The current issue of Π#01 comes almost half a year after our pilot edition (Π#00) published in November 2011 in Athens. It's a fragmented sense of continuity – different periods of time, fragile materials, open thematics – that is in a constant negotiation, in flux. This attempt of Institute for Live Arts Research is moving away from canonical structures and linear forms of continuity, and engages with discontinuities of sorts: fragments and ruptures that might produce a continuity in time.

Those forms of continuity/discontinuity are not dissimilar to the occupancy of EMPROS by Mavili Collective and the re-activation of a disused space by numerous groups and people. Again fragile and fragmented modi operandi that appear and disappear; constantly seeking to engage with potential forms of continuity in discontinuous structures.

In March 2012, a 12-day programme ‘Potentials: Alternative Modes of Production’ took place in Embros as an attempt to actively explore forms of continuity. Institute for Live Arts Research | Π, participated in this collective programme, proposing structures of dialogue in order to redefine the notion of ‘agora’ and organizing an observation/feedback station in the space. We considered EMPROS as an agora, an in-between space, or to borrow Homi Bhabha a “signifying ‘third’ space, that lies in the interstices of agency and identity”.

Current issue is bringing together different modes of writing, and includes theoretical texts (Homi K. Bhabha, Vassilis Tsianos & Dimitris Papadopoulos), case-studies on particular cultural experiments (Steriani Tsintziloni), reflections (Maika Knoblich and Sonja Jokiniemi) and encounters (interview from Mavili Collective by students from DasArts Theatre School in Amsterdam).

To be continued...
Our Neighbours, Ourselves: Contemporary Reflections on Survival

[...]

My own intervention in the discussion on “authenticity” and “recognition” derives from some of Hannah Arendt’s leading themes in The Human Condition: In what sense is recognition a practice of acknowledgement and empowerment related to the “agent disclosing capacity” of speech and action? How do you “recognise” the emergence of agency in the midst of that “curious quality of alteritas” or Otherness (Arendt, 1998, p. 176) that reveals an agent who is neither the author nor the producer of his own life-story, to adapt one of Arendt’s most memorable phrases. Is there more to be said about “otherness” – about the role of Alterity in the realm of recognition – than Taylor’s benign statement that “[w]e define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others [G. H. Mead] want to see in us?”

The sovereignty of identity – whether it is projected upon us by “significant others” or expressed in propria persona – is not the crux of recognition. The subject of recognition is the process by which “agency” emerges through the mediating structures of alterity that constitute social representation. Look again at Taylor’s account of what he calls the “fundamentally dialogical character” of human life, and you will find that the practice of recognition begins, so to speak “in the middle.” It is only after signifying structures of intersubjective dialogue are established at the level of institutional and ideological anonymity that interlocutory agents – you and I, significant and insignificant “others” – belatedly assume identities in a contingent, open-ended conversation of plural and proximate relations. This signifying “third” space, that lies in the interstices of agency and identity, is what Arendt (1998) defines as the intangible, in-between – as “something which inter-est, which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together” (p. 182). Such a de-personalised realm of representation and mediation – where “subject positions” precede expressive subjectivities, and sites of enunciation precede individual speech-acts – is crucial to the identification of an agent who is both belated (non-sovereign) and intricately related to, what Arendt calls, the web of human togetherness.

The “in-between” – inter-est – is an intangible time-space because it is open to contingency and unpredictability as to who the agent may be; what subject-position he or she may take up; and how and when a speech-act might emerge to make a claim to recognition in a mode that may be individual or collective. But the “contingent” is not merely a formal or functional condition of agency; it is an ethical disposition that is intimately linked to the belatedness of the subject. It seems strange to think of recognition as a temporal regime when it has, in the main, been conceived of in spatial and positional terms, whether these are dialectical or dialogical. Agamben, however, is surely right to argue, in Remnants of Auschwitz, that the “faith” of the subject as agent of Testimony lies deep within the site of enunciation – in the contingent potentiality to speak and to be – rather than at the propositional level of the speech-act (the archive). “Contingency is possibility [or potentiality] put to the test of the subject... [because] [t]estimony is a potentiality that becomes actual through an impotentiality of speech.... [This division and separation in the subject signifies] the living being and the speaking being, the Muselmann and the witness” (Agamben, 1999, p. 146).

[...]

Recognition is something more than a person-to-person dialogical exchange, or a group-to-group inter-personal acknowledgment. My attraction to Arendt’s intersubjective account of agency for these purposes lies in her emphasis on the relational, rather than identitarian, concept of agency. Recognition discloses the contingent and conflictual relationship between the “what” and the “who” of agency: what a person is in the context of shared social and historical norms; and who he is in a more private, particularistic sense. It is the shifting ratios of “what” and “who” – determined by social differences, psychic dispositions, moral and political discriminations – that makes the agent’s disclosure deeply problematic. It is, however, the very frustration and perplexity that accompanies the revelation of agency as enunciation – “neither reveal[ed] nor hid[den] in words, but give[n] [in] manifest signs” (Arendt, 1998, p. 182; Arendt is here quoting Heraclitus, Fragment 93) – that is, at once, the trial of, and testimony to, the agent’s freedom as acknowledged in the ambivalent and ambulant movement between the “who” and the “what” in the process of judgment, deliberation, choice and action.
Arendt’s account of the state of alterity picks up something of this ambivalent, double sided recognition of agency: “I am not only for others but for myself, and in this latter case, I clearly am not just one. A difference is inserted into my Oneness” (Arendt, 1981, p. 183). These “inserted differences,” I have argued, are temporalities that move restlessly between the agent’s “what and who”; switch back and forth between the first person and the third person, in-between We and They; and construct a contingent community of mutual recognition by intangibly connecting belatedness and relatedness. It is by grasping this ambivalence that articulates “the person” with “the agent” that we follow Arendt into the realm of a politics of rights and mutual recognition that empowers us in speech and action, to be, at once, for others and for ourselves. Recognition, then, is the capacity to represent and regulate the ambivalence that arises when what is presented as fatedly “objective”, material, conditional – injustice, discrimination, poverty – is capable of producing, in the interstices, an agency of empowerment, resistance, transformation.

[...]

In a New York Times article on 26th November 2006 Warren E. Buffet is reported to have said: ‘There’s class warfare, all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war, and we’re winning.’ This statement sounds even more true today. The 2008 economic crisis brought with its wake a sweeping attack on global living labour with the introduction of harsh austerity measures, the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, the surge of racist and anti-migratory attacks, the (even deeper) dismantling of public education and social provision. In addition we saw the failure, or better unwillingness, of global governance to introduce even the mildest regulation of financial capital, the collapse of the climate summits in Copenhagen and Cancun and the failure to tackle the global food crisis. This is class war from above and it seems that they are winning it.

Escape Routes was written as an attempt to think the possibility of politics from below against this pervasive capitalist spell over life. Our motivation was not so much to deconstruct this attack or expose the logic and system that produces it (which many other authors have already done insightfully) but to develop a new perceptual strategy for thinking and acting in this conjuncture. We wanted to identify and refine a perceptual strategy that avoids the dilemma between resignation on the one hand or mere resistance to control on the other – two alternatives which fix us in permanent and global class war exceptionalism. Rather, a honing, retraining, remaking of our senses is necessary in order to allow us to think how radical social transformation is possible and already takes place. In Escape Routes we are not looking for social transformation in existing organised forms of resistance. Thinking and acting in terms of resistance makes us believe that the only way to resist the global attack that Buffet shamelessly conjures up is by reactive opposition. But the moment of opposition never comes as such. Instead, what we see is a series of epochal eruptions that leave us almost speechless and puzzled because of their power to announce something that by far surpasses the political semantic of resistance: the Paris banlieues riots in 2005, the 2008 December insurrection in Athens, or the 2011 London riots and the Arab revolutions. How can we understand these metropolitan uprisings, strikes and riots? They do not ‘resist’ something but create a new situation that allows those who have no part – following Jacques Rancière – to enter and change the conditions

Reference list
of existence altogether. On a different scale, how can we understand the silent and mundane transformations which happen when people who refuse medical normalisation develop diverse and alternative embodiments of their illnesses, when migrants who clandestinely defy the borders that block their future expose the limits of liberal citizenship without ever intending it, when people twist and queer the hetero-order of intimate relationships to create other kinships, when precarious workers refuse to become regular workers? How can we understand that people who were all their lives partaking in European 'oligarchic democracy' now do 'Real Democracy' in Madrid, Athens and Cairo in 2011?

The magic formula of social transformation that Escape Routes attempts to grapple with is that the social changes not when people resist, respond or react but when they craft new situations, new worlds, new ecologies of existence. This is an idea that is anchored in the principle thesis of autonomist Marxism about the primacy of workers’ exit from work as the driving force of capitalism. Escape Routes, as Stevphen Shukaitis notes, takes up and reworks this thesis by decentring the workerist fixation of autonomist Marxism. Exit and escape are not particular to the realm of wage labour. Retraining our senses allows us to perceive and act with slivers of social transformation as they multiply across different realms of ordinary existence. Moreover, it challenges any idea that control and resistance are two distinct movements each occurring in response to the other. Escape Routes attempts to depart from this serial mode of thinking by showing that resistance is only one of the things that sparks people’s creative action – think of fantasy, melancholy, desire, boredom etc. Moreover, acting sometimes produces a surplus which does not just respond to oppression but creates a new occasion, an excess that is not reducible to what existed before. The relation between social movements and power that played out in the 20th century can be depicted as an aleatoric succession of encounters. In the case of the relation of capital and labour for example, we can see that in every one of these encounters labour attempted to escape its own conditions of existence and exploitation, and this escape kept transforming the tissue of everyday life itself. It is like a Beckett play – the actors coexist on the stage and each actor’s deeds are the precondition for the actions of the other, but they never directly address each other or engage in systematic dialogue, they simply act and change the other through the material effects of their doings. Escape Routes names this as imperceptible politics: politics that are imperceptible firstly because we are not trained to perceive them as ‘proper’ politics and, secondly, because they create an excess that cannot be addressed in the existing system of political representation. But these politics are so powerful that they change the very conditions of a certain situation and the very conditions of existence of the participating actors.

II.

Criticising the limits of political representation as we do in Escape Routes means that it is also necessary to interrupt often unexplicated ontological assumptions about people’s capacity to represent themselves and the world through their perception and action (and Stephenson and Papadopoulos have developed this to a larger extent in the book Analysing Everyday Experience). So far we have discussed how imperceptibility and escape break the presumption that the relation between the subject and political power is one of representation. Escape Routes argues that humans do not represent worlds in our minds. Our minds are worldly. Representations do not exist independently of the material world which they supposedly re-present. So politics is not about representations but constructing the world. This work of construction can be done through concepts, affects, ideas. But these are not just outside matter – they belong (again) to the same actual occasion, they are made of the same stuff. Concepts, affects, ideas are material, just as a cell, a neuron, tissue, water or soil is material. Thus we can say that we do not hold on to the binary opposition between ideas and materiality. There exist no two distinctive ontological entities of ideas and materiality connected or added to each other through ‘+’. Rather we have one world, and everything in it is a differentiation, but everything is as much material as anything else that exists. Once we reject this dualism that codes and language are mixed with objects, spaces etc. Moreover both of them are one, they belong (again) to the same actual occasion, they are there because they are both made of differentiated matter. Codes, or to use a example free software programme codes, exist as a differentiation of materiality that can only exist as part of other human and nonhuman things which helped them to come to life: a community of
software developers, certain political visions circulating at that time, a legal system of proprietary rights and its enforcement, a certain type of processors, fibre optic cables, the internet, the market of software etc. So it is not ‘the code + the materiality’. The software code is a certain morph of a specific material occasion as much as the chips which run the codes are a certain form of the same specific material occasion and so on. All these things together make each other (and the code) possible.

Semiosis, codes, language are all stuff of the same world. And semiosis, codes, language are not representational, they construct – literally – the world, even more they are responsible for the world. Monism is not about epistemology but about care for the worlds we live in. As Donna Haraway says 'language is not about description but about commitment'. When feminists for example rework language to challenge everyday injustice, this is not about representation, it is about the extent to which it reorders lived ordinary materiality. In Escape Routes, refining our perceptual strategies to see, understand and work with this non-representational form of human existence takes us to continuous experience. Continuous experience is a way to see how people live life in ways that their potencies are not delegated straight to some sort of external political power. What we mean here is that representation establishes a strong automatic relation between subject and political power whereby the subject surrenders (or tries to resist) her potencies to institutions which are there to administer these potentials. The promise of representation is to secure a peaceful mediation between subject and political power. But if one breaks with the logic of representation then it is possible to interrupt mediation and to reclaim the power of politics in subjectivity. This is exactly what continuous experience attempts to establish: it proposes that radical politics are possible only when they are anchored in the flow of experience between people and between people and things. In other words, it attempts to think politics as a practice which materialises in the everyday life of people and in their relations with each other and the world. Continuous experience works without being mediated by some form of representation but through constantly being in a process of materialising. The materialisation of continuous experience beyond representation politics hinges on the capacity to craft and create new worlds; new worlds in the sense that Stevphen Shukaitis describes in his commentary the autonomist practices of infrapolitics and the undercommons: imperceptible worlds.

Again why is imperceptible politics central? What about Scepsis that raise the important concern that imperceptible politics could be a zone of pseudo politics that does not have the capacity to change things? Let’s recall the 2011 Tunisian revolution. It is a revolution that came directly from the everyday; there were no dealers of representation, there were no left parties, big NGOs, empowerment campaigns, external humanitarian interventions. There were the permanently harassed street vendors, the young academics that were ready to migrate, the caring culture between the people of the neighbourhood, the brothers, sisters and friends living in transnational communities abroad, all these seemingly invisible connections that suddenly occupied and safeguarded central places in cities and towns. In this sense Asef Bayat talks of ‘social non-movements’, non-movements because for years they were sustained and nurtured silently through the continuous experiences of people, things and places. It is these non-movements that when they were confronted with the brutality of the state, they crafted a non-identitarian collectivity of insurrection. But long before the eruption of the insurrection they had already answered the question of ‘What is to be done?’ simply by silently crafting new political ecologies, by creating new enchanted worlds.

* The text is a slightly edited abstract of the article entitled "This is class war from above and they are winning it. What is to be done?" of Vassilis S.Tsianos, Dimitris Papadopoulos & Niamh Stephenson, which is about to be published on July 2012 on the magazine Rethinking Marxism.
Steriani Tsintziloni
Danse Theoretician

Creating an audience for dance

Theatre 'Embros' 15 March 2012

6.00 pm
We haven't yet started.

6.30 pm
We have just started.

Two choreographers (Konstantinos Rigos and Konstantinos Mihos) and a dance theorist (Steriani Tsintziloni) discuss about an artistic 'experiment' at theatre Apotheke. During the first months of 1995 the two choreographers and Mary Tsouti (founder and choreographer of Analia company) used Apotheke theatre as venue for presenting their work. The aim was to initiate new conditions for dance performances (selection of venue, longer period of presentation). Maybe, this was an attempt to combine their efforts as an unconscious need to co-exist, to form a community (Mani, 1995, 3). Finally, this 'experiment' aimed at creating the conditions for dance to have a permanent venue for presentation, so as to start building an audience for dance.

Then, in 1995, a dance performance, in accordance to its ephemeral nature, was usually performed only for a limited number of performances (two or three) per year, under material conditions that often did not help the role of the performer or the role of the audience. Then, in 1995, the Psyri neighbourhood was not trying to become the Greek Soho (Pournara, 2007, 5) and the actions for urban regeneration have not yet being ended in building lofts and hip apartments.

Then, in 1995, such initiative it might be conceived 'an alternative model of production', for it was different compared to the artistic practices usually used. In addition, it proposed possibilities for a collaborative model, and furthermore, it was the implementation of a model for presenting dance orchestrated by the choreographers themselves. This model took a particular stance on the issue of art production; a stance which saw art as part of a labour process involving not
only the creation but also the promotion, not only the production but also the consumption of an art form that 'has' to communicate with an audience. And all those issues were not common sense in 1995.

In other words, this practice seems to be connected to a period when dance started to be emancipated, in the sense that it was transcending romantic perspectives on artistic creation, while at the same time, tensions between artistic issues and market pressures started to become evident. Almost a decade later, these pressures are clearly expressed by bureaucrats when "a re-evaluation of cultural capital as a means for development" becomes dominant. According to this perspective: “The cultural issue for a contemporary society has to be understood in terms of politics concerning the production, distribution and exploitation of expression, an approach that has important economic implications” (Kyriazidis, 2007: 99). In such perspectives the concept of expression, interchangeable with creativity, takes a broader meaning, applying to cultural, social and economic contexts. Such perspectives are then in accordance with the economic turn evident in culture, art and politics after the 1990s. Expression, creativity, idiosyncrasy, qualities relevant to artists and the arts since the 19th century, are now "models of the new work ethic” (Gielen and Bruyne, 2009: 7). In other words, we are approaching the conditions described by the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno when art has dissolved in society like an effervescent tablet in a glass of water (cited in Gielen and Bruyne, 2009: 12).

On the other hand, contemporary dance in Greece in 1995 was searching for ways to approach an audience. Was that important? How and why the Apotheke experiment can be significant? The issue might be approached from three different perspectives: exploring the material conditions of production, analyzing the practice as a strategy for dance promotion or speculating about the ideological operation of the practice within the context of dance discourses. Taking into consideration the critical stance of both choreographers during our public conversation, the third perspective looms large.

Their critique has different context and content for each one of the two choreographers. Konstantinos Rigos was skeptical about the artistic merit of the work and the reception by the audience at that time. Konstantinos Mihos was criticizing issues of approaching a specific target group of spectators each time, dictated by the work itself. In this way, the artist could cope with and navigate within the tensions/pressures coming from commodity or market aspects inherent in every attempt to approach an audience. In such cases, the artist could, at least, decide about the general direction of recipients.

The presentation of dance performances at Apotheke theatre, I suggest that posed a major issue of dance into practice; that is dance's relationship with time, or in other words, with duration, or in other words, with repetition. For a whole month each choreographer presented her/his work, constantly, repetitively, every night for their spectators. It was an audience unexplored regarding its profile, it was also a model unexplored regarding its social, economic or other ramifications. But ultimately, as the press of the times suggest, it was also an interesting practice.

The arts, and especially performing arts, have inherited the notion of singularity, which is further intensified by their ephemeral nature. Singularity in arts is often connected to authenticity; however, in this case those concepts are problematic. Rigos presented his choreography *Daphnis and Chloe*, a work first presented by Diaghilev Ballets Russes and choreographed by the Russian choreographer Michel Fokine in the early 20th century (1912). Fokine's ballet, in turn, was also based on Longus' novel under the same name, written in the 2nd century AD. Mihos presented two choreographies, one of the two, having the title *Come forward my shadows*, was exploring the absence of Vassos Kanelos from Greek dance history. The choreographer mentioned that one of the creative processes explored in the work was the 'replication' on the interpreters' bodies of movements and poses made by Kanelos, as they can be found in the historical traces of his life (photographs).
It seems then, that the ‘experiment’ at Apotheke theatre has many different meanings and not only that it was an attempt of dance to become extroverted. Maybe it’s fruitful because not only it initiated a new practice but also ‘took advantage’ of old elements. How can we then cope with ‘repetition’ as an element of content in a dance work but also with ‘repetition’ as a series of (re)presentations to an audience? I believe that this ‘experiment’ raises issues concerning the reproduction of a work of art and its capitalist consumption, concerning the social function of concepts such as authenticity and singularity, but also concerning the, historically constructed, relationship between Kantian aesthetics of arts’ autonomy and dance in Greece.

8.00 pm

We are already over.

Maika Knoblich
performance maker - DasArts master of theatre

How do I want to work?

Already in winter 2011, Manolis Tsipos sent me his proposal for a visit to Greece which I was instantly intrigued by. I was curious not only to see Athens in these times but especially to see Embros and Evoia and understand what is happening there by experiencing it myself.

The question I took with me to Greece was mainly the question of How do I want to work? This is a question that is following me through my whole studies and which is related not only to methods, but to a more global idea of what working in theatre means and how do we want to engage with a place like a theatre. And I found interesting insights for me concerning that question both in Embros and the Eco Villages. In Embros the insight is the value of mainly looking for questions instead of solutions. And to worship what questions bring in motion and to not be satisfied with the solutions that we know from institutions but to listen to our own desire. Especially when it comes to looking at theatre as a place that is a communal place as well. What I remember in this context is a question that derives from a workshop with Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish: Do you want to share the problems or the solutions?

I think in its presentation at Embros, DasArts attempted to share the problems instead of the solutions with the audience. But problems here is not a negative term but a vivid one that puts our thoughts into motion concerning what theatre-as a space- can potentially be.

Something similar goes for the Eco Villages, Evoia and Agroteroristas. What I admired there was that they keep it as one of their goals to reserve time to show people their way of doing things. And that people come and learn by doing things their way! So a learning experience always comes with both acceptance of their ways and by doing things their way!

I have an honest interest in different modes of production in the sense that I have a deep respect for a decision to live differently, rethinking the concept of money exchange and valuing something else than efficiency and the concept of deadlines and fast solutions. What I honestly think is that the so called “free scene” in theatre -in its fight for visibility- has adopted principles of commercial

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business strategies, even more than some institutions or city theatres. What I admired most about the proposed modes in the Eco villages and in Embros was that they are utopist and “efficient” in their own way in a claim for inefficiency. This was the real discovery: that their modes are not trying to adapt to what we know. They are creating their own frame; they are not trying to make it work in someone else’s frame. And by that they save a lot of time that I -as a practitioner- spend sometimes complaining about “frames”. The mantra of Evoia is to “produce good news yourself” if there aren’t any good news. I think that this is crucial when it comes to the empowerment of the individual.

Pascal Gielen talked about what he called opportunistic art scene in a lecture that I followed, pointing out the fact that artists nowadays are constantly driven by taking opportunities when in fact maybe they should create opportunities themselves (like Embros or Evoia do), instead of being trapped into just reacting on opportunities from the outside that all too easily might turn out to just be demands.

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**NO 1. About a place where new meanings can be created.**

The metal chains of closed doors leading to a silent looking box are opened with delight. I enter my first time to The Embros Theatre; the old and the new. This box is like a shell- a shelter and a cave for an everyday researcher. Its universe is closed from the rest. Its secrets concealed in its definite form. Its occupation hid from the streets walker. Its collective privacy itching inside...

The Box-Form is strong in its protective qualities yet acknowledges its interconnectedness with the world outside of it. This is a place that consists on temporary flexible numbers of cosmos, inevitably embodying choreographic practices of an organism at a state of change.

As I wash the upstairs windows of Embros, clearing it from six years old dust and weight, the place is opening up the dialectics between inside and outside. The now visible body of the building is creating a feeling of transparency and transition.

**NO 2. “Part of the discovery of the beauty of a biological form is the discovery that it is put together of relations and not put together of parts.” (Bateson, 1970 cited in Klien & Valk, 1970, p. 220)**

Embros is a centre of gatherings, conditions for thinking bodies, thoughts that are physical acts, and encounters as ways to learn. Embros is a relational organism that is discovering its place and position in its surrounding environment inevitably embodied in itself.

Leaking pipes. Rust on the walls. Damp in the air. On one of the inside walls of the Theatre, it says something like: “the only reason I am writing you this is because it will disappear”. Everything is in constant flux of change; fermenting, disappearing and transforming; us as well as much as the space and the meanings we create and imprint on it. Here, we are in the midst of our own disappearing.

How are new thoughts born?

Embros is proposing an ecology that consists on multiple relations with international and local artists, thinkers, theatregoers and local community. Embros is itself agathering that is bringing people together, opening up itself for different artistic
and political views as well as sheltering ideas. Perhaps the purpose of Embros is not to singularly respond towards immediate situations and climates, but to create sustainable universe of its own with its systems and cradles. This universe is formed by multiplicity and interconnectedness.

What are then the conditions, the invitation and the dramaturgy to facilitate sustainability?

**NO.3. About what thrive people to do things.**

We settle into a discussion about the motivations for constructing an eco-village. And we receive a straightforward answer: the love of doing what you want to do. The motivations are: not being bind into economic dependencies nor sociological acknowledgement.

“Nobody knows how long we have, under the present system, until some disaster strikes us, more serious than the destruction of any group of nations. The most important task of today is, perhaps, to learn to think in a new way.” (Bateson, 1970 cited in Klien and Valk, 1970, p. 223)

**NO. 4. Poetic measures of myself in the world.**

As I sit on a piece of mountain land and observe the psychology of the dream about an eco-village put into action - the thought body activating and participating in its environment - I get attached to a thought about how things are made possible.

It fascinates me how certain systems and rules are put into place rather spontaneously or out of necessity. These systems are created to offer conditions for alternative practices to take place. Ultimately most systems whether individual or collective, are created to reach towards another land: another way of perceiving and thinking one’s position in the world.

Beliefs and fantasy are playing with the active body at work, in order to build utopia. The community as an heterogeneous unit in a state of flux.

**NO. 5. About small acts.**

I return to the Embros Theatre where I have left behind a dreaming room - an invitation to dream the future of Embros. During the last evening of our stay we repeat this exercise as part of our presentation. When the ten collaborators and volunteers map out the collective dreams collected from all of the participants, a certain social structure starts forming itself. Individuals start mind-mapping and they gradually evolve into a collaborative system of building the future of Embros through the dreams displayed.

It does not really matter, whether these dreams become true, but what is important is the moment of dreaming and imagining - this moment of total freedom of thought. Indeed, what is productive in dreaming is the ecology of movement of thoughts; the field of play between associations, thoughts and images. Perhaps, collective imagination will bring us a bit closer to some new ways of thinking.

**Reference**

1. How do you imagine the structure and organization of labor in EMBROS? Where are you now?

Gigi Argyropoulou: To be honest, it's such a fluid situation that we all keep changing views. We began the occupancy unsure of what comes next. We formed a program of activities that we weren't sure if we would fulfill. We never expected the impact that the reactivation of EMBROS actually had and in fact in a strange way kind of obliged us to continue. But the continuation was not an easy thing. The occupancy's state, its relation to local communities, the continuous interest from press and media, and our personal long-term desires and commitments seem to intertwine. Probably this means that we still investigate our "co-existence". Ideally, for me, if there is such a thing as a "perfect scenario", it would mean that EMBROS is constantly a self-redefined space. A space that resists the temptation of a fixed identity but on the contrary engages with temporal dynamics, 'needs' and lacks and redefines its identity temporarily. Maybe with the expectation that through these "temporalities" we could create other forms of stability, identity and continuity.

Kostas Koutsolelos: I/We don't know yet. We are exactly at that moment when we think and discuss upon it. We are looking for a model of labor division and organization, which on one hand would allow to all of us to be creative and which on the other hand would not exhaust us. In my opinion it would be extremely useful if we would find some people to help us – on a steady basis – on practical issues and tasks inside the space. Furthermore, for a while now there is the thought of an expansion to people who could organize and program what takes place in EMBROS. We will see.

Vassilis Noulas: I would like the structure and organization of labor/creation in EMBROS to be formed through constant fermentation and interaction amongst the Mavili Collective members and an open network/circuit of collaborators.

2. How do you consider the community of Psyrri? As potential makers, as a type of programmers, as volunteers, and/or as audience?

Gigi: I don't think there is one unified identity in the community of Psyrri, as there isn’t in EMBROS neighborhood too. I think EMBROS has to co-exist with the neighborhood and the inhabitants and their needs but also with Athens, its artistic production and its constantly changing sociopolitical situation. Maybe you understand why we hesitate to speak about one "vision" and one organization of EMBROS. We all have visions, individual and communal ones, but this is a moment in which we need to ask ourselves what could actually be done and what it could potentially produce in this so critical moment.

Vassilis: I think the community of the "active" inhabitants of Psyrri is one of the main supporters of the EMBROS occupation. I perceive them more as collaborators and co-managers of EMBROS.

3. Who are your potential dream/ethical funders?

Vassilis: I think that a moderate financial support of EMBROS is already arising by the freewill, voluntary contribution of all those who frequent it and I wouldn't desire something more than that at this moment. Depending on the needs that appear each moment (e.g. partial reparation of the building, purchase of equipment), a contribution should be given up to the point one could or would wish to do so.

Gigi: I have a problem to dream potential funders. Maybe because I have been working in Greece for too many years and I know that miracles rarely happen and that funders don’t exist. So the ideal thing would be a social state, as it exists – up to a point – in the more privileged countries of the North. Practically though, I would say that our funders are those who come and give as much money as they can, each time.

4. What legal status would you prefer for EMBROS? As part of the ministry of culture, as independent under state umbrella or completely independent and privately run by a foundation or a community as a non-governmental organization? Do you maybe have another vision?

Kostas: If such a thing would be possible, I would prefer for us to be completely independent from any state agent, as well as from a private one. Unfortunately, my experience has shown to me that it is almost impossible for any type of theatre institution to survive without some sort of state support. If only we were the first ones to find a way to make it happen...

Vassilis: I think the current status of an artistic occupation which has the ‘informal tolerance’ of the State is already a legal (anti)status which for me has several practical advantages and which satisfies me from an "artistic" point of view: a feeling of temporality, an active state of vigilance, an openness, an absence of formal money exchange such as tickets, cashier at the bar, etc.

Gigi: All of these are nice! An independent organization... Perhaps... I still feel that these are all romantic.

5. What would a “dream programmation” for EMBROS look like?

Vassilis: If only we could find a “golden” balance, an efficient time and space management and primarily a trust amongst us all in a way that everyone would be able to realize his/her artistic desires in EMBROS. But there must be a dialogue between these “desires”, in a way that one would feel that he/she is actively watching and participating in the desires of the others and the others in his/hers.

Kostas: A programmation that would not aim – as commonly this is the case – to how to attract an audience, but to how we present actions that first and foremost intrigue us, and which we also feel they are missing from the theatre scene in Athens.
workshops, live archives, presentations of performances the audience wouldn’t normally see, educational acts, open research modes, self-goals, organized discussions and feedback sessions after every performance, as well as other things that we haven’t yet thought of.

Gigi: A programmation that would be created by different groups and people so that the space would remain unpredictable. But at the same time it should cover needs and desires of different groups so that it would continue to produce something vivid.

6. How long do you imagine this occupancy to continue?

Gigi: Everything in this country is at such a critical point – that I really don’t know. It is said that a private company which has undertaken the task of the sale of the public property has been created. So it depends on how fast all these things will move...
Kostas: I really don’t have a clue. For sure, for a year more.

7. Who usually takes the initiative to take care of the space?

Kostas: Whoever is more available each time. Quite often Gigi is, quite often I, but also everyone else.
Vassilis: Whoever is more active in the space at a given time.

8. Who cleans the toilet?

Vassilis: We have all done it sometimes. Even though there is a monopolistic claim from the part of Kostas and Georgia.
Gigi: Well! All of us – each one helps as much as one is able to.
Kostas: Whoever can handle it... For me and Georgia though, this is our specialty...

9. How does the Mavili Collective resolve the issue of equality in decision-making, an issue which we find to be essential in an attempt to understand potential failures of capitalism (our current reality)?

Gigi: How could one be inside capitalism and still function on other principals? I also said it before, me co-existence is the most important thing. That might mean a series of compromises, perhaps. This is also a very capitalistic ;) Generally speaking, when the process functions well, the disagreements and the different positions seem to simply add up to the situation and what is being decided is both a unanimous and correct decision. But in the long-term we cannot always trust the “magic” of the moment. So when things get complicated, we resolve them through trust, mutual compromises and tolerance – less perfectionism and strictness.
Kostas: We truly try, as much as possible, to take decisions on a bilateral basis, so that no one would feel that is being wronged or not heard. For example, if one strongly disagrees about something, we usually respect it. Or if one sees that most of the others have a different opinion than him/her, he/she usually backs up out of his own freewill (provided of course that this is not an issue of great importance for him/her). The only problem during this effort for bilateral and as much as possible unanimous decision-making is that this is a time-consuming process and sometimes a toilsome one...

Vassilis: a) With discussions amongst us, but also with other collaborators, as well as with Psyrri inhabitants and b) Through a time-consuming system of mail exchange.

10. What is for you the “echo” that DasArts presence has left in EMBROS and the people around/inside of it? Is there one? What has DasArts maybe left behind according to you?

Vassilis: For me the most important, beautiful and meaningful contribution of DasArts has been the tiresome cleaning and the “opening” of the upstairs space of EMBROS, with the occasion of a party the DasArts students had organized. I think this has been done in the best way and we thank them. The upstairs space remains open since then! Personaly I had the chance to exchange views on issues that keep our attention in relation to the management and the problems of EMBROS. Furthermore, I took part in discussions they would organize, I followed them in their 3-days excursion to eco-communities in Evia and I participated as a member of the Mavili Collective in their final presentation they made for the audience of EMBROS.
Kostas: I considered each one of the students and the professors of DasArts who all came here, to be very interesting. Nevertheless, I feel that DasArts’ presence didn’t really leave something behind, nor did a real exchange happen with us – at least with me. It has been also a pity that DasArts didn’t attend most of the performances. For example, they didn’t attend to mine. If they would have attended, they would have seen what I am busy with in theatre and in what way; so, we would have a basis for a discussion. Because in my opinion, only on the work itself it is possible to have a true exchange amongst artists.
Gigi: We might not be the right people to answer this question. DasArts for sure left EMBROS bigger with another space on the first floor!!! Sometimes what remains is tangible and collective, other times it is just personal. It was very nice that you came and the final presentation was a very interesting attempt to imagine the future and the continuation... Perhaps this has been a short visit. Temporary meetings and “euphoria” moments are nice, but what I personally find as the most critical and urgent in this moment in time, is what happens next, what do we do with those ephemeral things, what is finally left? I don’t know either, these thoughts are difficult and there are no easy answers – I am very much dealing with it with the occasion of EMBROS but also on a broader basis. Which formats, relations and structures could potentially offer circumstances of an “unpredictable” continuation???

Thank you very much!
Cordially,

Laila and Tchelet