

TEXTS ON POST-TRUTH, VIOLENCE, ANGER
DORIAN SARI





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To people who bring the sounds of the waves
to the people who have never been on the beach.

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PREFACE

Philipp Selzer

This volume brings together stories, diary entries, and musings written in Berlin and Basel over the past year by Dorian Sari. The style of writing in English – which is not the artist’s native tongue and which Sari employs and manipulates for personal purposes – is a loose, artistic intervention in language. Sari’s writing is more a written “conversation about” than a “writing about”; it is not a literary or academic practice but rather an artistic one, one that currently can be understood as a response to the restrictions forced on artist-creators during the pandemic. Much like the sculptures, videos, and performances, the texts are a way of summoning an audience and seeking a meaningful dialogue with Sari’s readers. Exchange, references, and discussion with numerous participants are artistic methods Sari uses, methods also employed during the making of this publication. The texts starkly display – as do Sari’s other works – the contradictions and problems of our time. Together with Sari’s remarks on the same, they constitute the fundamental form of the artist’s work.

Sari describes and examines autobiographical experiences and uses them as occasions for writing, for these life events comprise universally applicable structures and norms, not intimate, personal life issues or sufferings. They define the

artist as “different” and their imprint on Sari’s biography is the footprint of a society predicated on dominance. Reading and interacting with the artist, it is quickly clear that Sari’s own life has become a sensitive, absorbent, malleable “mass” that the artist endows with language and uses to make art. It takes an unbridled view of Sari’s life issues; as such, Sari’s work cannot be read without considering Sari as an individual.

The artist experiences norms as dominant because Sari is not in accord with them and because they call into question the legitimacy of Sari’s own identity. They become visible for instance through the repeated and ongoing evaluation of the artist’s permanent residence permit in Switzerland, through the complex situation as an artist from a so-called “third country,” and when Sari is pigeonholed by culture, religion, and gender. Regardless of the perspective, norms create a “we” and a “they”; they exclude and include – or, to remain within Sari’s visual language, they divide things into black and white. The experience of exclusion, or indeed of one’s own illegitimacy, is a violent one, and the fissures it causes do not surround but instead traverse an individual. Sari describes the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion discussed in current debates on identity politics as nuanced gestures but ones which have the same effect. In necessary contradiction to the prevailing norms, exclusion and inclusion designate and establish differen-

tiated identities; assign allegiances; and formulate and represent concerns. But Sari shows the ambivalence of these divisions and identifies in them the persistence of the same mechanism that reproduces existing power structures rather than changing them, that fragments and hierarchizes instead of unifying.

Sari's texts bear witness to individual repeated experience, exposure to and reflection on the tensions between identity and political and societal norms. They speak poignantly to the artist's own experience of hardship and contextualize it within a societal discourse. Sari identifies post-truth as a political method and examines how it affects the individual, describing anger and violence as politicizing experiences, not personal ones. Sari's interest in understanding personal experiences in the context of socio-political debate predates the artist's art studies: Sari previously studied Greek literature and political science in Paris and Naples. Sari's texts do not claim to be an accurate, complete, and cohesive contribution to these debates, but rather comprise an artistic contribution.

The fact that Sari is not indifferent to the socio-political issues that permeate the texts in this book is both a remarkable stance in artistic terms and in terms of activism. Sari's "written speech" can be deemed an act of self-empowerment that both contributes to the discourse and, most importantly, recognizes and repre-

sents the self, rather than conceding the field to self-proclaimed advocates. In their simultaneity and juxtaposition, the issues are "too much." But Sari quite deliberately wants "too much": because one grievance cannot be discussed in isolation; because grievances exert leverage on one another, and any kind of order entails a new hierarchy. This "too muchness" overtaxes the individual, leading to a paralysis or doubt in one's own efficacy – symptoms that evidence how powerfully politics in the post-truth mode have defined recent years. A post-truth politics offers simplistic explanations for the chaos of facts based on feelings, not facts. Sari responds to the reception of contemporary art and the conditions of its production as well as LGBTQ+ discourse. The artist also comments on the numerous contradictions which the Western world, including Switzerland, accepts. Sari questions whether the slow alignment of powerful interests is truly the best way of addressing global problems such as the climate emergency and the refugee crisis. The artist's impatience and urgency agitate a prudent, supposedly well-meaning society accustomed to negotiating slowly – because those prudent negotiators are always the same people and inclusion remains a subject for negotiation rather than a matter of course. This is most clearly instanced when the artist critiques the "vitrines of the powerful": Sari describes how institutions and individuals strive to project a progressive image, appropriating it, speaking of "transformation" and representing

it while failing to query the underlying principle of striving for dominance. Artists and “others” – the jesters and messengers – sit in these display cases, but it is not always clear what exactly they are doing there, and for whom. Their influence is limited by these roles, though they are granted the power to critique those in authority. Sari could be described as inhabiting each of these roles.

A passing thesis but one of Sari’s most radical is the reference to the two meanings of the term “naïveté.” Whereas in the West the word is understood to carry a negative connotation and underscores a lack of knowledge or information, Sari emphasizes the positive reading of the word in the East: naïveté can also mean a knowledge that is unbiased and empathic. The artist’s denial of art’s political efficacy, which Sari describes as a naïve belief, while simultaneously extolling a positive reading of “naïveté,” is not without contradiction, particularly in the context of this book, which the artist presents as a work of art. Sari finds it “naïve” to believe that art can lead to change and effect transformation of thoughts and deeds. Sari demands and formulates possible ways of moving away from an arbitrary division into a vocal, dominant “we” and a silenced, angry “other,” regardless of which group takes on which role. Sari’s call for coexistence and inclusion is powerful. But the act of what Sari calls truth-telling, in which subjective truths and experiences are voiced,

is central. For Sari, this “putting-things-into-words” is not only a legitimate artistic act, but should also be ascribed a social, informative value and thus amount to an alternative, communicative currency which strengthens our mutual perception as individuals and our exchange beyond the hierarchical structures of society. This book is Sari’s contribution to that goal.

READING THIS BOOK OR
HOW TO AVOID COPY EDITING
AND STILL GET PAID FOR IT
Michael Ray-Von

English is a fundamentally foreign language. Its use is so varied and widespread with regard to geography and context that a truly native speaker becomes difficult to identify. Due in part to the ongoing damage of British and American political and industrial imperialism, it has developed innumerable dialects and a tremendous plasticity. And relative distortions in its form can articulate the specific personal histories and perspectives of those who speak it.

There is a dangerous caveat, in that the creation of hybrid dialects with a formidable foreign language is a stage in the process of language replacement. However, hybridity is the rule, not the exception, and a force so powerful and unpredictable as the weather itself. Even as we speculate on a linguistic singularity, subgroups are already forming and diverging, and on some timescale, new languages are constituted. I don't mean to criticize caution with respect to language shift, but to advocate for the patchwork assembly of our sign systems, and against the disciplining of semantic expression.

We took a risky approach to copy editing this book. When Dorian approached me to contribute, we decided early on to carefully modify

only the grammar and punctuation which would distort Dorian's meaning when deviating from my notion of intelligible English. This is not a case for imprecision or for lack of care (we put many hours into revision and editing), but for the richness of residue and the bounty of semantic surplus. The work here was in preserving something specific, instead of correcting something wrong. We felt it important to remain consistent with the ethos of the book by not explicitly "civilizing" their English, but instead allowing their voice to be sounded.

When you read this book, you should find your mental mouth in the shape of Dorian's. If you read it aloud you might sound a bit like them.

THE WILDCARD

Alice Wilke

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
 And to do that well craves a kind of wit.
 He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
 The quality of persons, and the time,
 And, like the haggard, check at every feather
 That comes before his eye. This is a practise
 As full of labor as a wise man's art,
 For folly that he wisely shows is fit.
 But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.¹

In the course of their invitation to write a commentary for their publication of personal essays, Dorian Sari, with a small, meaningful gesture, gave me a card in my hand. It was not a map, but in a figurative sense something quite comparable, because this object was actually intended to give me both a basic orientation – by providing me with a question that I could begin with – and beside this even the theme for this text. It is a particular playing card from the Tarot: The Jester. The image of that card, which was given to me as my guide, shows the reproduction of a historical engraving by Jean Dodal. The engraving was made around 1700 in Lyon in the tradition of the Tarot de Marseille, as a variation of the classic card set that is still widely used today. Dodal's depiction of the jester draws with a few precise strokes the symbol concentrated in its essential attributes: a figure in colorful clothing, walking along a path with a bundle over

his shoulder and a walking stick in his hand, with a cat at his heels, tearing up one of his trouser legs. Looking up into the air, the fool is walking towards the edge of a cliff. One does not have to be particularly skilled in the interpretation of either maps or cards to recognize that the fate of this figure is indeed a precarious one.

The card of The Jester belongs to the 78 cards of a Tarot deck. The oldest reference to the Tarocchi as a game can be found in Italy in the early 15th century. Characteristic of the family of Tarot playing cards are the 22 trump cards together with the 56 suit cards, whereby the Jester with the number 0 is the highest trump. From the end of the 18th century onwards, the cards of the Tarot have been primarily used for divinatory purposes and therefore have been enriched with additional symbolic content, while the related cards of the Taroc are used in a wide range of social games and gambling, such as bridge, canasta, jass, or poker. Here the Jester reappears in the form of the Joker's trump card, but only in decks with so-called French suits (Clubs, Spades, Hearts, and Diamonds). The Joker is considered to be the only remaining trump card in the former Tarocchi hand, but its zero still contains the highest card value and surpasses all other trumps. Depending on the game variant, the Joker offers different possibilities. Players who hold the Joker in their hand can usually play this card for any other card in the deck. In poker games, these wildcards are

included in a deck when the game becomes more exciting and more complex to calculate. Jokers ultimately increase the probability of forming a strong hand. The old trump card of the Jester (the Joker) is thus considered the most important and powerful card in the deck. We all know power games: some may play with open cards; some only with their cards face down or even marked; some eventually let you take a look at their cards – or not; only few put their cards on the table. When we look closer at cards as a system of rules, the connection between play as a cultural concept, social act, and the sphere of politics become more obvious. Play in and of itself should “lie outside the antithesis of wisdom and folly, and equally outside those of truth and falsehood, good and evil.”² The games people play, be they in cards or in politics, should ideally be based on moral and ethical standards such as fairness and mutual respect. As soon as competition and profit are ruling the game, we know that this is not always the case at any given moment.

Probably because of its outstanding characteristics in card playing, the figure of the joker is generally perceived as solely positive, while the equivalent term, the jester, just like the fool, has a predominantly pejorative meaning in everyday language. The jester, on the other hand, is a human archetype, belonging to the series of archetypes as they have been repeatedly described by Plato, Descartes, and Carl Gustav

Jung as the very basis for our ideas, convictions, and actions. In connection with the Tarot, the jester is considered one of the most important symbols of the unconscious. Among other meanings it stands for the “self” at the beginning of a life’s journey. It is, in the end, a philosophical figure representing a person in search of truth.

The figure of the jester is at the same time a representation of the medieval juggler; of a vagabond on the fringes of society. The position of the outlaw may well be a chosen one, however. The role of the outsider – not least with regard to artistic practices – can be an essential part of their social function, and ultimately it always had a social function even beyond the realms of theater, visual arts, and literature. Playing the fool often means looking at things from an outsider perspective. This offers the invaluable possibility of questioning what is supposedly God-given, and thus opens the paths to a critique of the dominant social systems – especially from this inferior position. The fool “becomes the person who through various means reminds the leader of the transience of power. He becomes the guardian of reality and, in a paradoxical way, prevents the pursuit of foolish action.”³

Aside from their role in balancing the hubris of those in power, their task at the court of the princes and kings of Europe was also to entertain with wit and irony. Accordingly, two essential

characteristics are mentioned from the larger catalog of traits from which we understand the term “art” today: the critical examination of contemporary events in an aesthetically thought-out and accomplished form. For this reason, the true influence of fool figures on society should never be underestimated. Even though their cultural actions and rituals are regarded as superficial or even ridiculous in some places then and now, their moment of rebellion ultimately serves to contribute to a creation of order on a larger scale. The fool’s purpose is not only to observe life in its absurdity, but also to fundamentally question existing rules and structures, as well as our understanding of logic, cause, and solution: “From this point of view, we can see why the myth of the trickster was preserved and developed: like many other myths, it was supposed to have a therapeutic effect. It holds the earlier low intellectual and moral level before the eyes of the more highly developed individual, so that he shall not forget how things looked yesterday. We like to imagine that something which we do not understand does not help us in any way. But that is not always so. Seldom does a man understand with his head alone, least of all when he is a primitive.”⁴

The Jester is not a “fool”: on the contrary. Many historically documented events and also purely fictional narratives of court jesters and others prove that the publicly displayed naivety and “uncivilized” nature of the jester is

a cloak of wisdom. Early evidence of this fact can be found in the tradition of jester literature in medieval Europe, in which the figure was used as an allegory to criticize the zeitgeist and hold up a mirror to society by means of mockery. In the proverbial sense, jesters embody a “praise of folly.” The humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam published his work *Moriae Encomium* in 1509, which was deeply critical of society and the misuse of power. During the time of the Inquisition, he wisely used the trick of inventing the figure of the *Stultitia*, a female jester. A foolish woman was supposed to take his place in mocking and criticizing people, and through her he was allowed to speak his truths. Through this female cloak of thought – well knowing that none of those affected at that time could probably be openly offended and truly take seriously what came out of a woman’s mouth – Erasmus of Rotterdam himself remained unscathed. His book, however, landed on the index in 1545.

To misuse the figure of the fool as a *carte blanche* carries dangers and also brings its pitfalls. Freedom is, as is well known, the little sister of responsibility. No one should feel called to bend reality to their individual ideas. Artists, philosophers, activists, and journalists often find themselves forced to play the social role of the fool, and their actions are directed against the dangerous tendency in which facts are manipulated and presented at will, depending on the context, and thus the truth is interpreted

in favor of one particular side. It is a challenge for every person to confront these political ideologies, knitted from ignorance and cynicism. “What happens when we are confronted with information that suggests that something we believe is untrue? It creates psychological tension. How could I be an intelligent person yet believe a falsehood? Only the strongest egos can stand up very long under a withering assault of self-criticism: ‘What a fool I was! The answer was right there in front of me the whole time, but I never bothered to look. I must be an idiot.’”⁵ Today, the same principle still applies here as it once was at the princely courts. A fool can be a wise advisor to those in power and responsibility. The kings should gladly let themselves be fooled, but if they become the fools instead, sooner or later it will cost them their heads.

- 1 William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act 3, Scene 1, 53-61.
- 2 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge, 1949), 6.
- 3 Kets de Vries, “The Organizational Fool: Balancing a Leader’s Hubris,” in *Human Relations* 43.8 (1990), 757.
- 4 Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious: Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, (Princeton University Press, 1980), vol. 9, pt. 1, 484-485.
- 5 Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), 72.

POST-TRUTH?

Sarah Wiesendanger

Defining the adjective as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief,” the Oxford English Dictionary declared “post-truth” the Word of the Year in 2016. The definition underlines that the prefix “post-” should not be understood as referring to a time after the truth, but rather as a time in which the value of truth is being reconsidered. This “reconsideration” is sometimes thought to stem from post-modernist deconstruction, with Nietzschean perspectivism as its precursor. Already used in this sense since 1992, in 2016, the word gained notoriety in light of political movements such as Brexit and the U.S. presidential election. Two years later, the Oxford definition was criticized as a “post-truth definition of ‘post-truth,’” with the term still lacking adequate conceptualization.¹

With these statements, I² want to make you believe: Post-truth is a messy field.

TRUTH & PHILOSOPHY

Has there ever been any agreement about the exact meaning of truth? Last I checked (yesterday, to be precise) the philosophical dispute over what counts as a truth is still ongoing.³ Theories such as the correspondence theory and

pragmatism, and their more recent iterations, have to be considered, and that often involves comprehending an underlying setting of metaphysics on which their respective definitions of truth are imposed. Facts, or the truth, need to exist in some realm and frequently require a “word-to-world”⁴ relationship. This leads to further questions: Does a fact or the truth exist in its own right? What are the implications of the fact that exchanging views about truth(s) requires us to transpose them into language?

Immediately, we are in discussions about the nature of thoughts or mental states – do they need to take the form of language? Do we have symbols in our heads waiting to be arranged in complex ways for expressing a thought? Is it even necessary to consider these intricacies before understanding which definition of truth lies beneath post-truth? Or, does it suffice to endow post-truth with a vague agreement about the meaning of truth?

We can take Hannah Arendt’s advice from 1967: Because “we look into these matters for political rather than philosophical reasons, [we can] hence afford to disregard the question of what truth is, and be content to take the word in the sense in which men commonly understand it.”⁵ Obviously, Arendt wasn’t writing about post-truth, but her essay “Truth and Politics” still offers insights on the connection between truth and politics that are fruitful for a reading of the

current situation. She distinguishes rational truths from factual truths, a distinction allowing her (and me) to disregard rational truths (philosophical or mathematical truths) as holding no real influence over political actions – contrary to what Arendt terms “factual truths.”⁶ Since “post-truth” is most often used to describe political events, it is legitimate to focus solely on the latter. For Arendt, factual truths are “seen and witnessed with the eyes of the body, and not the eyes of the mind.” Factual truth exists only in relation to other people, as it concerns events that rely on being witnessed and spoken about, it is “political by nature.”⁷ Arendt acknowledges that facts are subject to interpretation and manipulation to accommodate narratives; nevertheless, she argues that these “perplexities” are no excuse for blurring the lines among fact, interpretation, and opinion. Shared facts, after all, inform beliefs and political thought, which makes them essential in the democratic process of forming opinions. Stating that facts and events are more fragile than axioms reached by reasoning, Arendt regards this as dangerous, as they operate in the political realm that affects the world we share.

TRUTH = POWER

Having eliminated the problem of defining truth in philosophical terms by the powers vested in me by Hannah Arendt, I briefly want to stress one thing: Knowing or possessing the truth

(or Truth) is linked to having power, or a sense of entitlement toward power and authority. Truth has long been recognized as valuable in its own right, as truthfulness is generally associated with virtue. Being dishonest or false in epistemic matters, therefore, amounts to a person’s moral failure, so it would seem impossible to imagine a politician publicly renouncing the truth. Instead, they implement a “meta strategy” of post-truth: It’s not about debating cumbersome facts anymore, but about questioning whether the facts are, indeed, facts: Maybe they’re just propaganda? This shift is paradigmatic for having “gone meta”⁸ and represents the core of post-truth.

FACTS VS. OPINIONS

Even though Arendt claimed that certain factual statements, such as those on the development of historical events, were once pronounced as true “beyond agreement, dispute, opinion, or consent,” she realized that the “infuriating stubbornness” of unwelcome facts could be moved by nothing “except plain lies.”⁹ Enabling facts to be converted into mere opinions is a problem we encounter today: Verified election results are denounced as lies, and scientific studies delivering proof for climate change are marked as fabricated opinion pieces of scientists with a political agenda – or, even worse, completely ignored in favor of “opinions and feelings,” their expression defended by invoking the freedom of speech.¹⁰

This magic conversion from fact to fiction, or so-called “opinion,” is currently demonstrated in its purest form by a U.S. congresswoman who is reported to believe that the 2018 California wildfires were caused by “lasers or blue beams of light.” Her explanation reveals her warped worldview, which is rife with conspiracy theories. If it weren’t so unbelievably tragic that the woman was actually elected, it would be comical.¹¹

CONCLUSION

Commandeering the antagonism between dialogue and rhetoric outlined by Plato and invoked by Arendt, I want to emphasize the importance of discourse today. While dialogue is linked to philosophical truth, rhetoric is the one-sided tactic of a demagogue trying to “persuade the multitude.”¹² So that we do not lose the capacity for democratic debate, we should uphold shared facts, as they are fundamental for any informed debate. It does not suffice just to tell the truth and hope someone will believe it – we humans are prone to act “against our better knowledge,” especially when influenced by others.¹³ We must acknowledge that some people need to be reached on a different level: one more personal, intimate, emotional. The easy strategy would be merely to denounce the post-truthers as “idiots,” but that won’t get us anywhere. More difficult, and hopefully more rewarding, is trying to

figure out what moves them. Notice how by writing “them” I make sure they are not us. I somehow disavow myself in repeating the fact they are the post-truthers and I am (we are) in possession of the real truth. Perhaps here I should start by acknowledging that they are individuals, too. Lumping them together into a big mass of post-truthers eliminates the possibility for dialogue, stripping them of their individual motivations, as Carolin Emcke argued when writing that hatred is only possible when directed toward an indefinite mass of people. According to her, hating cannot be achieved precisely, because precision would necessarily be followed by tenderness toward the subject.¹⁴ While criticizing is easy, making positive proposals, “let alone re-imagining or re-making societies,” is difficult.¹⁵

Dorian Sari understands the importance of dialogue, which is exemplified twofold in this publication: First, *Texts on Post-Truth, Violence, Anger* was written in a manner of radical critique: The artist embraced this, never shying away from discussions and re-writing and re-thinking aspects. Second, *Texts on Post-Truth, Violence, Anger* addresses readers in a determined and evidently subjective voice. The artist makes readers listen by recounting personal stories, revealing vulnerability and tangibility at once. The voice in this book is that of a subject who can be approached, questioned, and challenged. Even if these pages seem to mark the end of a journey

of finding the right words for the current state of affairs, the artist intends to use the vulnerability shown in them to open up a dialogue to bring us closer to mutual understanding. While this may sound naïve, it shouldn't be forgotten that acknowledging multiplicity, plurality, and conflict is fundamental for a radical democracy¹⁶ – and debate is an essential tool for this.

- 1 "Oxford Word of the Year 2016," <https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/>; Steve Fuller, *Post-Truth. Knowledge as a Power Game* (London: Anthem Press, 2018), 1. For an outline of the lack of conceptualization and a discussion of Hannah Arendt, see Ari-Elmeri Hyvönen, "Conceptualizing Post-Truth Politics," *New Perspectives* 26, no. 3 (2018): 1–25. For a summary of post-truth's postmodern roots, see Lee McIntyre, "Did Post-modernism Lead to Post-Truth?," in *Post-Truth* (Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2018), 123–150.
- 2 By writing "I," I want to stress the impossibility of writing about an objective (post-)truth without really being able to do so, even though I legitimize my effort by quoting other people.
- 3 See Fuller; Michael Glanzberg, "Truth," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/truth>.
- 4 Glanzberg, 21.
- 5 "Truth and Politics" was originally published on February 25, 1967 in *The New Yorker*, reprinted with minor changes in Hannah Arendt, *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 545–575, 548.
- 6 Arendt also subsumes scientific truths to rational truths. It would be interesting to pursue the idea of whether or not scientific truths really influence politics, especially in regards to scientific research on climate change.
- 7 Arendt, 553.
- 8 Fuller, 3.
- 9 Arendt, 555–556.

- 10 Marjorie Taylor Greene herself labels her thoughts as "opinions and feelings" and defends her right to express these invoking the First Amendment and freedom of speech. "Marjorie Taylor Greene to speak at the American Priority Conference Dec 6–8th AmericanPriority.com," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhe9Fd6YRyA>.
- 11 Eric Hanahoki, "Marjorie Taylor Greene Penned Conspiracy Theory That a Laser Beam from Space Started deadly 2018 California Wildfire," <https://www.mediamatters.org/facebook/marjorie-taylor-greene-penned-conspiracy-theory-laser-beam-space-started-deadly-2018>. Greene's other beliefs range from anti-Semitic statements to conspiracy theories: Catie Edmondson, "Marjorie Taylor Greene's Controversies Are Piling Up. Republicans Are Quiet.," *New York Times*, January 29, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/29/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-republicans.html?>
- 12 Arendt, 550. Arendt dismisses this antagonism as something of earlier times, though.
- 13 Hyvönen, 17.
- 14 Carolin Emcke, *Gegen den Hass* (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 2016).
- 15 Benjamin Tallis, "Living in Post-Truth: Power/Knowledge/Responsibility," *New Perspectives* 24, no. 1 (2016): 7–18, 12. Tallis refers to the dismissal of the 20th century avant-gardes. "The avant-gardes were certainly not lacking in critique – much of it as radical as it gets. Yet, they also presented positive visions of how things could and should be" (13).
- 16 "A project of radical and plural democracy [...] requires the existence of multiplicity, of plurality, and of conflict, and sees in them the *raison d'être* of politics." Chantal Mouffe, "Radical Democracy: Modern or Postmodern?," trans. Paul Holdengräber, *Social Text* no. 21 (1989): 31–45, 41.

INTRODUCTION

Dorian Sari

Sometimes, I miss speaking Turkish. Because it is playful. I can invent new words. Everything can become a verb, a name, an adjective or an adverb. Then they can also be passive or active. They can be poetic, fictive, doubtful or on point. There are no genders, no il/elle, er/sie, le-la-les or der-die-das. There is only o. All the songs, all the poems are everyone's. All the evils, all the shadows are everyone's.

This book is written in broken English. I do it with the belief that it makes everything more transparent. It becomes vivacious. Even though English is not my mother tongue I speak it everyday. Here I wrote as I live with it. I tried to pay attention to use they-them-their instead of she-her-hers, he-him-his whenever the person's gender was of no importance to the story. Because I want that all songs belong to everyone. I want that all poems belong to everyone.

Genderneutral pronouns

He is going home
They are going home

She is my daughter
They are my daughter

He is 9, he can dress himself
They are 9, they can dress themselves

His car is purple
Their car is purple

Her mug was her birthday present
Their mug was their birthday present

We call her in two minutes
We call them in two minutes

I love him
I love them

WHO WROTE THIS STORY?

JULY 2020, BERLIN

As many of you, me too, my schedule is overloaded. It is difficult to say sometimes ‘no, sorry I can’t’. A dear friend or someone that you were envisioning for a while to collaborate with can knock on your mailbox or ring your phone in a busy moment. Actually, when I am not involved with something? I can’t remember a moment of not being busy. I have a hyperactive and depressive nature. It sounds bipolar enough, but this is what it is. Indeed, they can be the antidote to one another. If I let the depression take over my consciousness, it brings regularly suicidal thoughts. It is a chronic mental disorder in my mom’s family. My uncle killed himself when I was ten years old and my aunt was regularly in a psychiatric clinic. And maybe my mom, the oldest one of them, found a remedy. She was working every day, even weekends. When I was little, I was begging her to stay with me on Saturdays. But “she had to work.” She was always coming late at night from work. She was responsible. She had responsibilities. Even now, she is working like crazy. She doesn’t even know what to do besides work. When I was little, I remember her face coming from work so tired. As if it was not enough, she had to take care of me, my little brother, and her horrific, violent, macho husband who basically never brought money home – never paid a bill or something. As if it wasn’t enough, my father was forcing my mom to regularly give him pocket money. After a certain age, I found out why my mom was work-

ing so much. Her job was her rescue from that unhealthy, terrorizing marriage. Once we talked about it, but she neither agreed nor disagreed. During my own therapy, I was bringing up many disturbing memories and her answers to my questions concerning those traumas have always been, “I don’t remember it at all.” Forgetting was her survival defense mechanism. On the one hand, it was making me so angry because she herself unconsciously developed a fake “functional” family system in which she had to work so much for her children, and as a result of it, at least her children could have, or had to have, a bright future. There was a repetitive sentence from her: “I work for my children.” And, day after day, my mom’s tired face became a signature of my unchosen guilt, which then at a very early age became my burden. I had the feeling that I had to be successful, because me and my little brother were project-children of an unhappy, depressed, young mother, made to believe by tradition that a marriage has to continue until the end of life, even though it is a marriage with a narcissistic asshole. On the other hand, I can’t be angry with her, because she got married and I was born when my mom was just twenty-three years old. She was herself a very young mother... in a society that never protected women, in a society where the screaming husband, the mentally and physically violent husband, was allowed. My mom didn’t even know or think about any other option. Because of what? Because you get married

only once and it should be until the end, and you should accept everything as it is: good or bad. I remember like yesterday, I was little, and went to tell my grandma that my father was acting murderous to my mom. She was crying from hearing that, and then I was feeling guilty to have made my dearest, loving grandma helpless and sad. My grandma was unable to have a strong position. Because of what? Because my mom, my dad, and me, we were a family, and what was happening in a family was no one else's business. Women shouldn't have a voice, and men were just like that. So my grandma had to stay shut up. However, I, as a project-child, had to be super successful. I worked hard, and became, capitalistically, a success machine – prize after prize. (Somehow I discovered for myself the formula of “winning” something in this stupid life). Meanwhile, years passed, and I became physically potent to fight back against my father; became competent to protect my mom and my little brother from his rage. I remember there were fights almost four or five nights per week. I analyzed and learned all the rules and tactics of domestic violence very young. When I was in my bed, right before falling asleep, I was fighting in my mind with my father. It was happening every night. With time, my father became a symbol of all male figures to me. From there, domestic violence grew into and became social violence. I am gay (I knew it already when I was in kindergarten. It is another story). At that time I never verbalized it, but around the age

of eleven or twelve the perception of the others for my gayness brutally labeled and tagged me. Of course, those who were mocking me were only boys. And these boys had the potential to become like my father. At least that is how I started to generalize them. So I was scared of stereotypical cis heterosexual men. It arrived to a certain point that I, the flamboyant gay boy, who is so funny and fun when they are with girls, became silent and terrorized the moment where there was a cis heterosexual boy or man. I was looking for a little mistake from them. I was ready to attack them for any potentially misogynistic or homophobic behavior. It was automatic. My brain was analyzing them so fast, and preparing strong and hurtful sentences in my head to protect “us.” When I say “us” I mean people who let by traditions be abused. I was unable to speak with cis men. I was unable to get to know, to discover any of them, except my father. I was puking all my fears and anger often on him. He was my allegorical punch bag. At the age of seventeen, I moved to Paris to study at Sorbonne university. It was very difficult to be alone with no money. I had to work, and I was still beyond scared of men, but my economical conditions didn't allow me to see a therapist until the age of twenty-five. Until then, I faked it. I hid my personality and my fear of men. I put a fake smile on my face, and pretended that it was amazing to work with them. Basically, I had to obey. It was hard to do it, but when you have no other choice, you do it. Now, I have to give

some credit to some amazing, good-hearted cis heterosexual men that I worked with. They have been great to me, their love and support made me cut off my automatic prejudgement, and I told myself that actually, some of them are good people. But around the age of twenty-five, my psychosomatic attacks didn't let my self-therapy go any further and it became insufficient. And I spent all of my scholarship on psychotherapy. I looked for – on purpose – a cis heterosexual male therapist. I needed to cry in front of one of them. It took three years of therapy for me to be able to talk with a cis heterosexual man without a wall; without any judgement. Yes, I still keep a distance when I meet with one. But at least I am not scared and I don't get angry in five minutes anymore.

Today, I am thirty-one years old, and I find myself in the same strategy as my mom: I just work. I just work, because sadness imposed by society is so quick to catch my being, and to blow around in my head. Yes, I don't have children. Yes, I don't have a brutal husband, but even though I forgave my father, permanently fighting him in the past passed the torch to cis heteronormative society. That is why I studied politics before art: to be able to understand better these disgusting rules and hierarchies. It is difficult to enjoy life once you became a machine of fighting at a very early age. Wherever I go, my brain detects in two seconds an inequality, injustice, or a lie, and in the third second

my impulses want to react, want to explode, but now I don't do this anymore. For a long time, I had my lessons from repetitive scenarios caused by compulsion. I mean, at least this is the best version so far. Since a long time I don't exorcise, instead, I immediately exercise: I wait, I dialogue, I question, I listen, I try to go to the source of the malpractice, and I try to have a conversation with a different vision and use of words that are missing in the expression of the person who is in front of me. It is a lot of work. It is not a funny game. And it is for sure gonna be like that until I die. As if I made a traditional marriage with this shit. I never tried to ignore life so far, but I guess I could divorce it by going to different therapies and learning how to ignore what is going on in the world around me, or even in me. At the end of the day, I find myself like mom's child, literally. Maybe I'm not married with a horrific husband, but I am married by custom to a cruel cis heteronormative male world. Honestly, in the past, when a situation became unbearable to handle, I tried to run away many times. I lived in different countries and different cities. Every time, I thought naively, 'ok this time in this new place, I will start from zero, it will be different, it can be a peaceful home'. But by experience, it has been proven that my escapes were only illusions. My therapist was telling me regularly, "Mösyö Sari, if you have shit in your pocket, wherever you go, you have the shit in your pocket." It's true. It resonated enough that it has changed my life

perspective. Now next to my diplomatic but still frontal approach to social problems, I try also to forgive people's capacity. But it doesn't mean everything is tolerable. It is just a step from my side to meet maybe in the middle of the bridge.

TO MY NEW
FRIENDS :
NICE TO MEET YOU
(LOOKING BACK
TO SWITZERLAND)

AUGUST 2020, BERLIN

A couple of weeks ago, I had the chance to meet with a lovely curator that was a dream for me to get to know them. We talked for hours. Both of us were excited and happy to get to know each other. In the end, we got so tired of speaking, silence gravitated in my atelier. And it was obvious, we had much more to say. They were already an hour late for their next meeting, and they were supposed to go on holiday in two days. They suggested that I come to a picnic for their friend's birthday which was happening the next day.

I was excited and happy to be heard and understood without an extra effort to clarify my thoughts. It doesn't happen often. But when it happens, it is so delicious. Of course I went to this birthday party. When I arrived, there were only four people. Three middle-aged, queer activists-artists from Turkey, and one young performance artist from Curaçao. This artist – I don't remember their name and I'm ashamed of it – quickly started telling me their story. Where is their country? What political forms apply? How many people are living there? Etcetera. It was clear that they were tired of explaining about their roots. But at the same time, they would not give up doing it: leaving us ignorant, knowing nothing about their Caribbean island where people struggle politically and economically. As if it was their duty to be proud. I listened to them very carefully. And my first question was, what was their mother tongue?

They loved it. They were happy to see that someone was interested in their story. "Papiamento," they said. And then I got a full introduction to this language and then this people's complete pain which was left behind by the colonial story. They said that bureaucratically, to be able to be recognized, they could only get a Dutch passport. They said that the only way to build a future was coming to Netherlands. There they studied performance art. And three weeks after their graduation, they came to Germany to continue to talk and perform – I can also use the verb to fight – about Europe's post-colonial story. In their speech, they were underlining their ongoing experiences of racism because of their skin color. They were giving examples of many legitimized racist customs that a stereotypical Western person would never think of and could never imagine.

After a while, it was my turn. I said that I am an artist living and working in Switzerland. And here in Berlin, I came to work for a couple of months. Suddenly they were smiling, and said that at the end of this month they will perform in Zürich. They said that it will be a performance in a public space about slavery in Swiss history and its ongoing effects. They said that they will wear historical replicas of slavery chains around their neck, their hands, and their feet. They said that they will walk with other people who will hold and pull their chains. The scene that they described sounded harsh. I know Zürich. I know

Switzerland. For almost eight years I have been living in this country. My very first imagination in my Kopfkino: while they were walking with these heavy burdens, next to them on the street were super clean-dressed, silent people: people that I presume to have very high life standards compared to the rest of the world, and have – allegedly – rarely been confronted with their own colonial history... I panicked for a second. This courageous young artist was motivated to bring their forthright attitude to a country that doesn't like in your face things... I didn't know why, but I panicked right that moment for them.

And suddenly they asked me, "Can you tell me about Switzerland? I have never been there. I am so excited. It will be great. Organizers are adorable. Can you give me some idea of what might be waiting for me?" They were curiously smiling.

What did I have to say? How should I answer that question?

I have a roller-coaster relationship with Switzerland: when it comes to nature, to people, to my chosen family, I love them, I love that country, I'm glad to live my life there. But when it is about politics and bureaucracy, there is a fit of huge anger in me. In a moment that something recalls it, impulsively, I want to run away from that country. I get a heavy heart with this

country when it reminds me of the silence, when it reminds me of passivity, when it reminds me of conservatism and political hypocrisy. I feel depressed, I feel auto-censured, I feel censured, I feel not understood. I feel like a minority. I feel ignored in the name of thousands, of millions of foreigners who live there.

I didn't know what to say. I boggled over.

On the one hand, this person is so courageous; so on fire. They have full right to scream and to confront everybody, with the condition of respect and non-violence. But on the other hand, after seven years of experience, I think I know enough to say how their performance might be seen from the perspective of Swiss culture and Swiss attitude. I personally experienced the denial in that culture. I have been confronted. I have shared my thoughts, demonstrated in its streets, used my freedom of speech, but I always hit a wall. The wall of silence and passivity. The wall which permits everything to continue as it is, as much as the country continues to be "safe" and "rich." I find it sometimes too difficult to adapt to Swiss slowness as a foreigner. I personally had the experience that, when I was telling my story, some people were not even believing what they heard. And my story is (for sure) not even comparable with the story of this young artist from Curaçao. As if it is not enough, when I criticize Switzerland's internal or external political attitude, I receive

comments that tell me to leave the country if I am not happy with it. I just told them to ignore what would be the reactions. I told them that whatever happens, it is their right to be there and perform their story. I told them to be prepared for nothing, to expect nothing. I told them that people are generally scared of not destructions, or not even death, but are scared of thought. Thought is subversive, revolutionary, destructive, and fearful. Thought tramples against privilege, rigid tradition, and all pleasure habits. Thought is anarchic and illegal, never gives a fuck about authority. Thought considers those scared humans who pretend to be the ruler of the universe, like little black-holes surrounded with endless silence. Thought is gigantic, fast, and free. It is the light of the world and the biggest step one takes. I told them that we are the mind of the future. What we think, what we believe now, will be alive in the future. And we shouldn't forget our past. If we let it happen, the time will continue to form its circles – it might repeat itself. That means: the violence of the past has just changed its hand. Now it is in our hands. And what are we going to do with this anger? Are we going to smash it back to where it is coming from, and let them have it again – use it again in the future? Or should we break this circle and form a fine line with it?

We should think! We should think bigger. We should think larger. How can we channel this anger and turn it into something construc-

tive instead of having unhealthy explosions from time to time? What is the “correct” attitude and language for that? Right then, as I said that, our conversation was over. Their smile was still on, and I was glad to see it. My new curator friend arrived two hours late. And without noticing, we became twenty-something people. I was surrounded by all these beautiful activists, those who are engaged for equality and for the freedom of love.

That conversation resonated in me all night long. I felt Swiss. I noticed that before! When there is someone angrier than me, I become Swiss, I invite them to be diplomatic, to be constructive. Diplomacy is not a bad thing, the opposite, I think it is the proper way to dialogue. Switzerland can really be a global role model, if it wants. It has the capacity and the direct democracy to do it. But I do not accept the slowness, waiting for the obvious changes which are not happening today or tomorrow. I want equality. I want inclusivity. I wish togetherness, not traditional hierarchies. We are in 2020, in the middle of Europe, in a world-runner country, and I am still waiting to be able to marry my partner (for example). I am still waiting to be accepted as a local citizen. I am still waiting for my artist's rights. Artist rights are human rights. As if being recognized bureaucratically as a second-world citizen isn't enough, how about those who are considered third-world citizens? I want recognition of thousands of illegal

people walking in the streets, working for us. They have no voice! No voice! Can you imagine? This year we are in the middle of a global pandemic. Corona could be, and still can be, a great moment to accelerate, and to find a solution for this misery. Cantons can take measurements – at least temporarily to try out – against domestic violence, climate change, for recognition of illegal denizens, and giving them free health-care and food.

These days, a lot of people are so proud of solidarity. It is like a chewing gum in the mouth of people. Masticating “solidarity, solidarity” as if it is a national anthem. But, personally, I will not believe in this solidarity which is primarily oriented towards Swiss citizens. It is not solidarity, it is nationalism, it is a hierarchy. It is ignoring “others.” It is defining “others.” Discounting illegal people, closing your eyes, turning your head and still letting them work for your society is basically post-modern slavery!

Are we clear?

Greetings to my new friend from Curaçao.
I wish you a wonderful performance in Zürich.
Peace and love, Dorian.

“I SELL GUNS,
AND I CALL
MYSELF NEUTRAL
;)”

AUGUST 2020, BERLIN

A couple of days ago, I have been invited to participate in “Rewriting Our Imaginations” which is a public art project that will take place in the city of Basel. Seventy-two artists are invited and each artist has to design their own poster regarding the title. The initial intention of organizers (Liste Art Fair) is to invite artists to rewrite, to capture, to comment on this “new normal” caused by Covid-19. I tried to take it from a wider perspective. In my opinion I don’t think there is such a thing as “new normal.” It is the same situation, but some destructive people have gained a better excuse to more specifically blame some others. Conspiracy theories get attention more than ever. Their producers and promoters got more clicks – more money in their pockets. The age of the ego of Strongman politics went down from fifteen to six. It became easier for these disgusting creatures to invent excuses to pull a gun; to threaten. Instead of unification and solidarity: lack of leadership, and “me, me, me” politics become harsher in the name of saving greedy capitalism. The marriage between hierarchy and money is still not in its deathbed. Instead of divorcing each other, they declare an eternal contract. It is more obvious to me to understand that my equalitarian utopian world dream is in the same corner as unicorns and rainbows – at least right now. I had thought my dreams were closer to possibility on the spectrum of all potentials.

There is not a new normal – nothing changed!

When borders got closed, insensitive people compared it with Gaza. When forced lockdown happened, insensitive people compared themselves with prisoners of conscience. When mandatory distance and wearing masks came up, insensitive people compared it with tyrannized Muslim women. But those insensitive garbage talkers continued to consume and destroy nature. Climate change is rocking; no measurements are taken; consumerism is still mega à la mode; domestic violence is, as usual, tolerated; animals are still eaten, and shared proudly on social media; and, of course, liars got longer scripts to play their multi-façade roles on the stage of power games. And now an art fair invites seventy-two artists to “rewrite our imaginations.”

If everything is about hierarchy, and if I still want to make a small change in this sad picture, and if this art fair gives me an empty poster to design, I believe I should start to talk about my surroundings; about the place where I live. First of all, I personally feel an urge to be more active concerning world problems instead of continuing in my singular artistic abstract creativity. It is a personal artistic decision and not a comment or critique of other artists. They can continue to do what they want to do. So, if I should be active, even become an activist maybe, I should start in my surroundings, in the place where I live. Because it is so easy to complain and to throw shit to 3000 km away, blame Trump and Trumpkinds and their disciples all the time...

It just releases egos on social media in one's echo chamber for a while, makes one feel good, feel like one did something good. And I think it is just fooling oneself. I tell to myself I should focus on here! What can I do here?

By the way! I would love to give a small example related to this ego-satisfaction through long distance before I explain my poster project. Journalists love this ego-satisfaction through long distance! They love it. They love to pump it. They love to contort one oppressed story to satisfy their public's ego. I will give now one example regarding Western satisfaction, and this is a consensus between Turkish intellectuals. Whenever these intellectuals are a subject or an object of an interview in a Western country, whatever is the main reason (book, theater or movie release), journalists bring the topic all the time to Erdogan, and they want to hear how much these intellectuals are oppressed, instead of promoting their oeuvre. Then, these journalists link all the inspirations to Erdogan's catastrophic politics. They write and make everything look like there can't be any different inspiration but Erdogan's oppression and violence. I agree with these intellectuals that it is a complete Western ego satisfaction to show to their public, 'look! we give voice to the oppressed, we give them freedom of speech'. I do not consider myself, and I am not considered, as one of those intellectuals, do not get me wrong. But I have a similar story. When I won the Swiss

Art Awards in 2019 with the video A&a (if art fails, thought fails, justice fails...), there was a teeny-tiny, super-small article in NZZ (Neue Zürcher Zeitung – which is considered as one of the most reliable newspapers for German-speaking Switzerland). In the article, they put my name with another winning artist, Mirkan Deniz, also from Turkey. According to the article, Mirkan's work is about attacks on civil houses in Kurdistan, and my video is a metaphor of the current situation in Turkey. I don't know what theme inspired Mirkan's work, but concerning my video, my inspiration was completely not Turkey or Erdogan! My initial inspiration was my juridic fight with Switzerland. My inspiration was coming from "how Switzerland was kicking me out of the country," because there are no artists' rights here if you come from a non-EU country. My inspiration was my legal fight against being a sans-papier in this country. It was about the injustice that I experienced in Switzerland. This journalist didn't even ask me anything. And at that point, everybody in the Swiss Art Awards team knew my inspirations behind that video work. One could also ask them. Or maybe they asked, but didn't want to mention a situation about their own country, and preferred to write something that says how Switzerland let these poor immigrants use their freedom of speech against Erdogan's oppression... I wished they had contacted me. I wished their interest to write one sentence about my work hadn't ended up as an invented story. Instead, I wished

that we could talk about that video, and I wished that we could seriously use our freedom of speech to say the truth behind it. But instead of truth, here we go with the post-truth!

But... Let's come back to the poster project.

In my own mental hierarchy of social problems (according to Carolin Emcke, social problems hold the second place after economical problems on the "hierarchy of pain"; mentioned in her book *When I Say Yes*), I select violence and anger as number one.

I love the poster format. It is in your face as a medium. What I like most is that these posters will be shown in the streets next to other publicities, commercials, information charts...

To be honest, I didn't think one second about what I would like to do. I think often about the power and tactics of obedience via public commercials. I read enough about it from a psychological point of view. In a society that everything is already preselected for you by unknown power-holders, these commercials serve just to keep the capitalist lie of "you have the full freedom to do whatever you want." Plus, in Switzerland, where the country has the one and only direct democracy system in the world, citizens are invited to vote very often, and in its streets, there are constantly new posters about the upcoming voting subjects.

And of course, in the time of populist right-wing rise, the Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC) has its own, not unique, but just disgusting, horrific, toxic, hate-oriented, racist, islamophobic, and unbearable ads everywhere. Most of the time, according to them, it is all foreigners' fault for everything; even though those "guilty" foreigners literally clean these racists' shit in their toilets, we are considered as if we came to steal Swiss money.

In Switzerland one of four people is a foreign national, that is officially equivalent to 24% of the people who live in this country. We do not have a Swiss passport. That means we do not have the right to vote. But we, two million denizens, are every day actively participating in the Swiss socio-economic-cultural system. We are working for this society, we contribute at every level in daily life, but according to the SVP, we are here to change the culture, to destroy Swiss traditions, to steal Swiss money as if nobody knows where this money comes from.

Their hate speeches and graphics in their posters make them in every polling more scandalous, more obnoxious. And as a "foreigner" (this is just a bureaucratic adjective in my opinion), me and everyone like me (foreign nationals) that I know personally: we get seriously offended! And my eyes are looking for someone, a foreign-national Swiss/a voice/a representative in this country who will defend our situation in front of

this hate propaganda. But it looks like someone like that doesn't exist. Between 2 million foreign denizens, I don't see someone who is diplomatic, but still defensive; liberal, but at the same time respectful to traditionalists; integrative, but not only for foreigners, also with Swiss national conservatives. I just don't see in public a thinker or a sociologist or an artist or a writer or a lawyer; someone who dares to be a proper voice.

What SVP does is using a strategy of hate. In 2017, they have been – once – convicted for hate crime, but they should be convicted for each time! And obviously this political party has an army of lawyers and enough supporters who double-check every possibility that one can't juridically attack them. I repeat: still what SVP does is a hate crime, because they point to a group of people; they put minorities as a target of all their reasoning. In their campaign ads, they put minarets in every corner on the map of Switzerland. When they do that, they pump islamophobia. When they depict a woman in a burqa, they objectify women's bodies. They generalize with hostility what "Islam" is. When they literally kick a black sheep out of the group of white sheep, they invite people to be racist. When they put a "fat" person with an E.U. belt sitting on a cracked Swiss map, they discriminate against their neighbors, they objectify the human body, calling their neighbors fat and heavy, greedy, space-consumers. When SVP

shows a condom on the EU flag and writing on it: "A Swiss [woman] is protected from European viruses," they officially consider women as a reproductive mechanism, they objectify their body, they abuse people's freedom.

They are disgusting! And I find it unbelievable how it is still not considered as a hate crime?! In Basel, I see many times these posters are destroyed. In this city, people are very open-minded. But when you go 30 km away, conservatism starts to burn one's brain. One well-educated adult foreigner immediately questions how is it possible? But obviously open-minded people live in the big cities generally, and they are not active enough to come together to do something to protect 24% of this country which doesn't have the right to vote. Is this hate propaganda an example of democracy? Is this really what freedom of speech is? Targeting foreign national denizens who don't have the right to vote, and using them for propaganda purposes, pumping hate regarding them: is this what we call democracy? I think it is a slowly accustomed, legitimized hate crime. There must be many more debates over this. We should question it.

Imagine for 2 seconds that this 24% of foreign nationals are gone from Switzerland... What would it look like?

Whatever!

Let's come back to the poster project: My inspiration for this project is this hate. I want to make a political poster with a subject that these SVP people and their voters cannot, for once, blame us. Using their simple language, and same graphical aggression, but this time showing something that is the complete truth.

I will write on this poster, "I sell guns, and I call myself neutral ;)," with a wink. I want to put a subject that is the truth but is at the same time not talked about enough. It is easy to find proper information about how Swiss-made tanks and guns are deathly used; how these Swiss-made products are sold to the market of murderers and fired upon civilians.

I get angry when I see SVP's publicities. I get offended. It has big effects on me living in this country. But, I am lucky to be surrounded with open-minded people that I can discuss and exchange opinions with about these targets. But what if you are not surrounded by open-minded people? What if you live in a small village and as a foreign-national Swiss teenager you see these hateful SVP attacks regularly? I use the word attack, because I see it – I experience it – as an attack. What will this teenager think? With whom will they talk and build up a proper opinion? How will they "integrate" smoothly to the society under this threat in which they are not welcomed and one day they might be kicked out of the country? How will these young adults

become Swiss? Instead of dialoguing with them for unification with this country, SVP posters create an invisible anger. This unquestioned force can lead these young people to feel left out and pushed out to radicalization. SVP radicalization is feeding on the other side an invisible radicalization. Instead of "integrating" the foreign youth into society, this youth starts to have – at a very early age – an identity problem. And that phase can go in a very dangerous direction.

What is this game?
What is this?
But how?

To make a conclusion: I don't believe that there is a "new normal." If we do nothing about climate change, if we do nothing about domestic violence, if we do nothing about sans-papiers, if we do nothing about hate crimes, if we do nothing about equality and inclusivity, if we don't improve human rights, for me, there is nothing changed with Covid-19. Nothing changed. It is the same violence at home. It is the same violence in the streets, it is the same inequalities in every level of society, it is still the same distraction, same language, same posters everywhere.

ADDITIONAL TEXT I: 4.9.2020
ARTIST + ACTIVIST = ARTIVIST

It took me 30 minutes to make this poster. I am happy with it. I showed it to many people to get some opinions before it goes public: some are Swiss nationals, some are foreign-national Swiss, some are foreigners who have never been to Switzerland. I received different questions. It quickly became social research for public opinion. Here I will only share three examples that I find very interesting.

By a Swiss citizen: “Do you pull a gun to a country that supports your art, gives you awards and money?”

My answer to this comment has been, “No, I do not pull a gun at all. I use my freedom of speech and my artistic freedom to address one very important national problem. First of all, it is necessary to question this topic. Second of all, if we want foreign-nationals’ inclusion in this country, we should honor and appreciate different perspectives and opinions. Let us bring diverse perspectives and share our opinions. It is also good for society to remember one little thing: being reminded about a subject that foreign-nationals can’t be made guilty for. It is much more a reaction to far conservatives to show that a foreign-national can also speak with their vocabulary and graphics to them.”

By a foreign-national Swiss artist:
“Are you safe with your permit to stay in Switzerland? They can kick you out of the country if immigration office hears about this poster and if that office is dominated by conservatives...”

My answer to this comment has been, “No, I am not in a safe situation and yes, if the immigration office doesn’t have any consideration for artistic freedom or freedom of speech as a fundamental rule of democracy, I can be in trouble very soon. And if it would be the case, it means that there is a serious fundamental problem in the bureaucracy. It would be censorship! And I do not understand one thing! Just because I am a foreign-national artist in Switzerland should I just shut up in front of violence and inequality?” Concerning this issue, I would like to invite everybody to read the “Manifesto on Artists’ Rights” written by Cuban artist and activist Tania Bruguera. In December 2012, Bruguera was invited to Switzerland to attend a meeting of experts on the subject of artistic freedom and cultural rights held by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. In this gathering, Bruguera read out this manifesto on Artists’ Rights which argues the vital importance of freedom of artistic expression, and that it is the duty of governments to assure it. In this manifesto, there is one point which divulges clearly this unspoken problem that concerns any

foreign artist in any foreign country. It says, “[...] On the other hand, there are artists who are internationally acknowledged and admired because of being activists in their countries of origin and who, at the given time, for one reason or another, migrate and establish themselves temporarily in other countries where they find a new type of censorship, a censorship that relegates, pigeonholes, and sets them inside a limited mental geography where they are only allowed to talk critically of the country they come from and not the country to which they have arrived. This is a situation of censorship in which artists are relegated to being unidimensionally political: a used political object. [...]” I am not an internationally acknowledged artist, but I am an artist. I am a human being, and I think it is already enough to fight against violence and hatred wherever I am.

By a foreigner artist who has never been to Switzerland: “If it becomes a scandal, then most probably they will target you as a foreigner artist who attacks Switzerland: you may end up this journey alone... Aren’t you afraid of being excluded?”

My answer to this comment has been, “First of all, this work came up very quickly and strongly enough that I didn’t need something extra to be convinced. I care about the opinions of the people who surround me, but so far, nothing was strong enough to keep me away from doing

this poster. The art world that we want to romantically believe it may not really exist. There are humorless problems in the art world, as much as in any other field. Also, I didn’t take the position of being an artist in this society to belong to a bubble. Unfortunately, yes, most of the corners in the art field are closed bubbles, but I made my choice to become an artist in the name of finding the truest version of myself and finding the most peaceful way to interact with life and people. Imagining the art world as something perfect and as if it is a healthy environment are very sweet ideas. Nevertheless, I do not rely on a dream of “one day...”. I consciously embrace the archetype of the fool. And I try to do it in the most positive and direct way. Again, honestly, with the posters of this extreme political party in Switzerland, I feel attacked. They bother a lot of people, and I do this poster because I am obviously convinced sufficiently that somebody has to open the topic again, or remind of it, or underline these very serious questions about it. The platform to show my poster in public space is the real value. If my poster was supposed to be hung within the fair’s walls I wouldn’t do such a thing. I wouldn’t use such a language. Because the project, from the beginning, was considered to be placed like any other informative publicity, I imitated these disturbing posters by replacing it with another serious problem that foreigners can’t be blamed for. I am sure people in the art field in Basel will definitely understand and even empathize with this project.”

MERCURY RETROGRADE

OCTOBER 2020, BASEL

On Sunday, two close friends surprised me. They came from Geneva to Basel. We had dinner together in a little sweet restaurant where a friend of theirs, whom I haven't met before, joined our table. This new friend is a Swiss architect in Basel. They are a smart, ambitious, and very determined person. While we were getting to know each other, they told me which exhibitions they have been visiting during the day in town. This new friend started to tell their strongly held opinion about Deana Lawson's solo show *Centropy* in Kunsthalle Basel.

This architect friend was aggressively against this exhibition that I loved and appreciated. They were saying that 'the show was inappropriate, because it was a typical exhibition where we were in front of images in which vulnerable people were exposed with fantasized scenes'. The architect who has an African descendant father was very sensitive to seeing Black people's semi-vulnerable, semi-fantasized exposures. They were crucially against any type of romanticism regarding Black issues. The architect had difficulty to find any reason to do such a show. They were demonstrating how even Black artists capitalize on Black issues for their work. 'In the end, this type of exhibition does not change anything in the lives of these communities. It remains just a topic to talk about for a while, then when the exhibition has finished everything (the ideas behind, the contacts behind, the points of view behind) will be consumed.'

That was the general point of their argument. At least that was what I was subjugated to. The way they were expressing themselves with their hand gestures, accentuation, and posture, and how they were so sure about what they were saying, in the end everything was too aggressive for me.

They made me go maybe too far in my mind.

What I heard is not my opinion. But I find their standpoint very interesting to reflect on. They are a young architect who is interested moderately in contemporary art. They had no clear image or idea about the art world, art institutions, the process of doing art, ideas and conversations, or the limits of an exhibition. They come as public to see something finished. When a viewer in art comes to see a show, they don't know what happened during the preparation. They don't know what was coming in the artist's or the curatorial team's minds. Exhibition visitors who are not into art come in and maybe read a paper of which they understand almost nothing. Because potentially the text is considered too sophisticated and poetic than something based on shared truths. It is not someone's fault. Two different perceptions, so two different vocabularies.

It made me recall an old memory. I was twenty-three years old when I discovered Boris Mikhailov's photography. It blew my mind. It moved

me to another level, with new rules and new potentials for life – for our collective life. Even today I get goosebumps and full of indescribable emotions when I recall the first discovery. Aesthetically it was breathtaking. It pushed all of my buttons. I was working in Tel-Aviv at that time and met some ex-Soviet Union citizens. I shared with them my opinion about my new favorite photographer. They were not happy with my affection; my love for this photographer. They were telling me how it is easy to “play” with people who are abandoned by the system. They were telling me that the photographer, to be able to make these naked, scenographic images, paid them money. They were saying that Mikhailov was “renting” people for his personal interest, telling them how to stand, what parts of their body to expose, which type of faces would be the most characteristic, etc. And this topic remained in my mind. Even today in the Western culture, Boris Mikhailov’s photography is considered genius, but when we are talking about these photos with ex-Soviet Union citizens who are not in the art bubble, they disagree. They think Boris Mikhailov is selfish. They think that these photos didn’t change anything in these people’s lives for the better. They think that they have been only used.

These different interpretations of a work of art ask automatically: how is the role of an artwork considered in different life experiences?

For those who are not in the art field, there is an invisible naïveté behind what an ideal artwork should be or should do. When I use the word naïveté, I use it from an Oriental perspective in which naïveté is something pure and empathic – not like the notion of naïveté in the Western world where it is considered more or less similar to stupidity. It is positively naive to think that art can have enormous effects in society. I believed in that as well before I started to study art. I thought what an artist and art institutions do is seriously guiding the society’s perspective... But in the end, I find out that it is not that easy to have even a proper voice in art. When we are far from this field, there is this belief that everything in art is for the sake of good. But it is not exactly the case. The art world is problematic as much as any other field in the world. The art world is an organic entity which reflects and contains exactly the same problems.

When an artist works on a new show, it might look from outside as if there is socio-political research, reflection, or sensitivity behind it, which is meant to dominate the process of preparing a show. This can be correct only if the artist has such an intention, or the show has been conceptualized in that way before. And then the artist is invited to be part of it under that condition. Otherwise there is no pressure to show something socio-political.

I don't know personally how the preparation of the Deana Lawson show went. One can easily find the exhibition text and the press materials online. There, I think Lawson's intention is very clear. I find the exhibition fantastic. Before going to any social point, let's concentrate on the experience between the oeuvre and its viewer. I saw this exhibition three times. Each time, with each step I took, Lawson's photography was whispering. People in the photos were in the room. The size and the framing were well done according to the room's capacity. Projectors from the little rooms behind were evoking a vintage sound. This sound was turning all the pictures in the big room alive. The mirror frames were abductive. I was at these people's houses and they were in the Kunsthalle. This dialogue was very powerful. I could look them in the eyes. I could listen to their murmurs. Whatever the resonance one might get from this sensation: good or bad, in the end, it was opening a lot of boxes in my mind. Some boxes proclaim gentleness, love, and life, while some other boxes may cross the line of one's capacity for the unknown. We are invited to deal with dilemmas. It is something very courageous to dare: to not be only nice. Then, I cannot compare Lawson with Mikhailov. Because their approaches with the protagonists are different. While Mikhailov is ordering, Lawson is dialoguing. And this one seriously important piece of information distinguishes the results of their practices.

Obviously, lots of sensitive boxes opened in the architect's mind. Even though I understand their opinion, I think it is too easy to judge something without knowing what's behind it. When someone comes to an exhibition with an expectation or preconditioned mindset, it ends most of the time with deception. Because art shows are physically public more than anything, sometimes viewers in art find the courage to scream all over what they think, before making research, or before reading text, or before knowing about the artist. Experiencing art is not only going upstairs in the Kunsthalle, looking to the objects for ten minutes, then building up your own uninformed judgment. There is tons of work behind it. Just because the exhibition is public, it doesn't mean one can consume the show in two seconds, if one is not someone closely familiar with the domain. I personally consider it disrespectful. Sometimes an artwork is not even visible. Sometimes it doesn't even exist. And if you are not interested in trying to understand the concept, it is your own problem. When you have problems with a work of art, make a research before exploding. Read about the artist, read about the curator, read about the idea behind. It is that same level when one does not try to understand conceptual art. Any impulsive, personal judgement of an artwork shows its degree of seriousness when it is expelled. The one-sided perspective that I heard from the architect last night was a blunt preaching for ethics: with their dominating voice and never

letting people speak; with their hand gestures and never letting us raise our hands; with their assertive mimics and never letting us be shocked. They were way too sure of themselves. We had no space for our opinions. Or we had to not have any opinion except theirs.

Ethical preachings: ethical preachings without collecting enough information are easy to do. There are quite important differences between questioning ethical rules and preaching them. Ethical questions can be asked in art. Any show which has an objective to change the world has to be prepared to be asked those questions. But if a show hasn't been organized with that specific aim, normally it provides more angles for an individual reception and evocation. Art and art institutions try to bring consecutive questioning and not making a point. And that is already enough.

I try to understand the ethical problems that showed up during the dinner. I try to discern the differences between the universal ethics with Western ethics which dominate the thinking here in Europe. I recall an incident where an artist exhibited a video with footage taken in northern Iraq, in Kurdistan. They were there a couple of times to document people. I saw the raw images while we discussed the artwork several times. And most of the time, I was reminding them to consider ethical implications. They had the full freedom to do whatever they wanted,

but it was my duty to remind them. At that time, they were confused about what to do with the large amount of footage in which there were distressed kids, adults in ruined, bombed houses, landscapes, and city panoramas, conversations, etc. We talked many times that it shouldn't look like a problematic Western attitude, one who is going to the "crisis zone" to make a documentation, and then when they come back to their "democratic country," they do a collage of the oppressed people to show to Western people in a super aesthetic and romantic way. Especially this romanticization of the material: the footage in slow-motion. Yes, it works well. The aesthetic result is beautiful. But I personally find it unethical. In the end, obviously, the attention that has been spent was not at all about the ethics, it was more about the look. I don't know what happened. Was it the stress of finishing their project for the show that pushed them to be unethical? Or when it comes to art, do we think that we have the right to ignore universal ethics? Or in this case, it is not only about ethics, maybe it is more about how artists can position themselves!

When an artist is assuming their position as an artist, sometimes they can also walk on the border of ethics with all the potentials of their works. There is no problem with questioning ethics... What I try to say is that artists when we are walking on the border of ethics, maybe we have to be conscious, aware about it. We have

to assume it. And if it is necessary we should mention it in our explanations. What I try to underline is the importance of transparency. But if we walk on the border of ethics unconsciously, we should also expect to receive ethical questions by viewers about our artistic engagement's ethical problems. Because when there is no conscious awareness, no clear artistic position, and no fair explanation, it can become easily problematic. Art is not something perfect. Artists are not perfect. Of course, there are artists who are down to abuse the system like any neo-liberal capitalist. That is not something new. But these artists, after a while, if there is no strong power-holders' support behind them, they disappear. But if the artist is taking their position as a provoker, or as a fool, or as a politician, or as a documentarian, or as an activist, or as a journalist, or as a thinker, etc., there is no problem to express the artistic freedom and the freedom of speech.

I do love the definition of artist by Carl G. Jung. Jung didn't literally define artist, but throughout the texts the notion of artist is graspable. Carl G. Jung evokes a simple circle. Inside of the circle, imagine that there is everything that we know: known-unknown. And outside of this circle, there is everything that we don't know: unknown-unknown. Jung imagined artists and scientists as people who are at the border of this circle. They suggest that we use our four cognitive senses: thinking, feeling, sensation, and

intuition to make the unknown-unknown, partially known-unknown. To update the circle. To enlarge the circle. To understand the circle. This image resonated in me from the first moment that I read it. It makes much sense to me. We artists can position ourselves as someone close to the border, but still inside of the circle, or we can stand on the border(s), or we can dive into the unknown.

THE OCEAN OF DARKNESS

I metaphorically imagine the border of this circle like a beach. Imagine it is completely dark and you put your feet in the ocean. You don't see anything, but something intrigues you to walk in that water. As long as your feet touch to the ground, you may find a way to go back to the beach. But if you lose the touch of your feet from the ground, one can lose the mind in the ocean of darkness: the unknown-unknown. Not all artists, not all scientists come close to the beach. Not all artists, not all scientists dare to put their feet into the ocean. Not all artists, not all scientists attempt to experiment with life in the ocean of darkness where you actually challenge your-unknown-self. I believe that trying to keep your feet touching the ground is very difficult. Once we start to walk in the water, it is easy to disappear. It is how one can become a fool in life, this is what I unconsciously try. Keeping the foot on the ground is keeping the connection with the ordinary world.

I do appreciate every artist and scientist who dares to get in this ocean: artists who define their own position in society, artists who bring the sounds of the waves to the people who have never been on the beach.

SHAPING TO
LOVE AND
MANIPULATING
TO CARE

NOVEMBER 2020, BASEL

There is serious evidence that the Chinese government is committing a major crime on Uighur citizens in the north-western territory of Xinjiang, in China. Reliable journalists use the word genocide. For more than three years, in the independent media, there were many accounts of Uighurs who ran away from the country. They tried to make their voice heard, and they were actually very powerful with that. But no country in the world wanted to care or comment on this inhumanity, because the world is dependent on China. To keep the international dialogue as it is, and for their profit-balance to capitalistically grow, they preferred to stay silent. But when the coronavirus spread, Trump needed to find something to blame China for. Suddenly in the world media, Uighurs were for some weeks on the front page. It became a striking example to show the hierarchy of power, how the economic world-runner countries are dominating the cultures and politics of other countries through the media.

Our humanitarianism is not based on humanity. It is based on the economy.

When I was little, I was into the world atlas. I was dreaming to travel the world, reading names of the countries, their mountains, their seas, oceans, lakes, their flags, their neighbors. I was dreaming of sailing in the water, walking the world, writing scenarios in which I fly. At the age of five or six I was not ignoring any places in

the world atlas. I was unconsciously careful to share the same curiosity with each country. Then I became older. With time, I became aware that I was watching so many American movies that I started to look at New York maybe more than Buenos Aires. There were mostly Turkish or American movies on the television, some European, and rarely Japanese. Around the age of seven, as a TV-obsessed kid, I had much more of a stereotypical idea of how New York or the USA looked like than the country where I lived. I remember, around that age, my route for traveling the world had changed. I didn't care anymore for the idea of going to Uzbekistan or Chad or Peru or New Zealand... My curiosity, my attention on the atlas, was modified. It was shifted. It became unconsciously dominated by Western culture. I was bombarded enough by a certain type of image, so as to fantasize life more than what I could invent by myself; with my own imagination.

Today, I believe this is the case for a lot of people. We receive first local and national news, and then USA's, then if there is time left, other powerful Western countries' information. Or maybe (!) there is an extreme situation or a natural disaster in a forgotten country. This supremacy brings obedience. When I was ten to twelve I was made to believe the Western world was much better and happier on every level for a kid's mind. If I could be there, I could be freer. I could have much more fun. It was

suggesting for me the feeling of being inferior. This situation is not letting you be only who you are. Hence, it implements the image of you are not living good enough. Because, in the place where I was living, the same beautiful houses or clothes or happy people or richness or glamour or sex or light or the same drink that I started to care about weren't there. At that age, most movies were having a happy ending. They were telling me that if I dreamed and believed, then my dreams could come true. If I could go there, I could have my happy ending. This is basically what capitalism is. It makes you someone who wants to have things and not to be. At least I see now for myself that when I was little I had been abducted, then hooked.

I wanted to learn English, French, Italian, Greek, Spanish, German, Russian, Japanese, but not Uighur or Kurdish. Today I know the reasons why it happened like that.

It reminds me of La Fontaine's fable between a wolf and a dog... Wolf looks to the dog and says, "You have a nice roof. You have also food, but what is on your neck?" The dog answers, "That it is my necklace."

Regarding the crime on Uighurs, and why we don't react, is going parallel with our conscious orientation toward influences. Once someone is hooked by the system, with our limited biological capacity, we perceive and react where our

head is pulled. Media is the volunteer guide on this journey that we call life.

So my question: if you heard about the Uighurs' current situation when it was on the front page, do you still remember it? This crime has been happening for years. It has been on the headlines this year for a couple of weeks, but it is still happening. I am not directly asking what you did about it! I question the simulacrum.

With a famous example to explain: What is the difference between a toilet paper commercial that you see on the TV and the news about this genocide? They have the same time and space in a limited time and space. Nevertheless we are more oriented to the toilet paper commercial. It is superior and more controlling, because you can go to the supermarket and buy that toilet paper. This is what one individual's capacity permits. One can't go alone and stop the genocide. But comparing their effects in our emotions: not being able to stop the guilt of genocide stimulates us to prove that at least we are capable of buying that toilet paper.

The absence of basic reality calls into question what the reality is and if it even exists.

Today, the world holds its breath to see who will win the election in the USA. We should keep in mind that it is an election in the biggest economy and the biggest military power in the world.

The value that we give to this election is so high that it imperializes us. We are deeply captivated by the competition between Trump and Biden. Trump was so bad and disgusting already that it made Biden automatically the good guy. There is no third option. The choice can only be made between these two and it already conditions everything. Because it is in between two, and we have to pick one of the worst, one must be better than the other. This better one, after a short while, can look like the solution for everything when you have no other option!

Since weeks it's all about this election. And yesterday Biden officially won. The majority of the people that I can directly connect with on social media go crazy happy with this result. Alright. But first, let's double-check with eyes wide open. We shouldn't forget that it was a quite similar case for Barack Obama. They were the "hope." The world was so happy to see a Black president in the USA. Me too. But we shouldn't forget that USA will always put the USA first. During Obama's administration, U.S. military forces launched airstrikes or military raids in at least seven countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan. It continued to kill people, to control countries, change regimes, and change others' economies, manipulate others' resources, support gun production and circulation, pumping oil and billions of other dirty things. On the surface, Obama was the good cosmetic tool to cheer

up first the USA, and then the world. And since yesterday everybody is sharing the picture of Kamala Harris. I am also happy to see for the first time a Black woman as vice president in that country. But we shouldn't forget that the USA will continue to bomb and to kill civilians in other countries. It will continue to pull its leashes all over the globe. And this vice president and the new hope called Biden will continue to make the same war decisions. They will sign their names under these declarations. That will happen because of the system. They will follow the path that the USA was on before in the big picture.

Yes, giving visibility to minorities and oppressed people, and establishing democratic human rights is fundamental. Today, the visibility of minorities is necessary more than any other time. But everything is not black and white. Just because it is Biden and they are a Democrat, it doesn't make them an angel. Just because Harris is a Black Asian woman, it doesn't make them an angel. I think we have a right to cheer up and be happy to get rid of Trump. Nevertheless, we should be wise and keep trying to understand what is within.

If the goal is bringing a livable world to everyone in the big picture, behind the surface it doesn't matter if it is done because of someone's gender, race, or social class. Because the goal, the collective goal is expected to be beyond any

terminology. But in the small picture, when it is on the institutional and even individual level, those who are in power, voluntarily or involuntarily, consciously or unconsciously, may use the same patriarchal way of communication, same way of dominance, same way of marketing, same way of control, same way of distribution, same way of manipulation, same way of feeding the hunger of power, to be able to receive the needed money in the name of the big change. And meanwhile they are making improvements to their public reputation in their vitrines with the power of showing oppositions. Here, I use the word vitrine as an image to describe politics (in every sense: governmental politics, daily life politics, business politics, etc.) that are framed to be “good,” “new,” “progressive” but underneath are still operating in the same way as before.

This is an important image of stupefaction, because the same power structure of this established patriarchal two-choice system casts a shadow on every level of society. When I say every level of society, it means the big patriarchal system is composed of little systems and it simultaneously produces new little cells from its own genetics to keep the big system alive. Therefore, in a casual way to say, anything public has to have a vitrine: to show and to suggest a form for an attractive living. And they have to give to that form a social value: good or bad, beautiful or ugly. This value has a tendency to create trends, because of the social and bio-

logical necessities for improving; a better and easier way for living/surviving.

Today in the Western vitrines, “progressive” power holders (new hopes) give visibility much more to non-dominants. They try to hire non-dominants. They talk about non-dominants. They try to promote non-dominants. They try to create new role models for non-dominants. They try to create jobs for non-dominants. And that is great. But the method of how it is done can still be a patriarchal domination. We shouldn’t just look at the vitrine of situations. We should not mix the political appearance of the vitrine with the real purposes behind it. It is extremely problematic to see a queer person using their queerness as a promotion to reach goals such as becoming the first openly queer U.S. secretary of defense. By doing this pinkwashing on the vitrine one shows open-mindedness, an acceptance for queer people in the military, while one’s queerness has nothing to do with the real purpose of military. Or someone exemplified as a good Christian mom becomes an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, someone who was sponsored by ADF (Alliance Defending Freedom: a far-right group that files cases and lobbies for policies which support the advancement of an extreme vision of society; they support recriminalizing homosexuality in the USA and criminalization abroad; they defend sterilization of transgender people abroad; align homosexuality with pedophilia;

and argue that homosexuality will destroy Christianity and society.) Maybe this person won't be able to go to extremes in the USA, but for sure, they continue to support hate groups' activities abroad. Maybe at first second it is cute to imagine a queer military chief or to see someone who plays the part of being a good Christian mom. But these adjectives don't justify any violence, dominance, or hate. Maybe in the 21st century, patriarchy doesn't have a gender or one face or one form. Maybe it is just equal to building or keeping an empire, a system, in which domination is privileged over and valued more than coexistence.

When we look at those who have got patriarchal big power, we can find clear traces of heroism in their speeches. In the beginning, they promise serious changes for the good of everybody, but generally, after a short while, one can discover behind this "hero": a hunger for power, a hunger for climbing in the social hierarchy, and not much empathy nor vision for togetherness. And some of these people construct today algorithms to earn even more money, to get even more power than any time before. And their narcissism, their techniques for public manipulation, their approach to "winning" in capitalist life: these sick qualifications generate, embody, and prioritize today toxic role models who are in every field to promote arrogant selfishness by saying, "look at me I did it, you can also do it," as if everybody has equal conditions. By doing that they

pump individualism and automatically a separation. With today's speed of technology and with the platforms in mass media and social media, these power-and-money maniacs spread "justifiable" greed in the belief that this is the promised freedom.

I believe one of the biggest human failures is to be right rather than be effective. There are still not enough efficient methods for transparent representation of main purposes: horizontal dialog; a new type of platform for truth-telling without any fear put forth by vertical systems; or basically, a new way of thinking for new economical systems. Yet, the most problematic is finding the money. It makes automatically all the same old dependencies continue to apply: building their own soldiers; using the same language of militarism; firing critics and hiring only people who say yes to them; using the names and the adjectives of all minorities and oppressed people on their vitrines; doing the same style of discrimination with the cosmetic help of positive discrimination.

Against any type of violence and dominance, I am down for positive discrimination. But don't do it as makeup. Make it consecutive and transparent with your main purpose. The patriarchal system has to change. And positive discrimination is part of the healing process, but this healing should be done with shared truths. And we should remember that in the big picture,

shared truths don't have a gender, a race, or a social class. In the heart of the idea of empire, shared truths are always egocentric; they get bent and become post-truths. Adjectives are the most playful mind-confusing tools for post-truthing on the vitrines. Patriarchy's main central body is made of domination and then violence. And money is the measurement for almost everything in this selfishness. We shouldn't live in a culture of 'take this money and shut up.' Maybe we should immediately start to get used to using truth-telling and transparency as a new supplementary tool for measurement parallel to money.

A patriarchal body tries always to be determined and dominant to reinforce its reasons for its selfish being. You can see, think, judge everything from many, many different angles.

When I listen to the speeches of post-truthers, we all hear incredible rhetoric. Those post-truthers know how to speak, how to conceal the central problem and make us confused with one little detail. They can point to something far away as the reason for a problem; playing the victim role while persecuting the real victims. Those people can convince a rock and get its juice. Today it is crucial for all of us to pay attention to fact-checking: to understand how those rock-juicers react when they confront any critic. Do they honestly listen, reflect, and give a proper answer? Or do they become a missionary,

blurring the image/problem and tell you at first, 'Everything is a question of perception,' and then explain to you their perception while they try to hook you for their own beliefs and missions which are most probably chained to money.

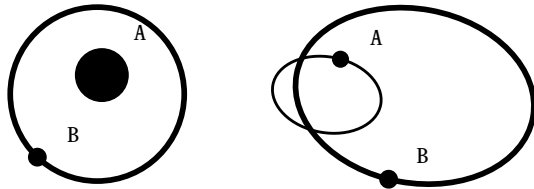
Yes! Everything is a question of perception. But how and where do you put this perception? Can we ever bring about coexistence with a selfish perception? Can we ever bring about collective oriented coexistence with this archaic game of domination? I don't think so. Because my understanding for coexistence is to dance with you, and not to play musical chairs.

When I was little, I wasn't only obsessed with the world atlas and television. I was also obsessed with the sky, with the stars, with the mythologies behind them. I can still find exactly where are the planets that day, constellations, galaxies, far stars. From that passion I hold two concepts of coexistence in my mind, which always helped me to know how to handle these rock-juicers. First type is like the sun which wants every planet and thing to turn around it. And then there is this dance of kinship like between Sirius A and Sirius B. They hang around each other in harmony and look as one from far away.

And you? Would you like me to turn around you?

or

Would you like to dance with me?



Discourse in a nightmare: July 2020, AdK, Berlin
 My dear family, we have to find a direction,
 a direction that will make us grow. But it is
 not a material growth. It is the growth of
 this togetherness. This merger of great energy.
 To wherever or to whomever we target it,
 those who confront it will suffer. Our to-
 getherness has charged enough. Our silence
 is death. And they are scared. But who are
 they? Is this one who played with your feelings,
 and those who squeezed you in their hands?
 Those who tricked you by saying, 'I love you'?
 And those who dominated, and then ate all
 your hopes and tears. Those who consumed every-
 thing and never got full, have today us in
 front of them. Because we had enough.

THE FUTURE IS GENDERLESS

OCTOBER 2020, BASEL

I have problems. I have problems when it is about how I am physically perceived. From outside, I am expected to be a man. But I am not. Ok, I have a beard. I generally put on stereotypical man clothes. And these are undeniable molds. But I feel genderless. I work on the core of things. And in the core there is no gender. Resonance, light, energy can not have a gender. It can have different physical forms but the thing that they are made of is the same.

Does it sound like intellectual masturbation?

I have to confess that I am tired of rectifying people. I am tired of not being seen as a person, as an earthling, rather than being a man. I don't want to be only a male artist. I don't want to be only a woman artist. I don't want to be only a non-binary artist. I don't want to be only a queer artist. I don't want to be only a homosexual artist. I don't want to be only a trans artist. I don't want to be only a foreign artist. I don't want to be only a Turkish artist. I don't want to be only a Swiss artist. I don't want to be only an Armenian artist. I don't want to be only a French artist. I don't want to be only a Smyrniote Levantine artist. I don't want to be only a Jewish artist. I don't want to be only a Muslim artist. I don't want to be only a Christian artist. I don't want to be only an esoteric artist. I don't want to be only a beautiful artist. I don't want to be only an ugly artist. I don't want to be only a white artist. I don't want to be only a successful artist.

I don't want to be only a duffer artist.

I don't want to be only an artist!
I just don't want to be tagged.

Basta!
I just want to be an earthling.
I am ubuntu: I am because we are.

Maybe the most hurtful thing that I have to deal with most frequently, is my male look.
I am tired of being put in that box.

I don't feel any urge or need to have surgery to accomplish anyone's expectation to put me in another box in the name of releasing me from what I want to get rid of.
Burn these boxes!

If it is necessary. Take this as a declaration.
I cut my penis.

When I start to work on a new idea, the moment I know what I want to deliver, I start to search for a body of expression. Most of the time, I prefer the form of a sculpture or a performative video. This time, it is a video titled *The Future Is Genderless*.

Next week, we will shoot it in my atelier. We will put the camera directly from above. I will be sitting on a chair. I will cut my fingernails and dead skin around. Meanwhile, there will be a radio station diffusing permanently the same sentence which says, “The future is genderless.”

I believe in fluidity. That is why I experience fusion. I think, reflect, sense love. Simply the notion of love. Since when does love have a gender?

This repeated sentence, “The future is genderless,” should and shouldn’t be misinterpreted. It may sound provocative for the second wave feminists who think that the future is woman; or for those barbaric men who run the world for thousands of years and still try to keep their power and everything about it as it is.

Sometimes, it is sad to see those who seriously work for a change, but they are at the same time blind to make it large and inclusive enough to everyone. So confusing... When we are talking about equality, we should talk about equality. There are people beyond notions of woman

or man. There is another level of perceiving love and life. In this beyond-gender perception, the only importance is accepting yourself and the other person as they are. Physical fluidity is part of the concept of being fluid and not being determined in mind and in body. In this way, the notion of time-space becomes the proper fine line to truly experiment with life. One listens to time, body, and spirit simultaneously, and then according to their purity and honesty, one can become convinced to show the equivalent physical appearance or any type of equivalent expression: instead of what society expects from them how to look “correctly.” First an awareness should develop, and then we can have a constructive conversation reciprocally.

I will have a fake penis in this video. Right after cutting my nails and dead skins, I take out my penis and start giving it a shape with scissors. With a serious and painless expression, I will sculpt it. Piece by piece until there is nothing. It is not a fantasy. I know it is slapstick. But it is also something very serious. I am fluid. I do want to have a safe space without your pressure. I want to be free from any binary imposed by society while I am already free from all separative adjectives that might be given to myself. I refuse determinism.

BINARISM: is a form of sexism. Until the moment that one disagrees it doesn’t recognize non-binary gender roles and identities. And this

concept believes unconsciously that it is what is supposed to be.

HETERONORMATIVISM: until the moment that one disagrees, everybody is heterosexual. And this concept believes unconsciously that it is what is supposed to be.

I can be a bearded woman. I can be non-binary. I can be just myself.

We never had full liberalism. Capitalism killed liberalism. Real liberalism provides equality in opportunity. But capitalism does not recognize such a thing. Once one holds power, they will do their best to get even more power and do not consider equal opportunities. That means there has never been a pure liberalism. It has not been experienced yet. Because true liberalism is supposed to protect and improve the freedom of the people as the main concern of politics. It considers government as the necessary organ to protect people from being abused by others, but it also recognizes government itself as a potential threat. Civil protection organs should secure life and liberty, but their power may also be turned against the idea of liberalism. The problem, then, is to conceive a system which gives the government the power to provide the necessary protection for individual liberty, but also it should prevent those who govern from abusing that power. Imagine a thousand people, there, nine hundred ninety nine say “yes” to

something, but there is one person who is against it. This one single person should be listened to for their argument. What are the reasons for this one person who does not agree? The moment that we give a voice to this single person, for me, that is the real liberalism, and not what we have been taught. Although this person says, ‘I disagree because of X,’ (whatever X is) the most important is giving them a space to breathe. A system that allows this one person to disagree. So, at the end, this video project is not only about the binary, it is also about this one single person being able to disagree.

With everything that we do with love, binaries should expire. The future is genderless. We should always keep in mind what comes next. This is part of our social responsibility. If you do not include us, sorry, I disagree.

Party!

A HOME AT
THE END OF
THE WORLD

AUGUST 2020, BERLIN

Imagine a big party organized by non-binary, trans community for non-binary, trans community. But everyone can also invite their reliable, trustful friends to this special gathering. And imagine in this party after a certain hour people start to take off their t-shirts on the dance floor. For most of the people in the party, some had gender confirmation surgeries, or some are currently transitioning, or some are not planning such a physical step, but still feeling sincerely the belonging to this specific community. All may find a safe zone to feel physically free and remember to be naked publicly without any judgment or fear. They do not take their tops off for anything sexual! It is just a celebration like any other party. And everybody is just drunk and happy, and some want to get clothes off in that humid space. In the heteronormative world only cis males are “allowed” to do that. If women get topless on the dance floor, they would be tagged to be a ‘whore’ or a ‘pervert.’ It would be considered like ‘a sexual invitation.’ And if a trans person would be topless in any heteronormative dance floor, how would it be taken? Could everybody be respectful to surgical scars on the chest of a trans man? Could everybody be gentle and generous to keep doing their own business?

Now remember this party has been organized by non-binary, trans community for non-binary, trans community. A cis heterosexual male ally, who had an amazing night, takes his t-shirt off

on the dance floor. People who don’t know this person get scared, and they don’t allow them to be topless. The reasoning behind was that he, as a cis heterosexual male person, he could do it whenever he wants and wherever he wants. Maybe his toplessness was reminiscent of daily life struggles. And the organizing community was not feeling safe enough when they saw this. This person was informed. They had two options: they could put back on their t-shirt, or they had to leave the party.

I do understand this restriction and I do agree with it. After long debates, to be able to clarify my mind, I had to separate the theoretical thoughts from the daily life experience, because there are still so many serious obstacles to reunite them. Just because theory and practice don’t confirm each other, it doesn’t mean one of them, or both of them, are wrong. Maybe they both are correct, but the reunification can’t happen if we collectively do not work on it. There are still many more steps to close the gap.

It is an aporia.

In theory, restricting this cis heterosexual male person to put their t-shirt on is a discrimination. And at some degrees, from a heteronormative perspective it can also look as if it is revenge oriented. As if that one non-binary, trans community wasn’t working for human rights, for equality and justice for everyone.

As if to ghettoize. It can look simply like another path of separatism.

But! In practice, in daily life, what I wrote above, the sadly ending experience, a potential for an ideal plot project: a potential for gathering without any exclusion, but just harmony and acceptances of all, unfortunately doesn't look possible. All patterns aren't yet fused. There are strong lines, strong segregations in our sharpened boxes. In my community, we get tired of repeating our same sentences. We are tired of educating heteronormativity, tired of explaining everything again and again and again, then again...

Gender politics are very sensitive topics. But in the end I truly believe that every single person on this planet must have equal rights and respect. When I work with LGBTIQ+ community for our rights, I fight automatically for universal human rights, not only for LGBTIQ+ rights. Of course, no community is perfect. In my community there are so many traumas and systematic threats everyday that some of us are permanently in defensive positions. These daily life oppressions in the heteronormative world push us to build invisible walls. It pushes us to live in a cocoon. And with time, and with each discrimination, our work for human rights pushes us to think only for ourselves; only for LGBTIQ+ rights. I think this is a result of not having been fundamentally recognized by

a heteronormative society that still doesn't embrace, doesn't assure our lives. It looks like we work only for ourselves. But yet, it is not enough until politicians, social workers, teachers, in the end everybody, engages systematically themselves to make a change for embracing in the name of everyone. Until then our job on the community level won't be enough.

I know we cannot push people to change. But we can make available certain forms of understanding. Some forms of understanding that others can be open to hearing. When one keeps trying to say something that others don't want to hear – right there – there is this feeling of powerlessness and the feeling of waste. That is maybe why most of the engaged people are annoyed to explain everyday the same stuff. It looks like for the majority our stories don't resonate.

I believe that one of the main reasons for the right-wing domination in the Western world is because of the catastrophic failure of the left-wing in the last decades. The Left, since decades unfortunately, has separated us. The Left got interested in fighting for human rights and against discrimination, but by working on that, we have been divided into little communities: there is a community for cis feminism, there is a community for queer feminism, there is a community for trans feminism, there is a community for Black trans feminism, on the other hand Black community, Native people community,

differently abled people's community, or religious minority community, community, community, community, and then each community's demand for its own characteristic rights. And today each community finds itself working only for itself. Finally it has been acknowledged by the Left that we can't separate gender, race, and class for a long time now. What happened? Why are we still separated from each other?

We can keep insisting to tell our real stories for a while, but after a certain amount of time, words are no more enough, we want to see change in our surroundings, not only hearing wishes about it. But, if these changes remain long-standing or neglected, the storyteller starts to get offended. People build up protective walls, become rigid and thick-skinned. So one little mistake can turn all the anger out. If it happens to you: hey, good luck! It's like putting fuel in the fire. Resentment proclaims itself. Anger proclaims itself. All the potentials for reconciliation expire. At the threshold of tolerance: no more understanding lays behind it.

If you are not active against transphobia, you are automatically transphobic. Being/staying passive in a society which allows transphobia makes you directly transphobic. Not being anti-transphobic means you are transphobic.

If you are not active against racism, you are automatically racist. Being/staying passive in

a society which allows racism makes you directly racist. Not being anti-racist means you are racist.

This cis heterosexual person in the non-binary/trans community party crossed the line. They have been selfish. They have been disrespectful. They didn't know how to dance with an understanding.

Didn't we read enough? Didn't we talk enough?

Why just because you want to live your life as it is should we have fear or even have to die?

I AM SORRY

DECEMBER 2020, BASEL

“What do I have to say? Or, to put the question another way: Who am I to say anything?”

Those who reject homosexual desire as perverse, unnatural, sick, and even those who consider themselves ‘tolerant,’ often deny homosexual men their masculinity and homosexual women their femininity.

The diversity of physicalities, the multitude of variations, of gestures, the diversity of ways to be female or male or somewhere

in between,
in motion,
else-

that diversity is blanked out again and again
by distorting images and concepts.

And those images and concepts
have always excluded someone like me,
even as a child: left me out.
They didn’t fit. They still don’t fit.
It’s not that I don’t fit within the norms:
the norms are not fitting in regard to me.
Something has always been too short or too long,
too heavy or too light; usually too unambiguous.

I don’t like monochrome.”¹

I don’t like arriving to a destination. And I don’t like monochrome. As this is chronologically the last text for this journal, I don’t want to finish it monochrome. In the last chapters I wrote about post-truth, violence, anger that I touched, lived, or observed. I put my experiences. Each time I had the position of receiver or observer of the actions. Here in this text I also want to add one disturbing memory in which I engage to violence. I think it is important to share one different side in a story.

1 Carolin Emcke, *When I Say Yes* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press 2020), 39/40.

In 2002, I went abroad without my parents. With my school we went to Royan, France for a French language summer camp. For three weeks I stayed in a big house that belonged to a single parent and their child. I ate escargot for the first time with garlic sauce there. We were six early teenagers staying at the same house. All of us were coming from a different country. I guess the family was earning money like that. On the second or the third day, the house owner asked me if I was Muslim. I said no. I don't know why, but they didn't believe me. They asked if I have ever seen my mom's hair. I didn't understand this question for a moment. Then they asked again, but this time with hand gestures; they were mimicking burqa. I said, "No, my mom doesn't wear burqa. She never covered her hair." They didn't believe me. They said something else, I didn't understand. I went upstairs. Next day, I asked this question to my school teacher who organized the voyage. I asked them why the householder asked me such a thing. They said, in France in the school books when there is a representation of Turkey, there was a picture of a mosque with women in burqa in the front. I found it horrible. It made me angry. Because it wasn't true. A couple of days later the house responsible told me, "Come here, I will introduce you to Mohammed." I went to the kitchen. They said, "Look, this is Mohammed, they are from Saudi Arabia. Petrol petrol. You can speak Arabic." They were laughing. I saluted Mohammed. But I told them that I don't

speak Arabic. The house-holder was like, what the fuck. They didn't believe me. I said we don't speak Arabic in Turkey. Mohammed confirmed. And the householder's face looked more awkward than last time. I said, "Nice to meet you Mohammed." Then I went upstairs. That ignorance made me angry. It couldn't be true.

Since forever, in my "foreigner" journey, I hear this kind of stupid or ignorant question, custom-made by prejudgments. Sometimes, one gets surprised to hear that my parents are divorced. Sometimes they don't believe that all my family is okay with my gender and sexual orientation, or even with my polyamorous heartbreaks. I hear a lot that I don't look like someone from Turkey. When I hear that I get angry because they don't even see what is laying under this question. When the approach of the questioner is going in the direction of race, it irritates me. I end the discussion: I immediately say, 'I am a monkey, we are all monkeys.' And when it comes to religion, in my teenagerhood I would say, I was violently against religion and everything about it. I tried to assimilate as best I could. Yes, I was an atheist. Yes, it is possible.

In my childhood I was taught that we weren't Europeans and neither Middle Easterners. We were a bridge between two continents, we were the melting pot of cultures. But at the same time, our education system in my city, in Izmir,

was subtly repeating all the time that we had to become European. Europe and its secularism was our direction. We were living in a laic country where religion and state were strictly separated. At the same time they were imprinting in us repugnance toward Arabs and Persians. Especially in my family, we strongly disliked them. When it comes to Middle East the only affinity belonged to Israel at that time. There was this knowledge in Turkish people's minds that Europe was categorizing us with any other Middle Eastern country just because Turkey was populously a Muslim country. So, because we were feeling the urge to become European, to be able to change our outside view for Europeans, we had to first separate ourselves from people with whom we have been categorized. I grew up arabophobic, persophobic, then after 9/11, slowly, slowly, islamophobic as well.

But I didn't perceive it like that in childhood. I was in a bubble of laic people: in a bubble that Turks, Greeks, Armenians, French, Italians, Muslims, Catholics, and Jews were mixed. Izmir was the representation of this. It was the laic, open-minded and progressivist face of the country. We were seculars and we were proud of being like that. It was also the case with my family. I question now if I remember someone in my surroundings, people with veil or burqa. I don't remember any: except traditional cloth that one could see easily at bazaars or in small villages around. Meanwhile, unfortunately,

objectification of the veil (in the end, the image of women with veil) was the symbol of ignorance and bad education. At least at that age I was made to believe in that. I was taught that these people with veil were brain washed by misinterpretation of religion. My education was telling me that we were "open-minded" people and we were supposed to be the majority. We had to educate these "ignorant people" who were wearing veils, and their families, and their children. We were calling them cockroaches.

Things started to change in Turkey in 2002. After that summer in Roynan, in November, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won the general elections. Rumors started in the country, some were saying, 'Don't trust Erdogan and AKP, they will change their face soon.' Others were saying, 'Finally someone who will dare to recognize everybody, they can bring respect for everybody.' People on the west coast have always been shown off for our secularism and our "progressiveness" in the country. The west coast was the country's economy, the brain: the only image on TV. We knew that in the eastern part of the country, in some villages there were no electricity, proper streets, even water. We have been taught that education was bad there, kids weren't even able to go to school. There was zero investment. Actually that is how the AKP came to power. They promised to forgotten citizens basic equality. They promised freedom of speech and freedom

of expression to everyone. They wanted to become a bridge between seculars and ghost citizens.

I remember during the election campaign that year, once Erdogan was asked in a TV show what they were thinking about homosexuals' rights in the country; if they were thinking to legalize gay marriage like some other European countries. Their answer was very positive. They said they 'want to consider giving homosexuals their rights.' They said they 'don't find it correct that homosexuals are unprotected.' As a thirteen-year old gay teenager I was happy to hear that.

In the beginning AKP's hypocrisy wasn't that visible. They did "good things" for the economy, they changed some laws which were still applicable from the 1980's military putsch. Everything was changing slowly, slowly. But the biggest chaos happened when they opened the topic of women wearing headscarf. Until the moment they arrived, women couldn't wear headscarf in the schools, at the universities, in governmental institutions, or state-owned companies, because the country and the constitution was laic. It suddenly became the biggest debate in the country – everybody was fighting on this topic. AKP was saying that if we want equality, we should give freedom of religious expression. The whole country got polarized very fast. The woman with headscarf was already the symbol of ignorance and bad education, then it became the

symbol of every opposition. We seculars were completely against it. I remember how we were insulting people who wanted to give or have this freedom. We were telling them to go to live in Iran. I remember at the school we were talking often about if the country was going backwards. We were all politicized. We were scared. In a short period of time, me and my friends understood that we were actually living in a bubble. Until that moment, we believed we were the majority of the country. We started to see an increasing number of people wearing hijab. We were hearing that AKP was giving scholarships to economically challenged families' children to go to school. But they were doing it silently, and they had only one condition: girls had to wear hijab, and boys had to report what was going on. The whole panorama in the country, in the city, in my collective life, transformed to something unbearable. Then the law changed and people who wanted to have free religious expression could wear hijabs. The problem was getting bigger and bigger. There was an empty building right in front of our apartment. In the same period of time, that empty building became a dormitorium for these young children who received scholarships. In a six floor building, on every floor there were maybe fifty teenage boys living. Total maybe 250–300. They were all disciplined. They had to perform prayer five times per day. They were between eleven to sixteen years old. Everybody who was living in the neighborhood was

frustrated. We didn't want to have a student complex with Islamic rules. Rumors, rumors, rumors... These types of dormitoriums were built everywhere in the city, in the country. The only thing we knew was that these new people in the city, mostly children, had been brought from very poor villages, from the other side of the country. And we locals didn't welcome them. Everything was getting tight and annoying. On the television there was only polarization. Newspapers were politically segregated. I was also pushed and became islamophobic. Only in my twenties I figured this out.

As if dealing with homophobia for me wasn't enough. As if fighting against ignorance wasn't enough. That moment, the chaos atmosphere in the country about this hijab topic made me believe that being homosexual was being against islam. This wrong logic sounded correct to me. Somehow I assumed the idea of being queer was equivalent to something that only progressivists could understand and live. Therefore, with a wrong mental construction I identified everything about AKP as something not progressive so automatically anti-gay. I was scared to lose my already limited freedom.

Almost each time when I was crossing someone with hijab I kept calling them cockroach. They were the symbol of ignorance. I don't like to write it, but it was engraved in my brain like that. The whole society was in a cultural war.

And this cultural war was the perfect playground to make those tornado changes apply. Then one day I did something. One day I was in the metro with a friend. We were joking. We were laughing and calling the person right in front of us a cockroach. Of course they had been hearing our humiliation but hadn't reacted to us so far. Their back was facing us. When we were arriving to the station where we had to step out, the announcement was made for the next stop. Then it beeped and I suddenly pulled the hijab of the person right in front of me with my right hand. I pulled their head maybe 30 or 40 cm backwards. They were screaming. We saw their face. Doors got open, and with my friend we ran away. We were laughing and panicking at the same time if AKP boys did see us, followed us. The first four or five minutes there was this feeling of pride, as if the half of the country, my teachers, my friends, my family would be proud of me.

In an hour, adrenaline went down. Inner dilemmas and frustration started to throw big rocks. That night I couldn't eat dinner. I regretted my day. I was constantly thinking about the violence that I had done. There was an earthquake in me. In the end I was ashamed of myself. I was the one who was rejected by society, by norms, by traditions, by culture. I was the one who was living violence because of their look, orientation, and beliefs. I was the one who was supposed to recall people to reflect on the

notion of tolerance. How could I do the same thing to someone else?

Who am I to say anything?

Maybe it was their only option, maybe they wanted to wear the hijab because they believed in it, or because of their parents' pressure, or just to get a scholarship to be able to study, or something-something. Who knows. And, who cares? Let people be.

What do I have to say?

Since then, I have this debt of owing an apology to them. I don't remember their face and I am sure if we cross today, we couldn't recognize each other.

I am sorry.

I don't know your name.

You, that I pulled your hijab that day in the metro.

I am sorry.

There is no excuse for that violence.

Since then, the country has changed a lot. It has been eighteen years now and people are still polarized. Everybody is angry. Seculars don't recognize anything from old Turkey. Yesterday's ghost citizens, today's majority, AKP's moderate islamists have also had enough with the dictator. Erdogan used religion and religions as their main tool to modify everything in their way. Today, there is no more justice, no more freedom. The youth has lost their hope. Everybody is looking for one little mistake of someone to explode; to discharge their anger. AKP and Erdogan lied to everyone, they played and cheated everyone. They changed everything. They destroyed operas, theaters, cinemas, parks, history, language, clothes, traditions, nature, science, literature, etc. But they built mosques everywhere. We saw Barbie dolls with hijab. We read the story of Pinocchio going to a mosque. They distort everything that belongs to everyone. Those boys who were living in dormitoriums, today they are grown up and they run the country. Nepotism, mafia, blackmailing, violence, and imprisonment became a daily routine. No more freedom of speech, no more freedom of expression, no more justice. And today I know that all these things have nothing to do with Islam. Erdogan and their power succeeded to manipulate people by using the name of a religion. They always pointed something in the air, and each time everybody looked at the sky, and each time we didn't want to believe that they were actually stealing our roof.

Today nobody belongs to that country except Erdogan. Sorry, at least that is how I watch the situation from abroad. Like many who left the country with anger, I promised to myself that there is no way to go back. It has been fourteen years now that I live “abroad.” I don’t mix anymore the manipulative fake religious ideologies with the true respect and love that one can have for their religions. What happened in Turkey is happening everywhere: smaller or bigger, lighter or heavier, larger or tighter versions. And not only with religions. It happens within everything that shows rejection and violence to someone because of their unique being. I have been made to feel maybe all my life as if I don’t belong to somewhere or to something. But it is not true. I don’t need someone specific or a specific authority to recognize me to have the feeling of belonging. I belong to the earth, to our real home.

Because I know that I belong here, you belong here, we belong here somewhere

in between,
in motion,
else-.

ONLY YESTERDAY

JULY 2020, BERLIN

Only yesterday,
 Before I fall for this dream,
 To forget everything about you,
 I slapped my face.

You have been gone
 You had to be gone.
 I slapped myself,
 “Wake up!”
 “Wake up!”

Then seeing you in this dream
 Right next to me
 I want you
 “Wake up!”
 “Wake up!”

My dear,

How are you?
 How is life over there?
 I saw you in my dream, in my nightmare last
 night. Everything was black and white.
 And we were grey.
 Imagine no color.

I was in a pulpit in front of people.
 Thousands of people.
 They were screaming and waiting for me.

I had to make a speech to them and you
 were right next to me.
 We couldn't talk with words.
 I was shaking, and you were doing your best
 to not show your panic.
 People behind us were holding guns to our backs.
 Someone from behind whispered.
 They said, “Start to speak.”

I didn't know who those people were.
 I didn't know who I was, what was
 my purpose to be there.
 What was my name? What should I tell
 those thousands of people?
 And the most important. Why were there
 guns behind us?
 What did we do wrong?

I didn't know anything.
 Someone from behind whispered again.

But the tone of their voice became harsher.
“Speak now.”

The gun touched my jacket, pointed deeper
in my back.
“Speak now.”

I looked in your eyes. And I understood that
that was my last time seeing you.
It was my goodbye speech to you.

People were screaming. I couldn't hear
anything clearly.
Do they hate me or love me?

I always believe in the power of language.
I always believe language is magic. If I put the
right words one after another, maybe we
can finish this terror alive. Maybe that is the
reason why people let the condemned say
their last words before the assassination.
Maybe the one who is going to be killed has
the last chance to convince.

I felt the gun in my back, prodding and
tormenting me.

While the voice behind me said, “Speak now,”
this time their other hand pushed me one
step further.

ABANDONED
ABDUCTIVE
ABOVE
ABROAD
ABSENCE
ABSTRACT
ABUSE
ACCEPTANCE
ACCOMPLISH
ACKNOWLEDGED
ACTIVIST
ADAPT
ADMIRER
ADORABLE
ADRENALINE
ADULTS
AESTHETIC

AFFECTION
AFRAID
AGAINST
AGGRESSION
AGREE
ALGORITHMS
ALIVE
ALLEGORICAL
ALLIANCE
ALWAYS
AMAZING
AMBITIOUS
AMOUNT
ANALYZED
ANARCHIC
ANGEL
ANGER

ANNOYED
ANSWERS
ANTHEM
ANTI-GAY
ANTI-RACIST
ANTI-
TRANSPHOBIC
ANTIDOTE
ANYONE
ANYTHING
APOLOGY
APORIA
APPEARANCE
APPLICABLE
APPROACH
ARCHETYPE
ARGUMENT

ARMY
ARRIVED
ARROGANT
ART
ARTICLE
ARTIVISTS
ASHAMED
ASLEEP
ASSASSINATION
ASSERTIVE
ASSHOLE
ASSIMILATE
ASSOCIATE
ASSURE
ATELIER
ATHEIST
ATMOSPHERE

ATTACK
ATTEMPT
ATTENTION
ATTITUDE
ATTRACTIVE
AUTHORITY
AUTOMATIC
AVAILABLE
AWARENESS
AWAY
AWKWARD
BACKGROUND
BACKWARDS
BAD
BANKS
BARBIE
BASTA

BAZAARS
BEACH
BEARD
BEAUTIFUL
BED
BEHAVIOR
BEHIND
BELIEF
BELONG
BEST
BETTER
BETWEEN
BEYOND
BIG
BIGGER
BIGGEST
BILL

BILLIONS
BINARY
BIOLOGICAL
BIPOLAR
BIRTHDAY
BLAME
BLIND
BLOW
BLUNT
BLURRING
BODY
BOGGLED
BOMB
BOOKS
BORDER
BORN
BOXES

BRAIN
BREATH
BRIDGE
BRIGHT
BRUTAL
BUBBLE
BUDGETS
BURDEN
BUREAUCRATIC
BUSINESS
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YELLING
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Due to the current situation around the world we are forced to rethink existing structures. Alter behaviours that seem fixed. In order to guarantee that Dorian Sari's exhibition is accessible and thus visible, the PRIMO app can be used to set the cover of this book in motion and activate an exhibition tour.

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