very commonly recognizable object which is strongly related to the discourse about national identities, borders and free movement of people as well as the amount on which we depend on such documents in order to survive in the modern world. Furthermore, the actual situation we have been experiencing in Greece with the waves of refugees arriving every day provided me with images that were directly connected with these two objects that represent fleeing and the *ticket* to the Promised Land.

I wanted all the participants to carry a piece of luggage that would sport the motto: WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS - WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS.

- My luggage would be the two flags I have always used in my live actions, the Greek and the European one. Throughout my project I haven't changed these two props that have been used in different ways as a representation of the Greek and the European Crisis and the relevant conflicts, since these issues are in the spotlight. At the same time flags seem to have become a powerful and featured symbol recently as a result of the recent political events which have caused a great Crisis concerning the national identities, too. Moreover, it has always been very important to me to have something

Of course, some months ago the subject "European Union and immigration" was mainly related to the immigration inside Europe, the movement of people from European countries like Greece that have serious financial problems towards other countries which are believed to be wealthier. But reality preempted us and now EU and Greece are facing the problem of immigration in a different way by receiving immigrants coming from non-European countries. It was something that I couldn't let it go.

(Valentina Paraskevaidou, excerpt from an interview from the documentary "The Bride of Thermaicus", October 2015)



Drohobycz, Poland
Jews Being Rounded up before their Deportation

I could say that the motto "WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS - WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS" was mostly used as a "performative sentence" as J. L. Austin describes it in the book "HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS"

"[...] all will have, as it happens, humdrum verbs in the first person singular present indicative active. Utterances can be found, satisfying these conditions, yet such that

A. they do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'; and

B. the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as saying something," and

"[...] to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it."

J.L. Austin, HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp.5-6.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO. North Kivu, Kibumba. 2008. Over 25, 000 people carry their belongings as they flee one of the main refugee camps due to fighting on Monday, Oct. 27, 2008 near Kibumba in eastern Congo.



An internally displaced Congolese woman carries her belongings as she enters a United Nations base in Monigi, near Goma, seeking shelter after being forced to flee

Music is a world within itself
With a language we all understand

With an equal opportunity
For all to sing, dance and clap their hands
But just because a record has a groove
Don't make it in the groove
But you can tell right away at letter A
When the people start to move

They can feel it all over
They can feel it all over people
They can feel it all over
They can feel it all over people

(from the song "Sir Duke" by Stevie Wonder)

My choice to involve music in my silent walk was a paradox even for me and it was questioned by my supervisors, classmates and artists friends. I could say that it was more an impulsive desire based on the doubtful idea that music is a global language that I could use in order to communicate with a vaster audience in a more immediate and comprehensive way. I also thought that sound and music can reach the people that are at some distance from the act, attract their attention and become a call/invitation to the event. But basically, I was more concerned with how I could emotionally involve the spectators within the limited time of our meeting on the street. I believed that a song would have this emotional impact I aimed for and from my previous experience in using music in my work I already had an empirical proof of how effectively music can influence the audience by reinforcing the emotional interaction and arousal of the spectators.

Of course, there is a great discourse if music is or not a global language and in which terms as well as the emotional impact of it. In a brief research I did I found very interesting the Theory of Musical Equilibration which gave to my instinctive artistic choice some scientific validity...

The link between music and emotions is more of an issue than ever before, and music research is increasingly focusing on understanding the complex characteristics of this interaction. After all, for a long time the fact that music has an emotional impact upon us was one of the greatest of enigmas, since fundamentally it only consists of inanimate frequencies. This is a topic something we do not usually think about in everyday life, and that is why an aura of the indescribable still hovers around music. The question as to how and why music can convey feelings seems to have a certain taboo to it – and interestingly enough, this is the case among musicians as well.

Although people like to describe music as an international language, science has still not been able to provide an explanation that deconstructs the nature of this language. For decades, it left the task of decrypting this enigma to a small group of people: music psychologists. Despite being well-equipped with statistics software and calculators, music psychologists to date have not had any more success than the widely-cited brain research of recent decades when it comes to resolving the question about why music can stimulate an emotional response.

The Theory of Musical Equilibration (known in the original German as the Strebetendenz Theorie) is the first to create a psychological paradigm which explains the emotional effects of music. It breaks down musical sequences into one of their most essential components – harmony – and directly uses this material as the basis of its argumentation. Harmony is essentially music in its concentrated form, since within a single moment it can reflect melodic and other musical processes which otherwise can only be depicted over a given interval of time. The psychology of harmony is the psychology of musical feelings.

Daniela and Bernd Willimek...Music and Emotions Research on the Theory of Musical Equilibration (die Strebetendenz-Theorie). Designed and conducted by Translated from the German by Laura Russell, 2013, p.6.

that connects my different live actions and creates a sense of continuity in my practice throughout my project. For me, the use of the same props-symbols in different contexts became a method which allowed me to explore how the perception of the same object or pattern changes in accordance with the change of time and space as well as the change of the context in general.

A strong image that popped up in my mind was the inspiration for using my flags in a different way than before: refugees carrying their belongings in bundles made with sheets. I decided that my luggage will be bundles made with sheets and wrapped with my two flags. My belongings will be hundreds of passports that will be revealed at the end of my walk, at my final destination, at the end of the Bride's new "journey"...

I had a strong feeling that my new silent walk needed a *voice* that would reinforce the power of silence through the juxtaposition of the reality of everyday routine (intense movement of people and strong sounds of the city) with the reality of the live action (silent and smooth movements of the performers and vocal "intermezzos" that would alternate with silence) -I wanted bodies but also voices of people to express bodily the emigration and the consequent separation. I wanted music and speech to merge with the movement of the performative bodies. I wanted this performance to be a juncture of people as well as a compound of arts as its core being the performativity and the liaison of the here-and-now of everyday life. I wanted a new reality to emerge inside and parallel the daily reality using substitutes of our routine transformed by the magic wand of art and creativity: movement, sound, speech, objects, colors, rhythm.

I discuss the idea of involving songs about emigration and separation in my live action with my friend, voice teacher and collaborator Grigoris. I am thinking of having four folk songs -one from Greece, one from another Mediterranean country, one from Middle Europe and one from the North. The concept is that these songs are four different destinations or starting points of a journey and represent different parts of Europe. I am thinking of having four "stations" during the performance: the first one at the very start, two stops during the walk and a final one when the group reaches the final destination. In every "station" a different song will be heard. I prefer the last song to be the Greek one since the first performance will take place in Greece. I propose the vocal ensemble "The Performers Quartet", which Grigoris is a member of, to participate in my performance and "become the voice" of it. My proposal is welcomed by all members of the ensemble with pleasure. My new performance acquires four beautiful voices...

Already during our first discussion Grigoris proposes the traditional Greek song "Alismono ke herome" (I forget and I'm delighted) for the finale. I get excited. I couldn't think of a better song -a kind of lament for the separation of a mother from her son who decides to emigrate.

We listen to the song together. I get moved and new images drift through my mind. The same night I decide how I want the final act of the performance to be. I close my eyes and I can hear the voices of my friends singing the lyrics of the song next to the sea. I can see the co-performers with their luggage standing in a big circle created by their bodies, a circle of separation, a circle of solidarity.



"WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE WITH YOU? UPROOTING|BORDERS"

The Folklore and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia-Thrace (Thessaloniki, Greece) presents Maria Belivani's exhibition-installation entitled "What would you take with you? Uprooting|Borders". The exhibition refers to the dramatic relocation and uprooting of people who shaped the identity of Thessaloniki during the 20th century, the people from Asia Minor, Pontus and Armenia, the Muslim population that left during the exchange of populations in 1922, and the Jews who were deported and killed in Nazi camps in 1943. The exhibition-installation connects the afflicted past of Thessaloniki with the current refugee crisis, it explores the mental and cultural vacuum left by uprooting people from one place to another and it records their route in history.

<http://www.lemmth.gr/periodikes>

http://www.artandlife.gr/en/-maria_mpelibani_ekthesi_egkatastasi_esy_ti_tha_epairnes_mazi_soy_kserizomos_borders



Nizar Ali Badr pebble stories

The Syrian sculptor, Nizar Ali Badr, recreates the events taking place in his country through pebbles – in the ancient city of Latakia he transmits the pain of the people who have to die, to suffer, to leave the country, but also there is a hope for the revival of the country, the return of human values – love, home, family.

<http://vsemart.com/nizar-ali-badr-pebble-stories/>

Alismono ke herome

(I forget and I'm delighted)

I forget and I'm delighted,
I remember and I'm sad.
I remembered of abroad
and I want to go.
- Come on, my mother, bake some good
crispbread.
In pain she pours water,
in tears she kneads
and while saying great complaints she
lights the stove.
- Oh, Stove, delay your warming up
and, you, Bread, don't get quickly
baked, so that the muleteer passes and
my son remains here.

(traditional Greek song from Hepiros)

According to the idea that all my live actions are *time-specific*, I decided that my "final" performance would take place on Sunday the 14th of December one hour before the sunset which would be on the same date and at the same time as my first live action, almost one year after it (the first one was performed on Sunday the 13th of December 2014, one hour before sunset, too). I was looking forward to seeing how much the change in the political and social situation during this past year would influence the reaction of the spectators towards a street event with clear political and social references to the present events.

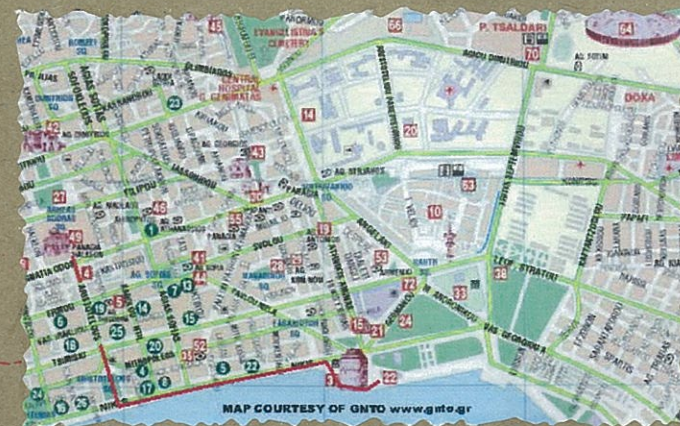


Apart from *time-specific* my live action could be also perceived as site-specific and the route of my walk plays an important role in the perception of the act. I decided that this time the route needed to be a bit different from the first one; the Bride needed to walk more into the city center along a central commercial street where there are lots of stores and cafes and people walk, shop and drink their coffee especially during weekends. I wanted the crowd of the performers to merge with the crowd of the pedestrians. I wanted to send my message and communicate with as many people as possible. Aristotelous Street, this big popular street of Thessaloniki, was the best choice since it is believed to be the heart of the city. Especially during December when the city is being prepared for the Christmas holidays, Aristotelous Street becomes a big attraction with all the different kinds of seasonal shops, amusement parks and decoration. So, I decided to start walking along this commercial street and continue my walk along the sea side avenue (in my first performance I had walked exclusively along the sea side avenue).

I chose to start my walk from the **Statue of Venizelos** and end up in front of the **White Tower** next to the sea. The significance of Venizelos in Modern Greek history and his vision of re-establishing a *Great Greece* made him a symbol that is very much connected in the nation's consciousness to hope for a better country. At the same time during the years of his political career Greece experienced the great wave of Greek refugees that fled from Turkey to Greece. I really wanted to involve this symbol in the general picture of my live action. Even his posture that gives a positive feeling that things are moving forward -a *gestus* of encouragement to the people to walk ahead- was aesthetically and contextually matching with the start of our walk. And of course, I couldn't think of a better ending point rather than the symbol of the city, the White Tower. Our walk would follow a route from our recent history to the ancient years and our roots.

The in-between stops were chosen to be in specific places along Aristotelous Street in order to create a spatial symmetry of four equally distributed distances along our route which would help me practically to handle my physical strain.

How will the city and the people be one year later? How will I feel after a year? What has changed around me? What has changed inside me?



Eleftherios Kyriakou Venizelos

(Greek: Ελευθέριος Κυριάκου Βενιζέλος; pronounced [elɛfθeriosciɾi'akuveni'zelos]; 23 August 1864 – 18 March 1936) was an eminent Greek leader of the Greek national liberation movement and a charismatic statesman of the early 20th century remembered for his promotion of liberal-democratic policies. As leader of the Liberal Party, he was elected several times as Prime Minister of Greece, serving from 1910 to 1920 and from 1928 to 1933. Venizelos had such profound influence on the internal and external affairs of Greece that he is credited with being "the maker of modern Greece", and is still widely known as the "Ethnarch".

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleftherios_Venizelos



The White Tower of Thessaloniki

(Ladino: Kuli Blanka, Greek: Λευκός Πύργος (Lefkos Pyrgos), Turkish: Beyaz Kule) is a monument and museum on the waterfront of the city of Thessaloniki. The present tower replaced an old Byzantine fortification, known to have been mentioned around the 12th century, that the Ottoman Empire reconstructed to fortify the city's harbor sometime after Sultan Murad II captured Thessaloniki in 1430. The tower became a notorious prison and scene of mass executions during the period of Ottoman rule. The White Tower was substantially remodeled and its exterior was whitewashed after Greece gained control of the city in 1912. It has been adopted as the symbol of the city.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Tower_of_Thessaloniki

At the same time period my friend and collaborator Yiorgos proposed that we collaborate which was an unexpected gift for me. Yiorgos is a member of the non-profit and voluntary youth organization *Citizens in Action (CiA)*. He and another friend of mine, Sotiris, would be the coordinators of a Festival about cultural diversity that CiA would organize in Thessaloniki, hosting forty volunteers from Greece, Spain, Poland and Italy. He believed that my project was very much related to the subject of the Festival and that I could present my work, run a workshop or involve the participants in any kind of interactive and experiential activity as part of the Festival. While discussing we realized that one of the days of the Festival concurred with the day of my performance. I proposed that the volunteers participate in my live action as co-performers and that it would be great to have all these people from different countries performing immigration and experience cultural diversity through a street live action. My friends and I got very excited with this idea and we thought it would be great to work together. This conjuncture was more than a gift; it was an omen for an unforgettable experience...

Although the number of the volunteers who would participate in my live action was already satisfactory, I still wanted to invite friends, students and collaborators as I did before. Merging foreigners and locals in order to create a new community that would perform together and collaborate for a common artistic purpose was a challenge and one of the basic aims of my artistic practice. I put an announcement in different facebook groups inviting old and new students of mine as well as the members of the Artists Group *SourLiBooM*. The response was moving... Ten more people joined the group of the walkers...

One more thing to be arranged was the video documentation of the performance. A long time colleague of mine, Tolis, who had been responsible for the video documentation of my performances in Greece was already informed about my last live action by the end of the summer and he was more than willing to do it. We discussed the *what, how, where and when* of the new performance. We remembered our previous experiences, we started brainstorming and planning, dreaming again and looking forward to a new exciting experience... We both agreed on the fact that he and the people behind the cameras were an organic part of my project and we were a team working through different art forms for a common purpose. During our conversation while exchanging opinions I realized that we kept repeating again and again "we are a team", "we do it together", "and we will rock" as if articulating these words gave us the impulse to create and reinforced our excitement.

SourLiBooM is a non-profit company,
an artistic collective, that I am a member of.

www.sourliboom.com

CiA is interested in the international and European exchanges of young people, the collaboration with communities for the reinforcement of the local development, the non-typical education and the volunteering as an experiential way of learning by acting and doing.

www.citizensinaction.gr

Festival: Cultural diversity and Europe: where is the link?

This Festival in Thessaloniki was part of the project "E-volution: bringing Europe to another level", a project aimed at analyzing, discussing and promoting new models to bring Europe to another strategic level, more attentive to the value of diversity, solidarity and participation, fostering the idea that "another Europe is possible".

www.evolutioneurope.org

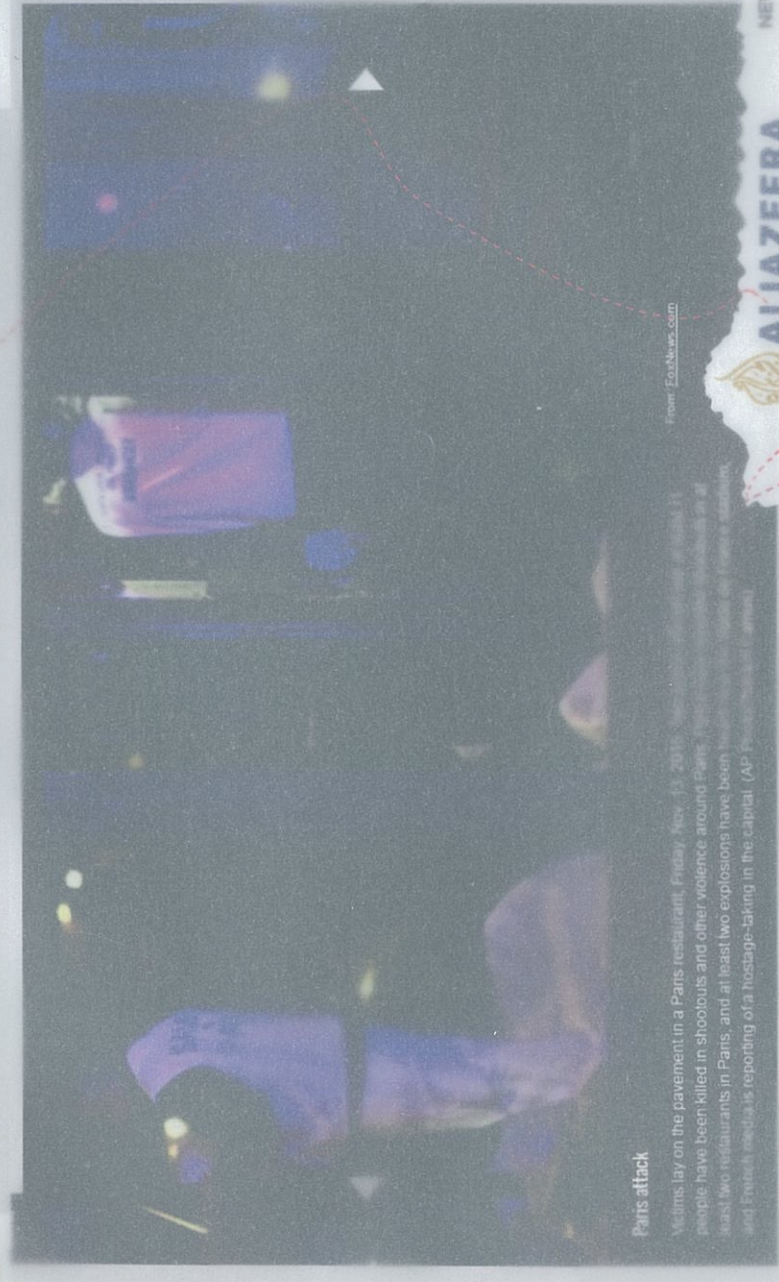
By that time he was preparing a documentary about my project including material from two previous live actions I did in Thessaloniki (*Salvo Condotto* and *DRown*). He asked me to translate the interview I gave him for the purpose of the documentary and edit the subtitles. Preparing my new performance while watching previous work of my project was a coincidence which gave me food for thought. I had the chance to go through what I had done till that time and listen to my old reflections on my project. It was a useful review which strengthened the feeling of continuity of my live actions, made me realize what things were like at the beginning of the project and the things that had changed. Through comparisons and conclusions I made I could make better and more effective decisions for my future practice. Although I had never before used the documentation of my work as a method of working on new projects or develop previous pieces of work, the educational process and the fact that this Master Program encouraged me to work more as a researcher opened a new path into my artistic practice. Eventually, the documentation of my performances was not only a souvenir of remembrance saved on a hard disc -soon forgotten- but a fundamental tool for my research, my practice and my writing reflections, too.

Images through the camera, through the body, through sounds and melodies, through the heart and the soul of all these people who are willing to go out on the streets and share with the city and the residents their need to walk together towards both the good and the bad that the future has in store for us.

I dream more and more every day ... And I wish that Sunday the 13th of December 2015 will be another sunny winter day...

Paris attacks kill more than 120 people - as it happened

- **This live blog has ended: our new live blog is here**
- Eight attackers killed, seven of them via suicide bombings
- Police say 'accomplices' could still be on loose
- Around 200 people injured, 80 seriously
- Attack has hallmarks of Isis, says Australian PM



Paris attack of November 2015

14.11.15 Syria-France-Lebanon

We have only
one sea
to swim,
one land
to inhabit,
one dead person
to grieve for.

No matter how many oceans we split
No matter how many countries we divide
No matter how many victims we kill
They will be only pieces
of one body.



November 2015

Paris, 13 November 2015
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/nov/13/shootings-reported-in-eastern-paris-live>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/syria-monitoring-groups-russian-air-strikes-kill-400-civilians-151122063024984.html>

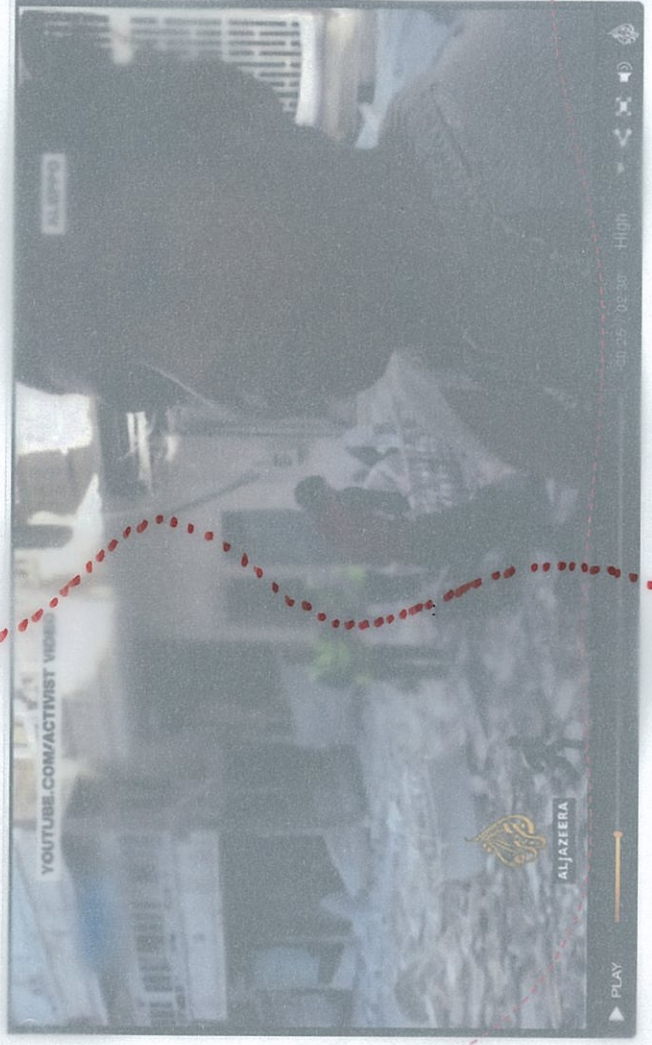
ALJAZEERA
 NEWS - PROGRAMME
 Topics: US, Europe, Africa, Asia, Middle East, Syria, Syria crisis, Russia

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 Take a tour of Islam's third holiest site

TV SCHEDULE
 Noweishour (in 20 mins)

WAR & CONFLICT
Russian air strikes killed over 400 Syrian civilians'

At least 97 children among casualties of military operations which began in late September, two monitoring groups say.
 23 Nov 2015 08:22 GMT | War & Conflict, Middle East, Syria, Syria crisis, Russia



Russian air strikes in Syria have killed over 400 civilians since September this year, monitoring groups say.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said the death toll from September 30 - when the strikes were launched - until November 20 stood at 403 civilians, a figure that includes 97 children.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), another monitoring group, said at least 526 were killed, including 137 children, since Russia launched its first air strikes.

Paris attacks kill more than 120 people - as it happened

- **This live blog has ended: our new live blog is here**
- Eight attackers killed, seven of them via suicide bombings
- Police say 'accomplices' could still be on loose
- Around 200 people injured, 80 seriously
- Attack has hallmarks of Isis, says Australian PM



Paris attack
Victims lay on the pavement in a Paris restaurant, Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. Two police officials say at least 11 people have been killed in shootings and other violence around Paris. Police have reported shootings in at least two restaurants in Paris, and at least two explosions have been heard near the Stade de France stadium, and French media is reporting of a hostage-taking in the capital. (AP Photo/Thibault Camus)

Paris attack of November 2015

14.11.15 Syria-France-Lebanon

We have only
 one sea
 to swim,
 one land
 to inhabit,
 one dead person
 to grieve for.
 No matter how many oceans we split
 No matter how many countries we divide
 No matter how many victims we kill
 They will be only pieces
 of one body.

Paris, 13 November 2015
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/nov/13/shootings-reported-in-eastern-paris-live>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/syria-monitoring-groups-russian-air-strikes-kill-400-civilians-151122063024984.html>

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December 2015



WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS // WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS in Thessaloniki

The week before the performance...

I arrived at Thessaloniki approximately one week before the performance. During my stay in Sweden I decided how to structure it. The meetings I had with my two supervisors, Cecilia and Staffan, and some presentations of my final performance I had during the winter semester at the University were influential in the decision making process but also in organizing the presentation of the live action for my collaborators. Presenting the concept and the practical part of a project is very important, especially when I need to communicate with, inform and co-ordinate. My previous experience showed me that the clearer and the more structured the description of a performance and my instructions are the more effective and the less time-consuming the preparation and rehearsals are.

I feel quite stressed about some practical issues that need to be arranged promptly in just a little time. I have to:

- meet Grigoris who designed a passport model I will use for printing the passport copies I need. We had to design a model because he found out that it is illegal to copy or forge an original passport.
- contact the printing store and make all the practical arrangements
- buy yellow tapes and markers in order to cover the luggage and write the performance motto on it
- prepare in advance some pieces of old and useless luggage I had collected in order to be placed in different parts of the city while walking. Marking our walk as an urban artistic installation.
- prepare a half-hour presentation of myself, my project and the performance including a preparatory exercise for the volunteers-participants from the Festival that I will meet for the first time two days before the performance.
- check the route of our walk and find the exact spots where we will stop. These spots need to be carefully selected because Aristotelous Street has already too many kinds of Christmas installations, entertainment parks, a big ice rink and all kinds of stands of several streets vendors. So, there are less free open spaces where we could walk and stop. It is also important to choose spaces where there is as less noise or loud music as possible, otherwise the vocal ensemble will have great difficulties in singing or being heard.
- prepare my "costume" (I need isothermal underwear because the previous two times I performed during cold days both in Greece and in Sweden I felt cold and I almost got sick)
- meet and inform the video documentation co-ordinator about the exact route and the structure of the performance.
- make a list of all the local participants, send them a written description of the live action and arrange a meeting with them before the performance in order to give them the final instructions, answer their questions and solve any kind of last minute practical problems.

I meet my best friend Eleni who is the assistant producer of all my live actions in Greece. We make a to-do list, we take a deep breath and we take action.

Five days later everything is ready...



Friday evening, the 11th of December, Eleni and I went to meet the international group of the Festival volunteers in a special venue which belongs to the non-profit activists' organization of IKOPOLIS that is very active in supporting and helping refugees. While we were walking up the stairs of the building where the venue was we saw different kinds of posters about activities of the organization for collecting clothes and food for the refugees or open calls for volunteering. We passed the storage rooms where people were sorting the clothes that would be sent and distributed to several refugee camps. I thought that the place was ideal to talk about my project and approach the concept of the upcoming live action in a more experiential way.

We enter the room where the Festival participants are and Giorgos welcomes us. After some brief presentations of each group and some introduction from Giorgos and a representative of CiA, it is my turn to present. I feel so happy looking at the faces of the volunteers that are watching my presentation. They look so joyful and interested in an unknown performer talking about an unknown project, the collaboration with some unknown locals and a walk on the streets of an unknown city... Although I explain that the participation is absolutely voluntary, I can see in their eyes the anticipation of this special Sunday we will experience together.

I invite them to do a simple walking exercise -a simulation of the "exploration walk" they will perform in the live action. I put the Greek song I selected for the finale on. Most of them are open and communicative. Even the ones who seem to be embarrassed or hesitant keep walking and exchanging glances. I start walking with them and try to develop contact and communication with these people that half an hour ago were complete strangers. I don't even know their names, but I already feel so grateful that they accepted my invitation for this joint walk and they reciprocate the smile and the glance I give them.

After my presentation the group of volunteers go for dinner to a restaurant and I join them, because I want to spend some more time with them and get to know them better -eating together is one of the most basic activities of socializing anyway, especially in Greece. I observe them... We discuss cultural diversities, we make jokes, and we laugh.

We are not strangers any more...

To whom it may concern...

During December 2015 at Eidomeni, two hours far from Thessaloniki close to the borders and the refugees camp the situation was unbearable. The following text was posted on the wall of the facebook page of IKOPOLIS, written and signed by twenty three different volunteers' organizations. A letter to whom it may concern...

*Description
& Instructions*

Eidomeni – The State doesn't want to and the groups are not allowed to...

In the wake of the implementation of new rules concerning the crossing of the border at Eidomeni that came into force following the clashes which took place at the start of December we have all joined forces and we stand in solidarity with refugees as every day we are witness to the absurdity of the situation there.

In particular, the police policy of stopping all coaches at a gas station 20 km from Eidomeni from a few hours to an entire day until they are given permission to move on to the border. Refugees are obliged to wait outside in the cold unless the coach drivers are willing to keep their engines running. On the other hand refugees are not allowed to sit down inside the cafe/restaurant area unless they order something. In addition using the excuse that the gas station is private property volunteer groups wishing to help are "forbidden" to do so.

All this at the same time that the volunteer groups and humanitarian organizations have for months managed to work together and organize themselves although the State has for months dragged its feet and been indifferent to the situation at the border.

The camp set up but left unused at Eidomeni has the capacity to offer refugees medical care, drinking water, washing facilities, internet access, the chance to charge cell phones, warm meals, the facilities to distribute clothing and heated tents for people to stay. Interpreters are available to provide information on their rights and obligations in the nations they will cross and how they can seek asylum in their own language.

Despite all this the police department in charge of the situation (based in the nearby Euzoñoi border crossing), apparently following acting on the orders of those higher up have forbidden the use of the camp set up by aid groups for use by refugees. As a result refugees arriving at Eidomeni are taken directly to the border and volunteers have just a few minutes to provide weary people with help and supplies they may need on the next stage of their journey. At the same time providing hot food which has to be consumed on the go or consumed cold later on the other side of the border whilst they desperately carry all their belongings as well.

We see refugees who are forced to sit on the ground out in the open in low temperatures while at the same time there are unused facilities just meters away which have been set up at great cost and effort to make this unnecessary and all of this for no apparent reason.

The hostile and callous refugee policy that is being implemented, with its fences and blocking of safe land crossings has resulted in the death of hundreds of refugees. Also resulted in the division of people into refugees or migrants, the re-opening of detention centers and the involvement of FRONTEX in border checks and the prevention of the flow of refugees. All of this is the perfectly mirrored on a local level in the absurd policy being followed lately at Eidomeni.

What we want from the government

To immediately revise the rules concerning crossing procedures at Eidomeni that block refugees from seeking material assistance, facilities and access to services that were created with much effort in an effort to show in a practical manner citizens' solidarity with refugees in the face of indifference shown by the State yet again.

To end this scandalous practice that not only further creates hardship for people deeply distressed but also gives the possibility to this particular business to profit from this crisis as they have been giving the economic privilege (at no cost) of being the only ones allowed to provide for refugees in the area.

<https://www.facebook.com/oikopolis.social.center/posts/917409715041830:0>

The performance description and instructions to the participants

The performance is a silent walk from the Statue of Venizelos at the junction of Aristotelous and Egnatia Street to the White Tower.

During our walk there will be four stops-stations: the first one at the beginning of the live action, the next ones on Aristotelous Street and the last one in front of the White Tower where our walk will end up. I will be leading the group and I will be followed by a vocal ensemble called "the Performers Quartet" which will sing one song at every station (the songs are folk songs from Greece, Finland, Spain and Germany and their theme is immigration and separation). All the co-performers will walk behind the Quartet carrying a piece of luggage on which there will be written the message "WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS-WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS".

When I arrive at the selected places-stations I will stop first, the Quartet will stop after me and the rest of the co-performers will follow. The ones who carry suitcases that have wheels need to lift them up and start carrying them by using their handle. The reason is that we want to avoid the noise of the wheels to cover the voices of the singers. After we stop, I will stand still and the Quartet will start singing. When their song starts all the participants start walking around the space in a way as if you want to explore the city and try to connect with the surrounding and the people around you. We can call this walking "the exploration walk". The "exploration walk" will take place at the first three stations.

Apart from the luggage all the co-performers will be given a passport copy which they will hold in one of their hands and they are free to give it to any of the passers-by they feel they have a special connection with. You don't need to give them if you don't feel like doing it.

Before we start our *normal* walking again some of the co-performers will leave some pieces of luggage at specific spots and we will create a kind of an urban installation along our route. Our *normal* walk starts when the singing is completed and I start first walking forward.

At our last station I will stop, I will put my bundles on the ground and I will look at all the participants while turning around myself. You need to follow my circular movement and create a big loose circle around me. Have in mind that the distance between me and you need to be approximately 5-7 meters. When the circle is created you stay still and look at me and the action that will follow. I will open the bundles and right after that the Quartet will start singing the last song. During the song I will repeat a movement pattern; I will take some of the passports that will be in the bundles, I will approach one co-performer and I will offer them to him or her. The participants I will make contact with will open their arms as if they want to take my offer or hug me but they won't make any effort to catch the passports which will be left to fall on the ground. I will try to hug the person that "welcomes" me as if I wanted to say goodbye or find support. Every partner is free to improvise and react to my approach either with a positive or negative way showing sympathy or aggressiveness, respectively. When the song is finished I will take the two flags, I will drag them behind me, I will walk towards the sea and I will stand nearby it to watch the sunset. Only the singers will come and leave their luggage around me after I stop and they will join the group, so that we watch the sunset all together for approximately five minutes. The live action will finish when I turn around and look at you.

Except from the participants that will be given the specific luggage that is designed for being left at the stations the rest of the group will bring their own luggage that will be prepared before the performance like this (I showed a sample I had with me).

Some tips:

1. we remain silent during the whole live action
2. we cross the roads using the zebra crossing
3. we don't walk on the bicycle roads
4. if anything happens (for example, if police stops us or a spectator gets aggressive), the assistant producer and I have the responsibility to handle it
5. if anyone asks what we are doing, we reply in English "I am sorry, I don't understand"

(Part of my presentation at IKOPOLIS Venue)

13 December 2015

- ✓ White trousers
- ✓ White shirt
- ✓ White T-shirt
- ✓ White underwear
- ✓ White shoes
- ✓ White socks
- ✓ White kerchief
- ✓ Greek flag
- ✓ European flag
- ✓ White sheets
- ✓ Passport copies
- ✓ Contact lenses

The nature of performance dictates that artists-in-action cannot be severed from their material. They make their "artwork" from a highly peculiar, even wilful material: their bodies or, as Helmuth Plessner aptly put it, "the material of one's own existence" (1982: 407). The peculiar role of the body as aesthetic material has had a central place in theories of theatre and acting. The emphasis lies in the tension between the phenomenal body of the actor, or their bodily being-in-the-world, and their representation of the dramatic character. For Plessner, this tension marks the ontological distance of human beings to themselves; in other words, the actor in particular symbolizes the *condition humana*.

Humans *have* bodies, which they can manipulate and instrumentalize just like any other object. At the same time, they *are* their bodies, they are body-subjects. By stepping out of themselves to portray a dramatic character in "the material of one's own existence", the actor refers to this doubling and man's "eccentric position" (Plessner 1970) inherent in the distance from one's self. According to Plessner, the tension between the actors' phenomenal bodies and their portrayal of a character bestows a deeper anthropological significance and special dignity on the performance.

Erika Fischer-Lichte,
THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics,
Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.76.



I look at the two flags and my clothes that I have been carrying with me in every country I have been to, both Greece and Sweden. My two silent companions during my journey. I remember the feeling I had one year ago when I first wore these white clothes, this "costume". At that time it was just a stopgap until the Bride found the cloth that would suit her. That big collective live action one year ago that was an experimentation, a prologue as I called it, ended up being the compass for the entire journey of the Bride. Even the very first clothes I used became eventually my "costume". The two flags are also the same ones I used the first time I performed, although I bought spare ones for both countries. I never used them. I feel that the textile of the clothes and the flags carries the energy of the cities and the people that participated in or saw the live actions and my own energy by the time I performed. And I don't believe that there is something supernatural in this feeling of mine. It is more something emotional and mental at the same time: for me these objects are a piece of material, that although wear out, still bear all the stories of the previous live actions in a similar way that souvenirs and diaries do... The story of this project is written on them. At the same time this is the material part of the performances that contributes in the metamorphosis (transformation) that takes place inside every actor, every performer, and turns them into a dualistic creature, both subject and object of the performance experience.

Eleni, the assistant producer, comes to pick me up with her car. We go to the IKOPOLI's venue to prepare the volunteers' luggage. The day is sunny and warm. Exactly like the one a year ago. I don't feel stressed at all. Only excited. And happy. I look up at the sky and I thank whoever is up there and provides us with these beautiful days...

In a storage room Eleni, Giorgos, Sotiris and I prepare the luggage, we laugh and discuss. We remember the live action performed a year ago and make predictions about today's performance.

Again the same feeling: a preparation for an excursion. But still there is a feeling of responsibility for the message we will convey to the people of the city. We know that the street and the market will be crowded; families that are shopping and enjoying the good weather, young people hanging around, old lonely people, beggars and thieves, sellers and buyers, homeless and illegal street salesmen. I imagine what I will experience in a while. I try to visualize the context in which 60 participants including myself will act and interact with crowd.

The time passes quickly. The luggage is ready. Eleni and I go to the Art Venue *SourLiBooM* where I have an appointment with my students, some friends and the singers in order to give them some last minute instructions and transfer the luggage we had prepared during the week. Before they arrive, I start preparing myself: I wear my white clothes and my kerchief and I put on my contact lenses. For me, this is a ritual and these few minutes of preparation are the most crucial moment of my concentration. Maybe it is because it gives me an illusion of metamorphosis not only of my outward appearance but inside me as well. The co-performers arrive and we discuss the details of the live action.

I feel alert. I feel that I can walk not only for one hour but for the whole day. All these people that happily unite for a common purpose fill me with positive energy.

We carry our luggage in the city and we move towards the statue of Venizelos at a park where our meeting point is. This park is a place that lots of immigrants, but outsiders as well, gather and hang around; they play cards, drink alcohol or just talk. There are also people, usually old ladies, who illegally sell cigarettes or handmade socks and caps. Sometimes, at night some drug addicts find a place to hide there. It is a place surrounded by ancient and byzantine remains and buildings as well as contemporary apartment blocks. Venizelos stands with his back to the park as if he doesn't want to see what happens there. He faces toward the big avenue of Aristotelous and the horizon where the sea either shines bright or gets dark and sends its angry wash. He looks as if he expects a message from the future, a sigh of hope.

We cross the park full of naked trees. A group of foreigners are gathered around a bench and they have their luggage on the ground. They look at us. We may look like tourists that just arrived. I don't know if they can read and understand what is written on our luggage.

When we arrive, we find friends and collaborators from the camera crew waiting for us. Gradually all the participants arrive but I can also see friends or people I know that came to follow our walk and watch the live action.



I welcome and thank everybody and I give some last tips. The video documentation has already started. And without having planned it I feel that I want to do what I usually do before every performance inside or outside the theatre black box; I want to hug each of my "travel companions", look each other in the eye and say "good luck". I start hugging one by one. Some return my hug warmly, some others feel a bit awkward but all of them are open and receptive.

I feel ready. It is time to walk in silence. It is time to share a message: we are all immigrants, we are all in crisis that is we are all united.



1st Station

I stand still in front of the vocal ensemble having one of my bundles on my right shoulder and the other one hanging straight down from my left hand. I look at the horizon and the bustling street, the people that "wait us". The sun is strong and makes me close my eyes. The first song starts. I bend my head down and I stare at the ground. At that moment I decide that at every "station" I will repeat the same movement and concentrate on the world that is spread under my feet.

It is a moment of reminiscence, of nostalgia, of fatigue. It is a moment that the memories of the past meet the harsh reality of the present. It is the moment that has the strength to force our head to bow down discouragingly. It is the moment that our thoughts stand still and find it hard to continue. The song is an acoustic expression, an articulation of all these memories of pain and despair. It is the land and the people we leave behind. It is the melody of a silent mourning that every separation causes. It is our personal crisis.

The song is finished. I raise my head and I look at the sea. This is where I want us to go. Breathe in. On we go. Some meters further I stop in front of the crosswalk. I cannot see any of the other participants following me. I can only feel them. I hear the sound of the wheels of their luggage that approach me. I hear their silence. I cross the street and I feel that in a while I will enter another dimension. Some people stare at me, at us. I feel the onus, like a messenger who carries an important message. The street is crowded. My senses are heightened. The sounds feel much louder but distant at the same time, the smells are plenty and strong and the colors are all vivid.

In the beginning my gaze wanders for some time. I watch the people and the activities around me. I feel that I cannot control it -I don't want to control it. I want to go against my decision to keep my eyes only straight ahead. Somehow this weakness of mine causes me to feel that my message loses its intensity. So, I stare straight ahead. The presence of my companions behind the cameras is very helpful. Their energy, their concentration, their focused gaze create the feeling that there is an invisible thread that connects us and pulls my body forward. It is not because of the camera or the feeling that I am acting -I never felt it that way. It is the tension and the awareness that these people have and the way they look at me while they try to "capture the

moment". Something *magical* happens in the time and the space between me and these companions who come and go in front of me.

I have never seen so many people in Aristotelous Street. I wonder if the participants behind me have enough space to walk. I can see some people making space in order to let us pass but also other people who notice neither me nor the parade that follows. They look unwilling to move away and they end up becoming a living obstacle in our way.



MuBi' den (Got to go)

1. Got to go, got to go,
Got to leave this town,
Leave this town
And you, my dear, stay here.
When I'm back, when I'm back
When I'm back again, back again,
On your doorstep I'll appear.
|: Tho' I can't be with you all the time
My thoughts are with you, my dear
When I'm back, when I'm back
When I'm back again, back again,
On your doorstep I'll appear. :|
2. Don't you cry, don't you cry,
'cause I've got to go,
Got to go,
As if our love was now gone.
Tho' out there, tho' out there
Are so many girls, many girls,
I'll stay true to you alone.
|: Don't think when I see another girl
My love for you, it will be gone.
Tho' out there, tho' out there
Are so many girls, many girls,
I'll stay true to you alone. :|
3. In a year, in a year,
With grapes ripe on the vine,
Ripe on the vine,
Then, again it's here I'll be.
If by then, if by then,
I am still your beau, still your beau
We will wed, my bride you'll be.
|: In a year my time, it will be done
And then it is yours I will be.
If by then, if by then,
I am still your beau, still your beau,
We will wed, my bride you'll be. :|

(German folk song)

<http://ingeb.org/Lieder/MussIDen.html>

This idea reminds me of a comment by Erika Fischer-Lichte about Marina Abramovic's performance *Lips of Thomas*.

In this way, the performance redefined two relationships of fundamental importance to hermeneutic as well as to semiotic aesthetics: first, the relationship between subject and object, observer and observed, spectator and actor, second, the relationship between materiality and the semioticity of the performance's elements, between signifier and signified.

Erika Fischer-Lichte,
THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics,
Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.17.

2nd Station

Very quickly, or at least that is how it seems, we reach the second *station*. I see on the ground a round, metallic seal that leads to the sewer. I decide to stand on it. I try to take advantage of anything around me that can be transformed from something indifferent into something meaningful and important and be perceived as a symbol. The cityscape transforms us and we transform it back in a constant alternation of roles. While I approach the seal, I see a street musician who plays zither. He stops and looks at us. I recognize him. He is a young man, a street musician who haunts this place. He stops as if he knows that the singers will sing and out of respect for them. I bow my head down. I feel that I also do it out of respect for him. Consequently, the movement of my head has a new meaning.

It is very noisy, but the song of the quartet is heard clearly, while the sounds of the market fade and become the echo of the city. The voices of the singers and the moving bodies of the co-performers transform the space - it feels like I am on a little island that "tells its own story", while around it the breath of the sea is a kind of a soundtrack of this story. While I stare constantly at the ground, my peripheral vision allows me to see people stopping for a few moments or more in order to watch our action. It looks as if they are also entering this transformed space and retransform it with their bodies and their energy. The explorative gaze of the performers meet the explorative eyes of the spectators. We share the experience of rediscovering the city altogether with its inhabitants and break the routine and the patterns of everyday life -we are the recipients of a unique experience.

The song is over. Breathe in, head up and on I go. And then, I see the street musician standing up and staying still until I walk past him -possibly until the whole group walks past him... I am touched. Was it an action of respect? A silent applause that was expressed by standing up? A movement that brought him at the same level as us and connected him to our group... I keep walking having the image of this man in my mind for quite some time.

The pedestrians are so many that I feel that our parade "breaks" the barrier of the sort of traffic jam that is created by their bodies. There are many people that push me in order to pass without noticing my outfit or the "performativity" of my walking. I don't know if the large number of the co-performers and their luggage with the message attracts the attention of these people. I think of how much I want to be able to see what is happening behind me and how our *little island* is moving and meets new visitors.

We walk towards Aristotelous Square, towards the sea. The buildings create a huge horseshoe that embraces the square and allows the light that comes from the sea side to brighten the people, the pop-corn machines and the stands of the street vendors. The noise of the cars, the different kinds of machines and the Christmas entertainment park in combination with the Christmas songs heard from different stores and by street musicians become louder and louder as we approach the square.

The emphatic accentuation of the actor-body's materiality creates the possibility for an audience to draw entirely new meaning from what it perceived and thus become the "creator of a new meaning" (Meyerhold 1974: 72, italics in original). The actor brings forth his corporeality with the potential to affect the audience directly and, at the same time, allows for the generation of the new meaning.

Erika Fischer-Lichte,
THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics,
Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.81.

Kuulinäänen (I heard a voice)

I heard a voice, I heard, I heard a voice of my darling
A jingle, jing-jingle from my love
I thought by, I thought, I thought by him I was
Beside him warming, beside him warming myself
I wasn't by, I wasn't, I wasn't by him after all
I wasn't beside, I wasn't, I wasn't beside him warming myself after all
I was five, I was, I was five weeks away
Six months, at the reach of six months
Wind came, wind came, came favorited
Cold wind, col-cold wind speaking
Would bring a word, a word, would bring a word, another would carry
To my own, to my-my own darling
Golden bird, golden, to golden bird of mine
That I did hope poor me
That I did hope poor me
If I got what I wanted
If I got what I wanted
I would get the man I favor
I would get the man I favor
A companion vigorous
A companion vigorous
In my lap I would feed him
In my lap I would feed him
With my hands caress him
With my hands caress him
Now I got what I yearned for, I got the man I favor
(He) has taken me for his own
Called me his darling
Seen me as his beauty
Chosen as his light
So I cling on him
Both cling and swing
Like a bird in a leaf tree
Like a squirrel on a fir branch
Like a bird in a leaf tree
Like a squirrel on a fir branch

(Finish folk song)

<http://lyricstranslate.com/en/kuulin-%C3%A4%C3%A4nen-i-heard-voice.html#ixzz40FbXQuuY>

The emigrant

Sweet Catalonia,
homeland of my heart,
being far from thee,
One cannot but die from longing.

Beautiful valley, cradle of my childhood,
white Pyrenees,
shores and rivers, heavenly hermitage,
eternal farewell!
Harps in the forest, pine trees and bushes,
do sing, do sing!
Weeping, I say to forests and banks
Fare thee well!

Where shall I find thy wholesome climate,
thy golden sky?
Alas, alas. Where shall I find your summits,
beautiful mountain of Montserrat?
Nowhere shall I see, city of Barcelona,
thy beautiful cathedral,
nor those hills, jewels of the crown
that God gave thee.

Goodbye, brothers; fare thee well, my father,
I shall not see thee any more!
I wish my bed were placed where
my sweet mother lies!
O Sailors, the wind that pushes me far from the
land
makes me suffer!
I am sick, alas! Take me back on the shore for it's
there where I want to die!

(song from Catalonia)

http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=30839

3rd Station

Having reached the next station we are almost halfway through our "journey". I stop. The singers start singing. I don't understand the lyrics - I only *sense* their meaning. In front of me some people stop and create a u-shape around us just like the buildings around the square. A new square is created with our bodies -a vivid, vibrating square. Bodies and gazes silently exchange emotions and thoughts. A square that I will live in for a moment, but it will continue to exist inside my mind forever.

I raise my head. The glare of the sun dazzles me, but I keep walking. This part of the square is the most difficult to cross: I need to cross two big streets in order to reach the big esplanade. Due to the Christmas entertainment park, we decided to cross the main part of the square via a small path between this park and some popular and crowded cafes. I cross the first street and scan the opening that leads to this path. The overcrowding and the noises are so intense that while walking on the path I feel a bit trapped and claustrophobic. I pass in front of the Aristoteles Statue where some tourists are taking pictures. Some of them don't notice me, while others take pictures of me as well. I think that for these people I become a *live monument* of the city that will be mentioned in their holiday stories when they return home and go through their photos! Aristoteles and I become the protagonists of new stories that will be taken as a souvenir in the *memory luggage* of some complete strangers.

I see some people sitting on benches and enjoying the sun, their snacks or their shopping. I decide to walk in front of them, although the sidewalk is too narrow and some of them are obliged to fold their legs inwards in order to let me pass. I think that they need to stay in this uncomfortable position till the whole group passes by. The proximity of the bodies once again creates a different atmosphere and interaction.

Just before I arrive at the pedestrian crossing to cross the seaside boulevard, I see a group of policemen who are checking the licenses of some street vendors. I feel that it may be a risk to pass in front of them but I like this challenge. I imagine a short scenario of a possible scolding by the policemen in my mind: if they stop me, I will tell them "is it forbidden to walk in our own city?" They look at us, but they don't really bother. One more time I am positively surprised by the police who behave in very decent way despite their bad reputation.

I wait in front of the crossing. The sun is everywhere and everything looks as if it is painted orange. I look at the traffic light and I wait. A little van stops right in front of me on the crossing -illegal parking in front of the policemen's eyes who keep dealing with the street vendors. The van prevents me from seeing the traffic light. I show my irritation to the driver by pulling my body up trying to see it. The pedestrian traffic light becomes green. We cross the boulevard and we are finally in the homestretch.

We walk on the esplanade. I look at the White Tower and I remember how it was one year ago when I had walked the same route for the first time. One year ago... seems to be so long ago in time but yet so recent... Once again I feel blessed: the sun is bright, the weather is warm despite the fact that we are in the heart of winter. It is like a *deja vu*. So similar to the past and so different at the same time. (Or as the poet Michalis Ganas says) "The eyes don't change their color, only the way they see"...

The eyes don't change their color

We will meet again at the same places
We will put our arms around our
shoulders
To remember old songs,
names and gazes and streets.

The eyes,
that you remember and I remember,
don't change their color,
Nothing is lost yet
As far as we live and we can feel pain
The eyes don't change their color,
only the way they see.

And even if our friends
have changed a bit.
We changed ourselves, too
We got lost one night in Pagrati (a region
in Athens)
But we still see each other on our
dreams.

(lyrics by Michalis Gkanas)

I walk and I stare straight ahead, but the eyes of my imagination watch the walk of my friends and companions. I am alone - I am with them. There are some moments that there is no *I* but only *we*. And again *I*... An internal movement of senses and emotion that seems to follow the rhythm of the waves. Along the promenade there are not as many people as there were last year, probably due to Christmas and to all the shopping and attractions all around the city center. All the pedestrians step aside to let us pass. In front of me the cameramen and a photojournalist alternatively appear and re-appear all the time. They look as if they are *clearing* the way for the walkers. In every performance I feel this special connection with these people -they make me feel safe and I receive vibes of tenderness and trust in what we do.

I notice the photojournalist asking a couple that is walking in front of me to stop for a moment because he wants to take a picture of me between their shoulders. The couple looks positive and poses. I approach them from behind. The photographer looks at me between these two young people and I look back. A *stilted* picture of a spontaneous gesture of courtesy...



I pass them by and I approach a group of street vendors whose merchandise are put on white sheets on the ground. They are black, probably from some African countries. Mostly they come from Nigeria. I see the photojournalist talking with some of them. I assume that he is explaining to them what we do in order to allow him to involve them in his shootings. I know that most of these people are afraid of cameras, because a majority of them are illegally in Greece or they have no license for selling their wares. They are exposed in public, but they still want to be "invisible". I think that I don't want to make them worried or cause them any problem. The closer I get to them the more I think of it. These people are my motivation and my inspiration for this act. These people are the immigrants I want to talk about through my work. Even though I keep staring straight ahead, I feel that I cannot keep my eyes off of them. I feel that it is like ignoring the people I am performing for. I feel their eyes attracting my gaze. I turn my head and I look at one of them. He looks at me intently in the eyes and for a moment it is almost as if we are having a silent dialogue. He gestures with his head -he slowly moves it up and down as if he says to me "yes, this is how things are...this is how it feels like being an immigrant...keep walking". I pass him by, I turn my head and I start looking at the White Tower again. Right in front of me there is a black woman facing me as if she has been waiting for me all this time. She is young, standing still and silent. She also looks intently into my eyes. Her eyes reveal a whole world to me. I start crying. My vision blurs and I feel that I am about to lose my contact lenses. I close my eyes and keep walking while trying to concentrate and control my emotions. This return to myself and my body makes me more aware of the pain I started feeling on my back and my hands due to the hunched posture I have had during my walk. The pain of my body makes my walking more difficult. The pain I saw in the eyes of these people pushes me forward beyond my own pain.

We approach our final destination. At the same time an old pirate type cafe-boat is sailing towards the same direction. Another nice coincidence. This image takes me back in time and jogs my memories. I recall images from books or pictures or narrations of people who experienced emigration. Images of boats that came to take thousands of people far from their countries to an unknown land where they had hoped to find a better life. Images of boats arriving bringing people that are exhausted and hungry and their luggage is too small to fit everything they love or their beloved ones in. Images of boats sinking before they reach the ports and people being strewn into the sea with their luggage.



I see a mother taking pictures with her children with the pirate boat in the background. They look so happy and care-free. They notice us and the mother tells the children to step back in order to free the space for us. They keep looking at us while we approach and one of the children asks his mother "what are they doing, mum?". I think of how fragile our happiness is; how easily innocence and carelessness can *fall apart* in just a few seconds. Our parade seems to have trespassed upon the family's happiness, changed their personal space and their feelings. I think of how brutally and painfully the war invades people's lives and kills even the innocence of a child's soul. And when the children wonder "what are they doing, mum?", there is no answer to give them -only a big question mark hanging above our heads. A big *why?*...

Carrying these thoughts in my mind we arrive at our final *station* while the sun has already started setting...



Greek refugees from Smyrna arriving at Peiraeus port (1922)



Swedish emigrants boarding ship in Gothenburg in 1905



Greek refugees from Smyrna (1922)



Migrants pulled an inflatable boat crowded with Syrian refugees arriving last month from the Turkish coast on Lesbos island, Greece.

The first separation: the womb of many wounds.

(lyric by the Greek poet Anastasia Gitsi)

4th station



I walk a bit further from the spot I had decided to be our final *station*, because the music from the cafe-boat is too loud and the noise from a popcorn machine is disturbing. I stop and I leave my two bundles on the ground. I stretch my body after one hour and it hurts but I don't really care, because I am very excited and happy. I look at my companions who keep walking and I start turning myself around while staring at the rest of the participants. They follow my sign and create a circle with their bodies around me. After our walk that seemed like it lasted only ten minutes, I see again the faces of all these people who join me with their bodies and their soul. I am touched while my companions dispersed into the area of the *station* and they look me in the eyes -we are the co-creators of a community, a new square of solidarity under the shadow of the White Tower that has been a witness to thousands of events for thousands of years.

I unfold the flags and the white sheets. The passports spilled onto them. I am happy with this image created, because this is how I had imagined it. The images of my imagination and the real images are merged through the actions of my body and the use of my props. The signal for the final song has been given. I hear the first line of the lyrics; "I forget and I'm delighted..." Everything looks so much brighter and much more beautiful than I could imagine...

[...] the body is not merely matter but a continual and incessant *materializing* of possibilities.

Erika Fischer-Lichte, *THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics*, Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.27.

I take a pile of passports in my hands and I look around me searching for the first person, *the first destination*, whom I will give the passports to and we will experience together the first separation. I spot my friend Sotiris behind the singers and I want to go to him, but while approaching him my eyes meet his eyes and I notice that tears are welling up in his eyes. I don't want our personal feelings to overshadow the action and start with such an intense separation. I decide to move to someone else. I want to stick to my original idea that the intensity of the consecutive separations will gradually climax. The gaze of a student of mine attracts me. She is serious and focused. I don't know how she would decide to react, since I gave the co-performers the freedom to improvise if they wanted to embrace or push me away, to have a positive or negative attitude. While I approach her, her gaze changes -what she had decided may also have changed. I give her the passports that begin to fall down between her open arms. We embrace each other. She pushes me back gently. *The first separation.*

I approach different people, I receive different reactions. Sometimes, I feel that I beg for sympathy, while other times I feel that I get angry or desperate, that I become persistent or I try in vain. The physical contact that is either tender or aggressive gives me unbelievable strength. I increase the rhythm of my movement pattern. I listen to the lyrics of the song and I feel a storm of emotions and images stirring inside me. I am there and at the same time I am in all the stories and images that pop up into my mind. The people around me are my companions and the spectators but they are also

transformed into my country that I am leaving, the land I am going to, my beloved ones that I am separated from, the people that welcome me in the new place I arrive, the people that don't want me and the people I have yet to meet.

The song comes to an end -the journey of the separations, too. One more journey of the Bride of Thermaicus finishes. The time has come to watch one more sunset of the city I adore and dislike at the same time -the city that attracts me the same way that pushes me away from it. I grasp the edges of the two flags and with a sudden movement I toss them. The passports that were left fall on the pavement. Useless papers that determine the future of people's lives. I start walking towards the waterfront while dragging the flags behind me.

The sunlight blinds me. On the horizon the colors of the sunset are red and orange. The sea is calm and shines almost black under the blinding light. I stop in front of it and I look at the beauty spreading around me. Behind me I can feel the silence, the combined breathing of people watching the sunset with me. The singers leave their luggage around me and join the silent group. We stand united, still and silent, lapse into the beauty of the view and the moment. We share the experience; the *transformative power of performative*. This is proof that it is in our hands to change our future in order to be able to look ahead and see the beauty of this world.

After the end of the performance I start embracing again one at a time the participants and friends who came to see the performance. It feels so different from the embracing of the very beginning of the act. I can see the transformation of me by looking at the participants and their own transformation; their thoughts, their feelings and their impressions are mirrored onto their faces and their bodies. The message we deliver is not an ideological construction or a theoretical artistic concept any more, but a collective and shared experience of the transformative power of performance and the re-enchantment of the world. We are now a big family and while we are hugging each other we know that we may not see each other again... So many *real* separations...

Two girls from the video documentation team approach me. I haven't seen them since last year's performance, but it is like we met some days ago. They are like old friends that despite the time passed they are always familiar. We hug each other and we feel happy being together again. We kept the promise that we made last year: to meet and create again a collective experience... I feel that a new silent promise has already been made...

2.12.15, 02.00

There are more children

to be killed

There are more countries

to be devastated

There are more weapons

to be sold

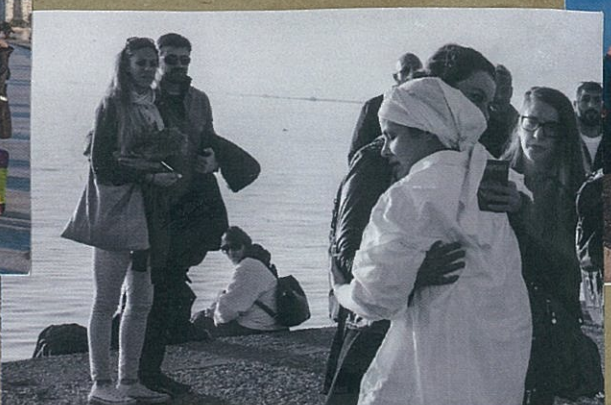
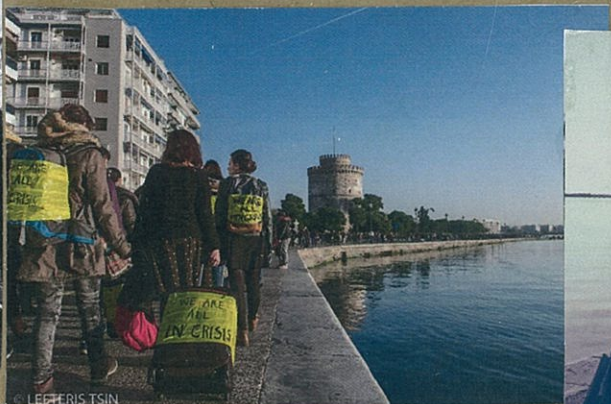
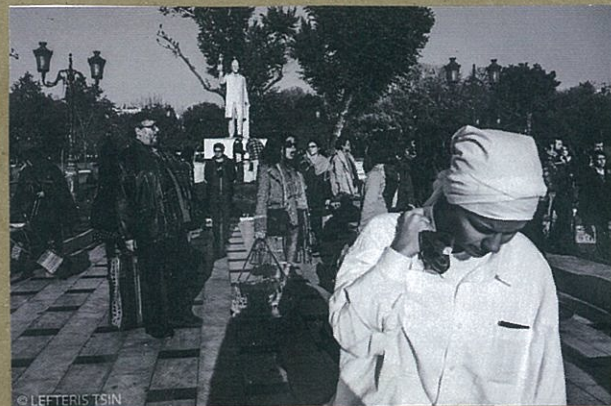
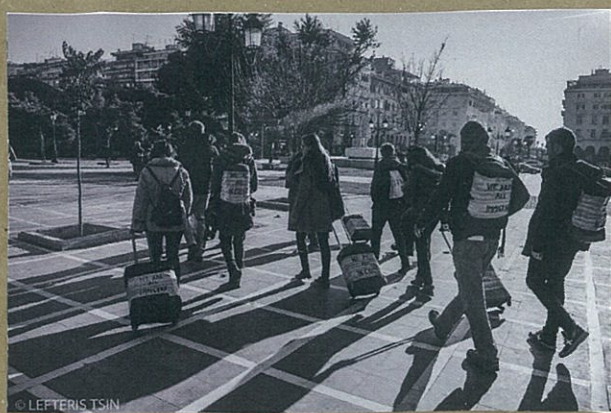
But still, we are doing a good job...



By transforming its participants, performance achieves the re-enchantment of the world. The nature of performance as event -articulated and brought forth in the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators, the performative generation of materiality, and the emergence of meaning- enables such transformation.

Erika Fischer-Lichte,
THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics, Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.181.

PHOTO JOURNEY



Photos by Lefteris Tsinaris

January 2016

Sweden sends sharp signal with plan to expel up to 80,000 asylum seekers

Move is another message to refugees that Sweden's warm welcome has cooled as many now face being forcibly expelled



Sweden's migration minister, Morgan Johansson, discusses plans for the deportation of asylum seekers

Sweden is to reject up to 80,000 people who applied for asylum in the country last year, as many as half of whom will be forced to leave against their will, according to official estimates.

The interior ministry has called on police and migration authorities to prepare for a sharp increase in deportations, and to arrange charter flights to expel rejected asylum seekers to their country of origin. Sweden is also approaching other EU countries, including Germany, to discuss cooperation to increase efficiency. "To make sure flights are filled to capacity, it said.

On Thursday Finland's interior minister said Helsinki also intended to expel about 20,000 of the 32,000 asylum seekers it received in 2015. "In principle we speak of about two-thirds, meaning approximately 65 percent of the 32,000 will get a negative decision (to their asylum application)," Paivi Nerg, the ministry's administrative director, told Agence France-Presse.

Sweden received more than 160,000 asylum applications last year - by far the biggest influx in the EU as a proportion of the population. Between 60,000 and 80,000 of them will be rejected, the interior minister, Anders Ygeman, told Swedish media on Thursday.

The revelation that a large proportion of asylum seekers will be turned down, and as many as half of failed applications will be forcibly expelled, sends another signal to refugees that Sweden is no longer extending the warm welcome it offered to them just a few months ago.

EU migration crisis: Greece threatened with Schengen area expulsion

Read more



The Greens' deputy prime minister, Åsa Romson, breaks into tears as she announces plans to deter asylum seekers in a reversal of Sweden's open-door policy towards people fleeing war and persecution

"Of course it is a way of saying that if you come here and don't have a case for asylum, then you won't be able to stay," said Victor Jarju, spokesperson for Ygeman. "You can seek asylum in Europe but there are a lot of safe countries where you won't be troubled by war and persecution, so you don't necessarily have to end up in Sweden."

Other Scandinavian countries are stepping up their attempts to broadcast to the war-torn regions of the world that they are no longer an attractive destination for refugees. Norway last week began deporting asylum seekers to Russia through the Arctic, while Denmark's new law enabling police to confiscate cash and valuables from refugees has drawn sharp international criticism.

Sweden started to introduce border controls in November to stem the number of asylum seekers arriving there, which was running at 10,000 each week. In January it made it impossible for refugees to cross the bridge linking Sweden with Denmark unless they could show a passport or driving licence, since when the numbers are down to about 800 a week.

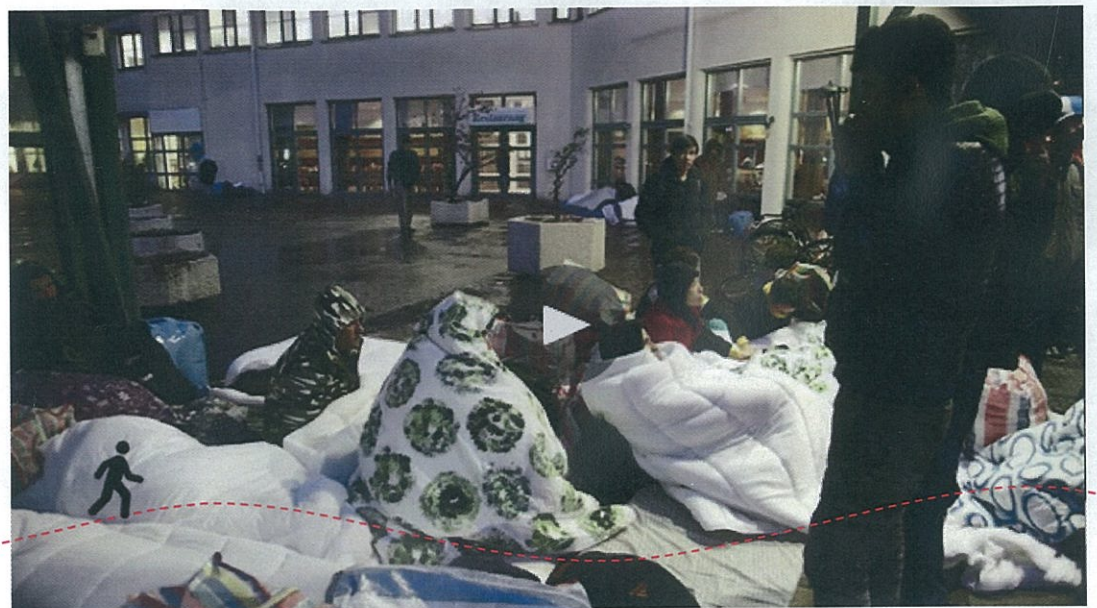
[...]

Sanna Vestin, chair of FARR, the Swedish Network of Refugee Support Groups, said: "We are very concerned that in this situation the government will play down proper procedure and rights just to get rid of them. We have already had a suggestion to end the right to appeal - the courts uphold the appeals in around 10% of cases."

She added: "It would be better if the government saw refugees as an investment in society's future, rather than a burden. We have a very good economy, in part because of having many immigrants."

Sweden sends sharp signal with plan to expel up to 80,000 asylum seekers

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<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/28/sweden-to-expel-up-to-80000-rejected-asylum-seekers>

In January 2016, while preparing my final performance in Gothenburg, I wanted to have an idea of the political situation related to the migration in Sweden. I made a research on the internet in order to find some relevant articles. I selected to quote some of them that were published during January.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-has-done-so-much-for-refugees-now-its-turned-its-back-on-them-a6792726.html>

INDEPENDENT News Voices Culture Lifestyle Tech Sport US election

News > World > Europe

Sweden has done so much for refugees. Now it's turned its back on them

Sweden has taken in more asylum seekers per capita than any other nation in Europe

Griff Witte, Anthony Falola | Friday 1 January 2016 | 161 comments



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WAR & CONFLICT

Sweden: Arrests and scuffles after anti-refugee rampage

Witnesses report people were attacked by mob after group handed out leaflets threatening violence against foreigners.

31 Jan 2016 17:01 GMT | War & Conflict, Human Rights, Europe, Middle East, Sweden

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/arrests-reports-anti-refugee-rampage-sweden-160131051114746.html>

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/10/the-death-of-the-most-generous-nation-on-earth-sweden-syria-refugee-europe/>

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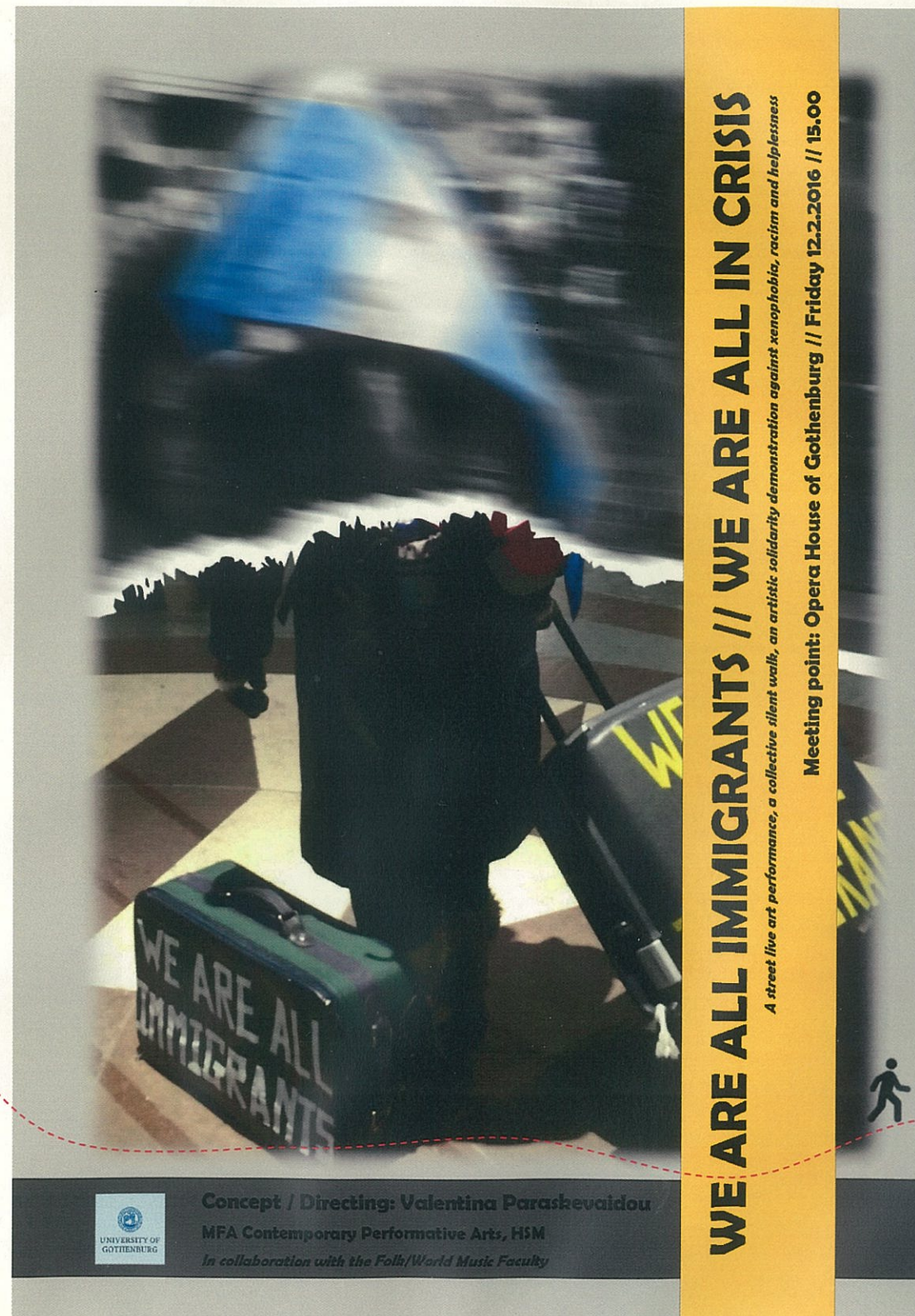
The Death of the Most Generous Nation on Earth

Little Sweden has taken in far more refugees per capita than any country in Europe. But in doing so, it's tearing itself apart.

BY JAMES TRAUB



February 2016



The poster of my final performance in Gothenburg

Poster designers: Grigoris Pyrialakos, Valentina Paraskevaidou

WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS//WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS in Gothenburg

Two months after the live action *WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS//WE ARE ALL IN CRISIS* in Thessaloniki the “mirror performance” of it was presented in Gothenburg; one more destination of the Bride’s journey which, although it has been typically completed, is still in process.

With regard to the concept and the structure the live action in Gothenburg was the same as the one in Thessaloniki with some small changes-variations as follows:

- The route



In comparison to the walk in Thessaloniki the route followed in Gothenburg (from the Opera House of Gothenburg to the Poseidon Statue) had a reverse direction: from the sea to the city center. There were two basic reasons for this choice. The first one had to do with the fact that the sea side boulevard of Gothenburg is not such a busy place and especially during winter there are not so many people walking there as it happens in Thessaloniki. Secondly, I wanted the performance in Sweden to have a sense of space and time continuity in relation to the one in Greece. The idea was that the Bride as well as the participants-travelers that ended up at the port of Thessaloniki emigrate and arrive at the port of Gothenburg from where they enter the city. In fact this concept could be considered a metaphor and an artistic expression of my own experience of emigrating from Greece to Sweden which reinforced my personal psychological involvement in the process of performing while allowing my *immigrant body to happen*.

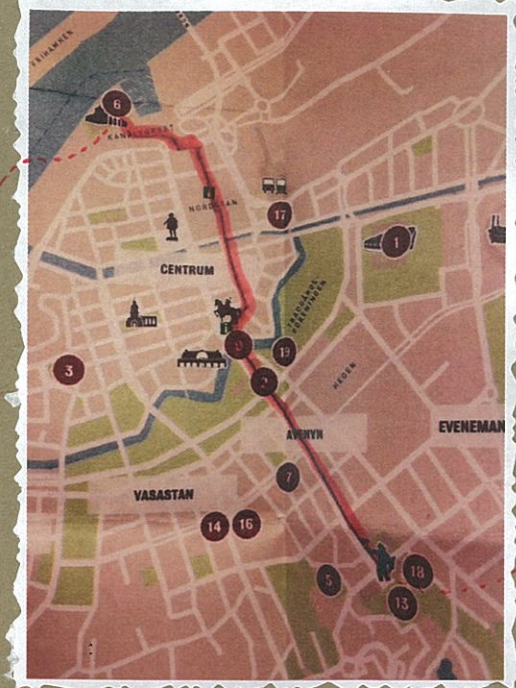
An additional difference was that a part of the walk took place in a closed space, inside the Nordstan mall. It was a choice equivalent to the one I made in Greece; I wanted to walk in the “heart of the city”, where people from different countries and of different social and financial status share space and time as part of their everyday habits, and try to *transform* their routine patterns and communicate my work with a broad audience.

- The time

For practical reasons I performed on Friday (instead of Sunday that was the day of the week when I used to perform in Greece. However, I noticed that the previous live action I presented in Sweden was on Friday, too (Friday, 1st of May 2015). This coincidence allowed me to observe similarities and differences between two different Fridays in the same city.

- The participants

The participants in Gothenburg were fewer than in Greece which, of course, influenced the overall dynamic of the action. However, the fact that the number of singers was smaller in Sweden (ten in total) than in Greece contributed in having a very vivid presence, especially at the *stations* of our walk where they sang. The music ensemble that participated in the performance consisted of students from the Folk/World Music Faculty of the Academy of Music and Drama of the University of Gothenburg and two professors from the Music Department, Sten Källman and Gunno Palmquist.



The living body however, vehemently refuses to be declared a work of art, or be made into one. The actor instead undergoes processes of embodiment. Through these processes, the body is transformed and recreated -the body happens.

Erika Fischer-Lichte,
THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE - A new aesthetics,
Great Britain: Routledge, 2008, p.92.



The choir rehearsing

Photos by Valentina Paraskevidou



Ayibobo

You are on your way
When will you see me again
The country is changing
It is done falling
The country is changing
They are done fighting
Plant the corn Ewa Ewa
Plant the corn
And the children will take the spirit
Every day I wake up
I see the country is bad
Every day I wake up
I see the country is only a little bad

May god bless you,
Ayibobo! (Bless)
Oh, I believe
In skies of grey
There still can be seen
Shades of blue
And when the sun leads to the moon
I start anew

I've lost my mind
Never tried to find it
'Cause what I discovered
It was keeping me down
But when eyes reawaken
I start anew

If skies that crumble
And brings tears
To your eyes
Can rise up in the morning
And bring hope through sunken eyes
Then the love that was lost
Can start anew

Give me the light

In my heart
Beats a drum
Louder than you and I
Louder than you and I

If skies that crumble
And brings tears
To your eyes
Can rise up in the morning
And bring hope through sunken eyes
Then the love that was lost
Can start anew

(Haitian folk song)

<https://kazoots.bandcamp.com/track/ayibobo>

Kaina Munywani

There is a little bird flying all around the world and sings:
We can all live together in peace.

(Song from the northwestern part of Tanzania close to the borders to Uganda where the "Hayafolks" live)

- The songs

Apart from a Swedish song the other two songs were from non-European countries: one folk song from Haiti and one from Tanzania. Due to lack of time it wasn't possible to prepare songs specially for the performance as it happened for the Greek performance. Alternatively Professor Sten Källman proposed the above mentioned songs whose lyrics are about emigration and separation. The idea of having songs from other continents wasn't at all out of my performance concept; on the contrary, it seemed to be very much related to the situation people had been experiencing in Sweden due to the continuous arrivals of refugees and immigrants during the last year. I also thought that Swedish society had been much more multicultural than the Greek one and there was a meaning in involving these non-European songs.

- The props

Unfortunately, I couldn't practically apply the idea of leaving some of the performance luggage on the streets as an "urban installation", because I didn't have the opportunity to collect and store wasted luggage. Eventually, we left only one hand-luggage under the Poseidon Statue.

Apart from the Greek and the European flag I also used a Swedish flag which was under the Greek one in one of my bundles and I revealed it at the end of the performance when I opened the bundles. My intension was to have a visual element equivalent to the Swedish emigration song that was heard in the closing act of the performance in order to engage the Swedish audience emotionally in Gothenburg similarly to the Greek audience that could see the Greek flag while listening to the Greek song in Thessaloniki.



Following through the writing process of the performance diaries I wanted my final text to be a *collective diary* of the final live action as a written manifestation of the fundamental component of my project that is collectiveness. So, I asked the participants to write and send me a text (in any form they wanted) reflecting on their experience of the performance. The following *collective diary* is a composition I made of five different texts I received and my own written reflection.



Bundles
Photos by Thaleia Leinardi

Vi Sålde Våra Hemman (We sold our homesteads)

We sold our homesteads and started on our way
just like the birds will fly when autumn is here to stay.
One day they will return, come spring again that's when.
But we will never see our native country again.

At first we travelled through the English countryside
on tracks and on wagons as quickly as birds would fly.
It was a lovely sight to see the land at last
but all the glorious sights kept flashing by too fast.

And later when we came to Liverpooldian bay
the tears of regret finally started to have their say.
The hearts then started burning in each and everyone
we only talked of Sweden that used to be our home.

We all were packed together in one unhealthy cave
it was as if we'd stepped into an open grave.
The food that we had brought from blessed Swedish land
was suddenly forbidden and taken from our hand.

And when we had been sailing for just a week or two
a horrid kind of darkness was clouding our view.
We couldn't see each other and hardly breathe or walk
it was a gruesome anguish for all people aboard.

The air was filled with hunger and drenched in wretched cries,
the howling and the noises would pierce right through the skies
and death became the ruler that forces us to our knees.
The dead were buried in the horrid fathom of the seas.

(Swedish folk song)

<http://sweame.blogspot.se/2011/05/introducing-swedish-america-youtube.html>



Photo by Valentina Pavroskevich

Black: Valentina
 Purple: Cecilia
 Blue: Thaleia
 Pink: Heidi
 Green: Yiota

12 February 2016

A collective diary of a sunny day in Gothenburg

9.00 am

I wake up before the alarm clock rings. I open my eyes and I see the sun light coming into my room from the window. "Unbelievable", I think and I smile; yesterday night it was snowing and I wondered how we would perform in the heavy cold the next day. My two students that came from Greece to participate in my performance and stay with me in the room wake up and the first thing we comment on is the beautiful sunny day that is so similar to the day we performed two months ago in Greece. I think of how people that flee away from their countries feel when they need to walk for so long under bad weather conditions and how it feels to wake up in the morning and be able to be thankful for a beautiful sunny day.

1.30 pm

We carry our luggage and the luggage of some of the participants all the way from my house to the tram station in order to go to our meeting point at the entrance of the Opera House of Gothenburg. When we arrive at the station there are people waiting for the tram and most of them look at us as discreetly as they can. It feels like our performance has already started. They may make comments or discuss with each other about us, but I don't understand the language, so I pay more attention to their facial expressions and their body language. In the tram some young men that are also foreigners try to help us with our luggage and offer their seat. I realize how familiarized I am with being in the tram with suitcases either arriving at or leaving from Gothenburg -I am an immigrant. In the wagon I can see that the majority of the passengers are foreigners -we are all immigrants. Some of them look at the message on our luggage. Two words pop up into my mind: art and fact. Two worlds-one reality; two realities-one world.

2.30 pm

In front of the Opera House all the participants gradually arrive. They all look happy and talk with each other in English, Greek, Swedish... The choir rehearses the songs... All around me are people, luggage and vivid voices - yes, it feels like we just arrived from another land and we are looking forward to exploring this new unknown city...

ALL: We did it!

ALL: We arrived!

SON: Daddy... here is Sweden?

DADDY: Yes.

SON: Little brother... aunty... when will they come?

DADDY: They remained elsewhere, my son.

SON: Because they cannot walk, Daddy? Grandmother said to me not to fall in the sea, to hug tightly - the one who falls cannot walk afterwards. Why?

DADDY: Because their legs become too heavy, my son.

SON: Yes. But they can come walking on the floor of the sea.

DADDY: It is called *bottom*, my son. Yes! This is what they do. But with heavy legs you walk too slowly. And in the water they cannot hear us. They don't know anymore where we are.

SON: Here there is water, Daddy. Look there. If we speak in the water, they can hear us. The fishes will tell them. They speak to each another. And they travel far.



Photos by Valentina Paraskevasidou



Photo by Thaleia Leinardi



Photo by Thaleia Leinardi



Photo by Yiota Amanatidou



Photo by Thaleia Leinardi



Photo by Yiota Amanatidou

3.00 pm

I take my bundles and I walk towards the spot where the action will start. I stand still. The performance starts. The choir sings and I can hear the co-performers and some spectators who joined our walk walking behind me. For some seconds I recall images from the start of my performance in Greece. It is my body that remembers... When the song is finished I start walking and heading to Nordstan, the city mall. I try to concentrate on my *performative* body and the purpose of this walk -I know that only if I feel and believe in what I do, I can communicate it.

As I started to walk, I walked for a cause, for a better place and equal value for all human beings.

I had the feeling that I was participating in something *big* and unique. Most of the time I was concentrated on myself and I was out of reality; a feeling of a pleasant transcendence that I didn't want to stop experiencing it.

Somebody suddenly gave me a suitcase and I became part of a group, a group with suitcases having a specific task. Before, I was part of the more general public following the woman in front and the group with suitcases. They seemed to be the core of the event.

In enjoyed walking amongst others. The feeling of community.

SON: Oooh, look there, Daddy. Mummy, look! So many lines on the hard earth.

MUMMY: They are tracks.

SON: And the little boxes on them? There are little children and people in them.

MUMMY: They are wagons. Going somewhere.

SON: They are smaller than the ones stopped where we were waiting.

Do you remember, Daddy? Where the tents were on the tracks and the wagons behind the tents. How much time has passed?

3.10 pm

We enter the mall. I can see that the place is crowded and I feel that the people stare at us and make comments that I don't understand. Just before I arrive at our second *station* I see a black man walking towards us saying something in Swedish and I understand the word "Grekland" (=Greece). I am impressed that he recognized the Greek flag. I hear somebody else speaking in Greek and asking probably one of the participants "are you Greek?".

In Nordstan it was specifically exciting. So many immigrants everywhere, hanging around, walking, looking. Many different languages. I imagined that many of them might be recent arrivals here, escaping another reality somewhere. It was a strange feeling, many of us being Swedish looking Nordic, walking with these texts on the cases, and being photographed and filmed by so many dark immigrants passing by. Two young guys speaking in a foreign language started to join the group of followers. After a while they left. They seemed very curious and positive.



Photos by Ami Svanberg Dahlstedt

I experienced the curiosity of children and foreigners, also the confused people escaping their feelings that our performance arose. I've always wondered about the feelings that beggars arise in me, the feeling of helplessness, the compassion, the anger, the shame, the blame, the sorrow, the need to look into the eyes, the need to shout, as I've walked silently further after giving a look or food as a poor student (=so utterly privileged that it pains me).

3.15 pm

I stand still in the middle of a big space in the heart of the mall. The singers start to sing and I see more and more people watching us attracted by the song either standing near us or passing by.

The singing added different characters to the event and made people look more.

There were some moments that I was back to reality, especially when the external stimuli were more intense. These moments I realized that people reacted in a different way from the way the people did in Greece. Some of them stopped and looked at us, some others kept walking and were indifferent and they didn't even notice that something was happening next to them. Some people were taking pictures with their mobile phones, while an old woman applauded. Of course, something similar happened in Greece, too, but there the people were more curious about what was happening, they were commenting loudly and they were trying to explain what they were seeing. Certainly the fact that the language was familiar (in Greece) contributed in understanding their comments.

3.20 pm

We keep walking in Nordstan and the intimacy that the jam causes allows me to observe the people's faces and their reactions. My eyes meet the eyes of a beggar who walks around asking for money while shaking a paper glass with some coins inside it. As we walk towards each other he stops begging and he just observes me and the rest of the walkers. We face each other. We are both immigrants of a different status, of course, but still, there is this strange connection between people who share a common experience.



In the beginning of the walk we passed a beggar to whom one of the participants gave money and half way another beggar -a woman that was sitting on the street. Although I had watched straight ahead during the walk, I felt a need to see her eyes. I saw her noticing us, looking at our texts, understanding what we were doing, and bursting into smiles -from the mouth to the eyes- as we looked at each other's eyes, gratefully, equally. At that moment I felt being in the right place doing the right thing.

3.25 pm

We exit the mall and we keep walking in the open air. The sky is not so sunny anymore and I feel cold. It feels like we spent half of the day in Nordstan; an overdose of stimuli, energy and images. This contrast between the *inside* and the *outside* world and the change of the temperature affects my walking and my perception of the surroundings. I try to adjust again to the new circumstances.

SON: While we were walking and it was cloudy I couldn't see the sun. Grandfather told me to look at the sun -when it starts its journey to turn it my back and walk. When its journey finishes, to look it in the eyes. And to do the same thing every time I see the sun starting its journey.

But, such a long time... how long?

It was cloudy, Daddy, and water was drifting from above. You, Daddy, how did you know where to go?

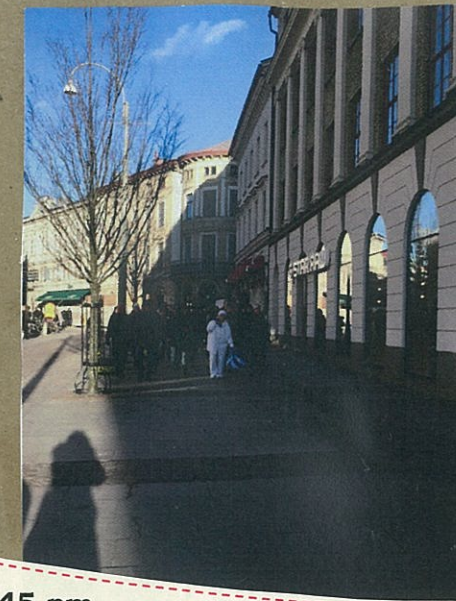
DADDY: Look here. This was given to us by Grandfather. Remember when he got into our house?... while it was on fire... it is called *compass*... with this you choose where to go.

3.30 pm

I try to find my way to Avenyn after we walked on a small shady street surrounded by stores. There is a turn I need to follow. When I approach it I can see and feel the sun light coming from the big boulevard. I hear again some Greeks who noticed us saying "they are a group going somewhere". *What a comment*, I think! But then, I realize that that was an honest and spontaneous articulation of the impression caused by our walk; a first attempt to understand something by putting it into words. Something that I may think is profound and I take for granted is not perceived in the same way by the spectators who are caught by surprise.

Before we enter Avenyn I recognize a friend of mine who takes pictures of us with her mobile phone having her newborn in a buggy. I am happy and moved seeing her while trying to prevent myself from losing my concentration and becoming *ordinary Valentina*.

When walking up Avenyn it was quiet and I was surprised by the great impact from all the commercials and signs everywhere. "Become the real you", "Create your dream home", images of smiling strange people. In the streets I saw beggars. Gunno stopped and gave money to one. It created a strong image, of the big group talking about immigrants, the foreign beggar and a man with a suitcase giving him some coins.



3.45 pm

I head to the third *station* of our walk and I already feel pain in my arms. It may be because of the cold, although now, except from my hands, I feel my body warm. I consider these moments of self-awareness as something very special in the performance procedure, because what I represent (a tired immigrant struggling to carry her belongings) identifies with what I really am and do. These moments, when I don't know where the borders of myself and my role are, are in a way scary and fascinating at the same time. I am what I perform AND I perform what I am.

My arms became heavy as the suitcase was heavy, it was not empty, full of stuff. I enjoyed my mini-walks with the case, but it was also a relief when the owner took it back.

I was fascinated by the fact that I was both a spectator and a participant at the same time. The real experience of having a double perception. I was looking at the main walker and the group with suitcases (even more so, when I was not anymore part of it) AND I was participating in a walk creating an event that other spectators - outside the event - observed and commented on. I enjoyed the doubleness, it also made me a bit confused, disoriented, which I liked.

4.00 pm

We stop at our third *station* and despite the pain I feel, I enjoy the song from Tanzania that sounds so optimistic and joyful. I know that it is about a bird that brings a message of hope and I think that it was a good choice to have this song at our third *station* next to the park where there are trees and flowerbeds. When the song is finished, I look up at Avenyn and I can see the Poseidon Statue that becomes bigger and bigger while we approach it.

There are many vertical streets that we need to cross and when we stop at the crosswalks I have the opportunity to observe the people from the opposite side of the street observing us while we all wait for the traffic light to get green for the pedestrians. I can even see people with luggage and it feels like they mirror our group or that we participate in a game that requires to change sides as fast as we can while carrying our luggage. The time that we face each other from the two opposite sides of the street is short but it feels that is enough to create contact and communication while sharing thoughts and feeling through our silent mutual gaze exchange.



At a crossing there was a beautiful choreography. A man came from the opposite direction pulling a black suitcase. In the middle of the crossroad, when he had just passed our big group, he stopped, turned and stood totally still for a while staring at our group walking away. In the middle of the road. It was like he and his suitcase were distant relatives of us, like it was something that he remembered or tried to figure out.

4.15 pm

I am in front of the stairs of the Municipal library and it looks so high, almost endless, while I feel defeated by the pain. I take a deep breath and I think of the final act of my performance which I really look forward to, since it is a kind of ritual that brings me closer to the co-performers and allows all the participants to feel more connected and experience collectivity through a more conscious introspection by facing and mirroring each other.

During the last meters the silent journey was more about me, what being a foreigner means to me. I felt walking those 70 meters having the same feelings I went through when I thought of leaving my family in Finland in order to study music in Sweden.

In Götaplatsen we became a more intimate group I sensed. The ritual with the passports and the singing was touching. The passports fell to the ground. Not possible to use.

And as I entered Poseidon Square I had just entered this strange land, and my children were far from me. I was numb, I was empty, I had left them and I was alone with these feelings. I could not carry Valentina or the passports, although I wanted to love her. And as I watched her going to everyone and experiencing their rejection and compassion, I felt my face full of tears, my hands becoming heavier and I had no power to lift them up, and I was almost shaking of the pain of our humanity, the loss, the shame, the loneliness.

4.30 pm

When I take the Swedish flag in my arms, I think of what Sweden means to me. I realize that opposite to me there is a person who in my mind has been one of the first images I have been having when I think of Sweden the last two years. Although she is not one of the co-performers I feel that she is the one I want to offer the Swedish flag and give a *farewell hug*.

A tear in my eye, a very intense hug, looking far away.

From where did we come? Where are we going?

As Valentina turned to see the sky, I slowly calmed down. Strangely enough there was an observer, a lady with a baby on a wagon standing next to me as an image of my story, a story of so many people. A story even truer for so many others.

As I stood still and watched beyond Valentina, as I felt her cooling down, I looked at the three birds flying free in the sky and I couldn't do nothing but be.



Photos by
Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt

4.40 pm

The sun started to set. I look at the horizon -I share my silence, my feelings, my thoughts. Is it an end or a new start?

It was over and we all helped to clean up the passports from the ground. So many helpful friendly people.

SON: Grandfather and Grandmother? Will they also come here? We must tell them to put on clothes, lots of clothes.

MUMMY: They went back to our village, my son. It's better there.

SON: Mummy, is it my fault that our house got burnt? I was playing war in my sleep. It's my fault.

DADDY: No, my son. It's nobody's fault. A bomb fell while we were sleeping.

SON: Why didn't we also go to the village? With Grandfather and Grandmother!

MUMMY: Because you were in danger, you and Daddy. To take you away. To kill other people. Or... to kill you.

SON: But Daddy helps all the people. He does them good.

DADDY: I am a doctor, my son. One day you will also become a doctor. This is why we are here.

Dear Valentina!

Thank you so much for a moving "installation". In this difficult time we live in in Europe, with war and other sorts of violence and sometimes so much inimical towards those who need to flee from their countries and therefore need love, this "walk" was a very beautiful, if that word is possible to use, way to show some small sympathy with all those who have a terrible life.

Thanks for your initiative and good luck for the future!

Regards

Gunno



Photo by Noto Anantitaba

Coming to realize...

In the live action in Gothenburg my experience was definitely different from the one in Thessaloniki and one of the most basic reasons was the fact that I was myself a foreigner, an immigrant, and I didn't only "play a role" or represent a situation as I did in Greece. The two "mirror performances" gave me the opportunity to experience in a unique way the double role of presenting and representing -a state that every performer often goes through. It was an experiential realization of what I read about the phenomenal body of a performer (their bodily-being-in-the-world) and the representation of the dramatic character, the swift between the phenomenal and the semiotic body and the experience of a state betwixt and between.

I had the opportunity to reflect on this double role while reading the texts of the other participants and how they experienced emigration in the performance context. I found so many similarities in the way I and other participants who are also immigrants felt and *re-searched* the city and its citizens; the inevitable recall of our difficult movements as immigrants, the memories related to our country, the comparisons between our homeland and Gothenburg, the connection/eye-contact with people on the street that are also immigrants. However, even participants who are Swedish had the chance to "be in the shoes" of somebody who is a foreigner, to observe in a more conscious way the behavior and the reactions of passers-by who were immigrants and reflect on emigration and the consequences of it in the society.

Either being local or immigrant I believe that the live action gave us the opportunity to reconsider emigration in an experiential way by transforming our walk from a *presentation* to a *representation* of the phenomenon (and vice versa) and eventually, our experience brought us to a higher level of realization and awareness.

March 2016



<http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/brussels-deadly-explosions-airport-metro-terror-attacks/>


This photo of a refugee boy in Greece holding a sign that says "Sorry for Brussels" was widely shared in the aftermath of the **deadly attacks** on Tuesday that killed at least 31 people.



<http://www.buzzfeed.com/tasneemnashrulla/refugee-child-message-for-brussels#.ty3lBjYd>

Instead of epilogue

The Bride's Manifesto for a transformative journey

Every performance is a journey; a walk into the world. 

- Every journey, even when it starts due to a desire to go away from a place or situation, is essentially an expression of our need for change; our need for another reality, different from the actual one. Every journey is an active reaction in the present that gives perspective for the future.

Every performance is an expression of our need for a change of the reality, an active reaction to the present situation that creates the circumstances to experience a transformation which gives perspective for the future.

- Every journey has a destination, even when we are unaware of it or we cannot exactly describe it in the first place. Along the way, we always find it. When we find it, we realize that it was what we have been looking for in order to complete our journey.

Every performance has a final destination. We don't need to know it in the first place. But when we find it, we always sense it; we have this rare sense of completeness.

- Every journey needs a plan; even when our plan is just to "take it as it comes". Our plan is related to our goal that is our final destination.

Every performance has a plan, even when it is totally improvisational. The search for a final destination becomes the compass for the performance's journey.

- Every journey is a movement in space and time. The way we travel depends on factors related to both space and time. Think: how would you walk on a hard rocky ground, into a dark forest, on a cold winter night, while a war is taking place in a city close to the forest? And, how would you walk on the grass of a field during a sunny spring day, while being in a hurry to go to the funeral of your best friend?

Every performance is a movement in the here (space)-and-now (time). It is an action that defines and is defined by space, time and the way we perceive them in the present. In that sense, every performance is both site and time specific.

We could define *Space* in relation to the following factors: the setting of a performance, the place where the setting is, the city and the country where the performance takes place, but also the aesthetic, the symbolism and the history of a specific space as well as the way of being into it (for example standing or sitting, alone or with others etc).

We could define *time* in relation to the following factors: the duration of the performance, the specific time that the performance takes place (e.g. at night), the season or even the special era during which it is presented (e.g. during Christmas holidays) as well as the era that the performance refers to (e.g. ancient times). Another factor could also be the current affairs.

- Every journey is unique and cannot be repeated; even if we follow exactly the same route in exactly the same way, it won't be the same journey. The space and the time would have changed; we would have changed.

You cannot repeat a performance; it is always an unrepeatable and unique experience. Every time it is a new discovery of ourselves and others in the constantly changing context of space and time.

- A journey is a process of transformation, since it is a process of change. The experiences that we gain during a journey transform us.

A performance creates the circumstances for an experience of transformation both for the spectators and the performer. It is a process of change.



- A journey is nicer, if we share it; by travelling with other people, by meeting other people along the way, by narrating stories from our journey to others.


The most essential part of a performance is communication and interaction; with the spectators, with our colleagues on stage or during the preparation, with people from our environment that we share stories about a performance. A performance is a collective experience.

- The big journeys that changed the world were a result of collective work.

*A performer who aims to be politically and socially active and become an **art activist** needs to work on a collective base; working collectively, which also means enhancing solidarity, is a first step of our attempt to change the world for the better.*

- It's the journey and its transformative impact on us, not the destination, that really matters; we arrive somewhere only because we have travelled.


It's the experience of the performance and its transformative power, not the artistic result, that really matters. There is no "good" or "bad" result. There is only our need for the re-enchantment of the world that we want to share through a performance.

A performance is both the journey and the destination. 

Current discussions about art are very much centered on the question of art activism—that is, on the ability of art to function as an arena and medium for political protest and social activism. The phenomenon of art activism is central to our time because it is a new phenomenon—quite different from the phenomenon of critical art that became familiar to us during recent decades. Art activists do not want to merely criticize the art system or the general political and social conditions under which this system functions. Rather, they want to change these conditions by means of art—not so much inside the art system but outside it, in reality itself. Art activists try to change living conditions in economically underdeveloped areas, raise ecological concerns, offer access to culture and education for the populations of poor countries and regions, attract attention to the plight of illegal immigrants, improve the conditions of people working in art institutions, and so forth. In other words, art activists react to the increasing collapse of the modern social state and try to replace the social state and the NGOs that for different reasons cannot or will not fulfill their role. Art activists do want to be useful, to change the world, to make the world a better place—but at the same time, they do not want to cease being artists.

Boris Groys, "On Art Activism", e-flux journal #54, June 2014.

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/on-art-activism/>

 Thank you.

This diary is dedicated to my mother - she makes my *journeys* possible...

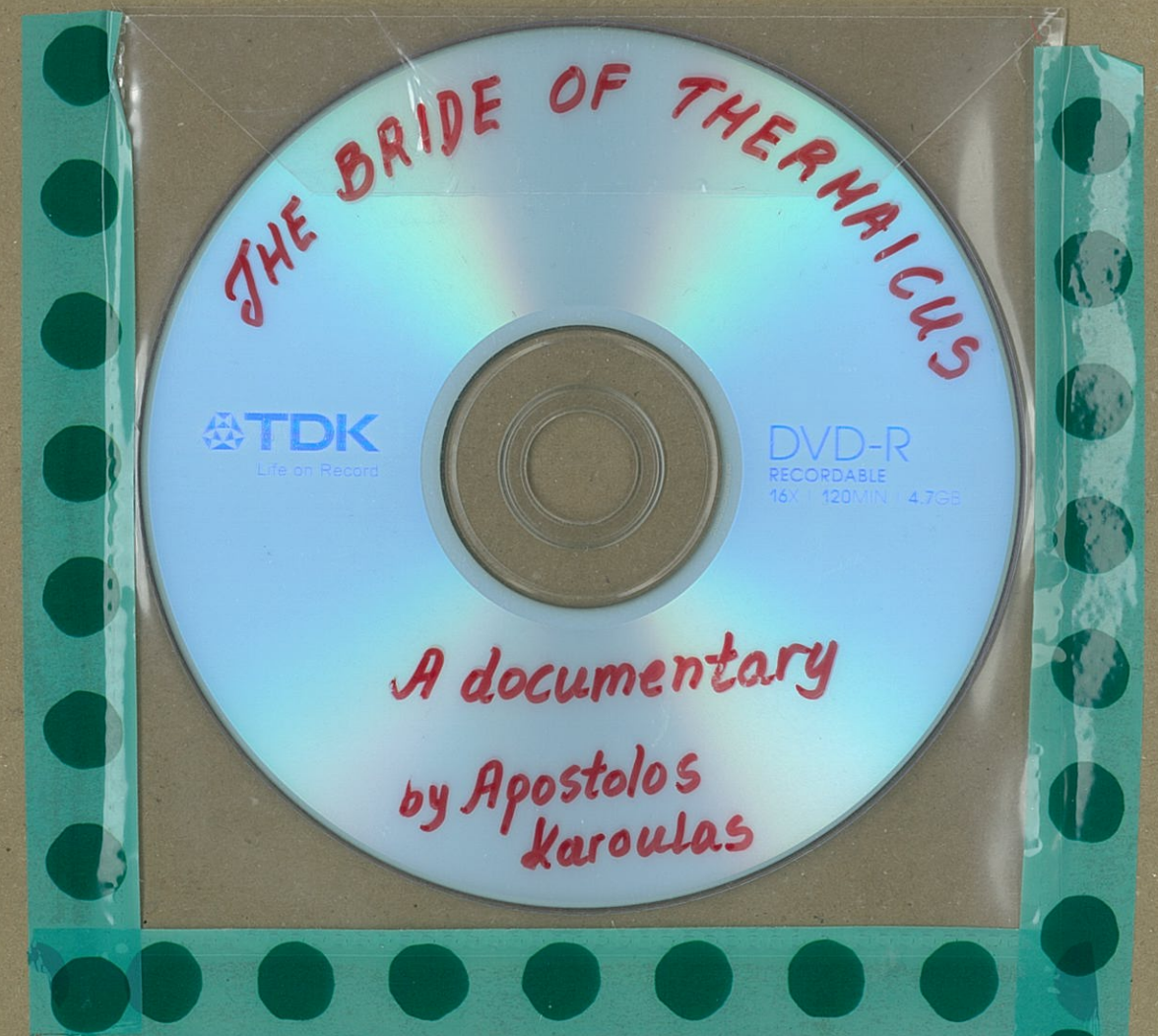
I would like to thank my teacher and super supervisor Cecilia Lagerström as well as Christina Molander, Staffan Mossenmark, Sten Källman, Gunno Palmquist and all the teachers I had during these two years of my *journey*.

I would like to thank my dearest friends, students, collaborators, classmates and all the people who supported and participated in my project...

I couldn't have made it without them...

Thank you,

Eleni Prasini, Grigoris Pyrialakos, Dimitris Papadopoulos, Apostolos Karoulas, Christos Georgiadis, Angeliki Arnaourogrou, Dimitris Kaligkos, Elpida Grammatikopoulou, Alexia Karagianni, Savvas Papadopoulos, Michael Mabesoone, Yiota Amanatidou, Meritxell Aumedes, Thaleia Leinouidi, Yorgos Adamidis, Sotiris Gakos, Maria Karavageli, Tinia Kotziabassi, Despina Sampsonidou, Despina Psatha, Dimitra Athanassatou, Virginia Gaidatzi, Athanasia, Thomopoulou, Benedikte Esperer, Zoe Efstathiou, Heidi Ilves, Annikki Wahlöö, Giorgos Yokotos, Dimitris Tousis, Aleka, Tsironi, Konstantina Petrinioti, Anastasia Digka, Melina Georgiadou, Lefteris Tsinaris, Athina Katsanevaki, Haris Papadopoulos, Merje Kägu, Marina Cyrino, Jesse Ojajärvi, Smaro Platoti, Christina Partsi, Dimitrios Karas, Anastasia Gkitsi, Tsakalou Georgia, Alexandra Tsotanidou, Victoria Papamichail, Maria Mavridou, Dimitris Tsakas, Vasiliki Pozidou, Maria Stamoula, Kalliopi Tzitzika, Vasiliki Alexiou, Niki Sfairopoulou, Sophia Simōn Symeonidou, Srdjan Milosavljevic, Iraklis Deirmentzidis, Apostolis Gkintidis, Thanasis Stathopoulos, Cecilia Parsberg, Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, Babis Peidis, Katerina Karpouzi, Zografia Otzaki, Sanna Fant, Lenah Berg, Frida Norberg, Emma Lindeberglund, Doris Teh, Helena, Julia Attrell, Henrik Andersson, Myrto Chatziandreu, Michalis, Nicholas Sparding, Pawel Orzechowski, Kacper Thomas, Wojciech Wieraszka, Juliusz Gudaneck, Kacper Kowalczyk, Gracjan Drzazga, Ewa Nowak, Anna Gajdka, Ewelina Górecka, Maja Selan, Margherita Sabia, Giulia Cannella, Edoardo Gino, Armando Casetta, Sandro Bozzolo, Marco Lo Baido, Laura Spallina, Giulia Baudracco, Francesco Massimetti, Vittoria Bianchini, Victor Sanz Jimenez, Gustavo Angel Mesa De León, Marita Risco Colchado, Dalia Moretto, Cindy Elodia Espinola Medina, Victoria Leiria Dantas, Francisca Osorio, Yanina Antonella Lo Iacono, Carla Martinez Pacini, Núria Martínez Teixidó, Konstantinos Nikolopoulos, Patrik, Dimitra Gitakou, artemis Gitakou, Elena Bonanini, Claudia, Giota Chrisanthakopoulou, Xenia Koutentaki, Giovanna Pignatti, Yiannis Arvanitidis.



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