

D I M I T R I S K A R I O F I L I S

Despotism of frontiers

The unnecessary
tyranny of
settlements, the
needless weight
of identity, the
unwished despotism
of frontiers.

While creating, one has to deal with an array of absurd mechanisms of the environment; a chain of priority-imposed limitations and implanted identifications. I never understood why the usual first two questions people always ask me (and everyone maybe) are: What is your work? —and— Where do you come from?

I always had difficulties in answering the first but more and more I see myself with difficulties in answering the latter. I have chosen a way of non-comfort and no-identity for me, there is an attraction to the invisible, I am a stranger everywhere.



Dimitis Kariofilis *Avanto Festival* Helsinki 2005

Explicitly declaring or pursuing a label for one's activities is like setting up a limiter for the mind, a limiter for emotions and intensity. Even a crippled polymathy is more desirable than an impeccable microspecialization. If this kind of polymathy or semi-mathy (for those who have their objections to the above) is also constantly misplaced, then the daily experience is richer and more intense. Adopting as many nationalities —real or fictitious— as possible, or —better even— refusing all of them, is a step ahead in the way to discomfort which everyone should seek in order to stay alive.

It is a demerit and a waste when one attempts to territorialize his/her work and moreover when proudly declaring a nationality. Actually, I think that having a nationality is like having a foolish hobby or being a collector of a useless, nonsensical object and people who feel proud of belonging to a particular nation by birth or naturalization suffer from anoe-



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sis and are just filling up some more of the empty space within.

In the art world unfortunately, this national declaration and territorialization is less obvious, but more widespread in western societies where disguised — and sometimes not so disguised? fascism is strong nowadays. For the last few years I have been spending most of my time experiencing situations in an undercover fascist place where everybody seems happy to be ruled and any kind of common “protest” or dissent is really fake as it is imposed by the marketing strategies of the authorities (commercial and financial) themselves. In fact, usually it is art and its media that first develops the basis of the mechanisms that are later

adopted by the authorities and commercial brands in order to impose their rules in a non-vulgarian and more sophisticated way. Of course these mechanisms serve mainly economic interests and unfortunately are also used to promote a romantic or idyllic —but in the end ridiculous— image of the tribe. Usually this tribe is sad and full of complexes.

All this, is really connected to my work, mainly connected with sound, as I never wanted to be part of any kind of current, hype or musical style. I have chosen a blurred path but I don't know its name, where it leads, nor am I interested in entertaining the least notion about it. I feel free by changing my approach to sound all the time and

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by not having an aetiological direction. I feel free by just losing beliefs about things achieved or levels reached and feel a great weight lifted when there are no more beliefs ahead. It really seems to me that trying to find “the way” is really useless as there is no “way”. By locking oneself to a fixed situation, freedom in creation is inexistent. This stance or “no stance” could just as well be a political posture or action and is much connected with the syllogism of the no-representation by any nation, tribe or group of people. Regrettably, the art world is just a minuscule portion of the whole mechanism and it is simply sad to see artists adopting either identity: some building up on a samey motif in order to be identified under a clear form or mode that covers the (usually) “no” underlying substance/spirit, others using their national identity in order to skip “square one”, and have a referential point by belonging to a pseudo-social arrangement such as a nation, in order to promote their intentions.

The exegesis is the same: the vast majority of artists want to be ruled because they fear freedom and discomfort. Moreover, the artists that declare a profound connection with a territory and who work on this as if it had a different value from the rest, have, as a maximum aspiration, to become part of the ruling system themselves and contribute in the secure set up of the home-cage.

Sometimes the proposed correction to this is, in reality, a double fault. It often occurs that the artist who feels pleased with belonging to a certain nation claims that travelling “out” of its territories and knowing other situations is a double benefit as it strengthens the national identity and at the same time, one has a broader image of the different realities. But this is indeed a double fault. Not only does he/she accept the tyranny of the tribe, he/she ignores that there is no “out”. This is not written in order to give any kind of meaning to a particular approach to the subject. In fact, I don’t believe that the adoption of an outlandish approach or the rejection of any kind of categorisation (as I wish) gives a certain meaning to things done. The meaning is a subjective quality and surely is less important than the intensity of the experiences. But the experience is surely more intense when one is free of the territory, its settlements and the bounding frontiers. «

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