

ATHENS

FOR

A

STRANGER

Athens for a stranger

De: eliana otta (elianotta@yahoo.com)

Para:

Fecha: sábado, 30 de septiembre de 2023, 10:58 a. m. GMT+3

Dear

I hope that this invitation finds you very well:

"Athens for a stranger"

How would you introduce Athens to a person who has never been here?

I am traveling soon to Bucharest, a place I have never been, as part of a residency organized by [Ntizeza](#), an Athenian independent feminist space run by Natasa Diavasti.

We'll be a diverse group of people going there, hosted by the feminist space [Matka](#). In that space there'll be a wall which I requested to leave empty, so that I can install a temporary exhibition of images and texts collectively introducing Athens to the visitors, for an event we'll have on October 14.

You're invited to send me an image (drawing, picture) or text (prose, poem, song?) that seems to you like an interesting way of presenting Athens to a stranger. For this I am contacting a group of twenty people (artists, writers, activists) that I think would provide an engaging and thought provoking constellation of materials.

If you would like to participate, please send me an A4 file ready to be printed as you want it to look (high quality needed in case it's an image). If you send a text, please do so in English, unless you purposefully wish to do it in Greek.

The deadline is October 10th. I really hope you can make it! In case you can't, please let me know so that I can contact others.

Thanks and a big hug

e.

Let me tell you a secret

for I've been born in the tender heart of the beast
traveled up and down through its leafy and salty veins
and been exposed to the radiance of its eyes
radiance enough to burn your every fear

Curious stranger,
Athens does not exist but in your imagination
Please don't forget to put it on (as a pair of glasses? an armory? a perfume?)
and set it in full mode, as all imagination ought to after all,
lest the city falls apart

After that, you shall be faced with a choice

I've found there are four entrances to her body

through the marble toes of ancient steps
-and if you come this way,
you might be slightly disappointed by current lack of glory

through ear infections granted by the sharpest dive in the softest blue,
after which you'll never be quite the same again

through slight anomalies in all prescribed rules
and queering of all givens
-if such is your inclination, do bring an extra pair of slippers
cause something tells me you'll be notably comfortable in here

or, maybe, just maybe
if you're one of the lucky ones
you might be allowed to enter through the gate of the city's pain
its face without make-up
its body before polish

If this is the case, put your imagination aside
I urge you to put down your guard
and allow to be sunken in the beauty of displaced, disorderly and troubled
limbs and eyes

Like so many other things in life
Athens remains a moving volume of matter and diagonally-placed words
it's only there the way you have chosen it to be
the angle you have decided to enter its condition

Only one thing is certain, stranger
Athens is so much stranger than you could ever grasp
and surely she's far stranger than yourself







LOU - Love Is A Lie

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=_0vwOdYts0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0vwOdYts0k)

Produced by
Eleni Papalitsa and Niki Analyti
Taken from debut album "LOU"

A song from the western suburbs of Athens

EVEN MORE GROTESQUE

undercover poets work in Tresor Hospitality to reintroduce the superior and the standard

,

carve urban refuges from the former premises of an IT company,
an old Millennium Bank building or the empty headquarters of the National Communist Party

,

cover Karagiozis' shadow figures with golden hues

,

paint the opal blue comfort

,

polish the sleek marble timeline of Joy that leads to Muse Suites, Lavish Rooms,
Bubbly Suites, and Do Disturb Athens Apartments,

,

hang signs that read: Normal Gets You Nowhere

,

oversee the beautiful options

,

sustain your own heaven 24 hours a day

,

mop the marble paving

are you a tourist or a dear traveller

check the Vibes Diamond Plus Boss Palladian Niche Chic Centre Hotels Collection,
an ever-growing, ever-evolving anthology of urban sanctuaries

remember what you came for

the freedom of Athens is a living art installation:
just you, the light pace of Oniro City and a hedonistic philosophy of life

do it like an Athenian, dear guest, embrace your own convenience, taste the securely
covered

if you are a member of Hotel Individuals, your room will guard you against ill omen

undercover poets write: wanting to grab the chain
and plaster with posters
the hypnotic relaxing pinnacle

hijack the 360 Degrees Pop Epos,
the king size Echoes and the rose
gold arty hideaways

when they can't take it anymore, they step into the Monastery Estate Venetian Harbor that smells like a rainbow in a black and white frame

,
label the glamorous, avant-garde, and aristocratic outlooks as Never Again market portraits

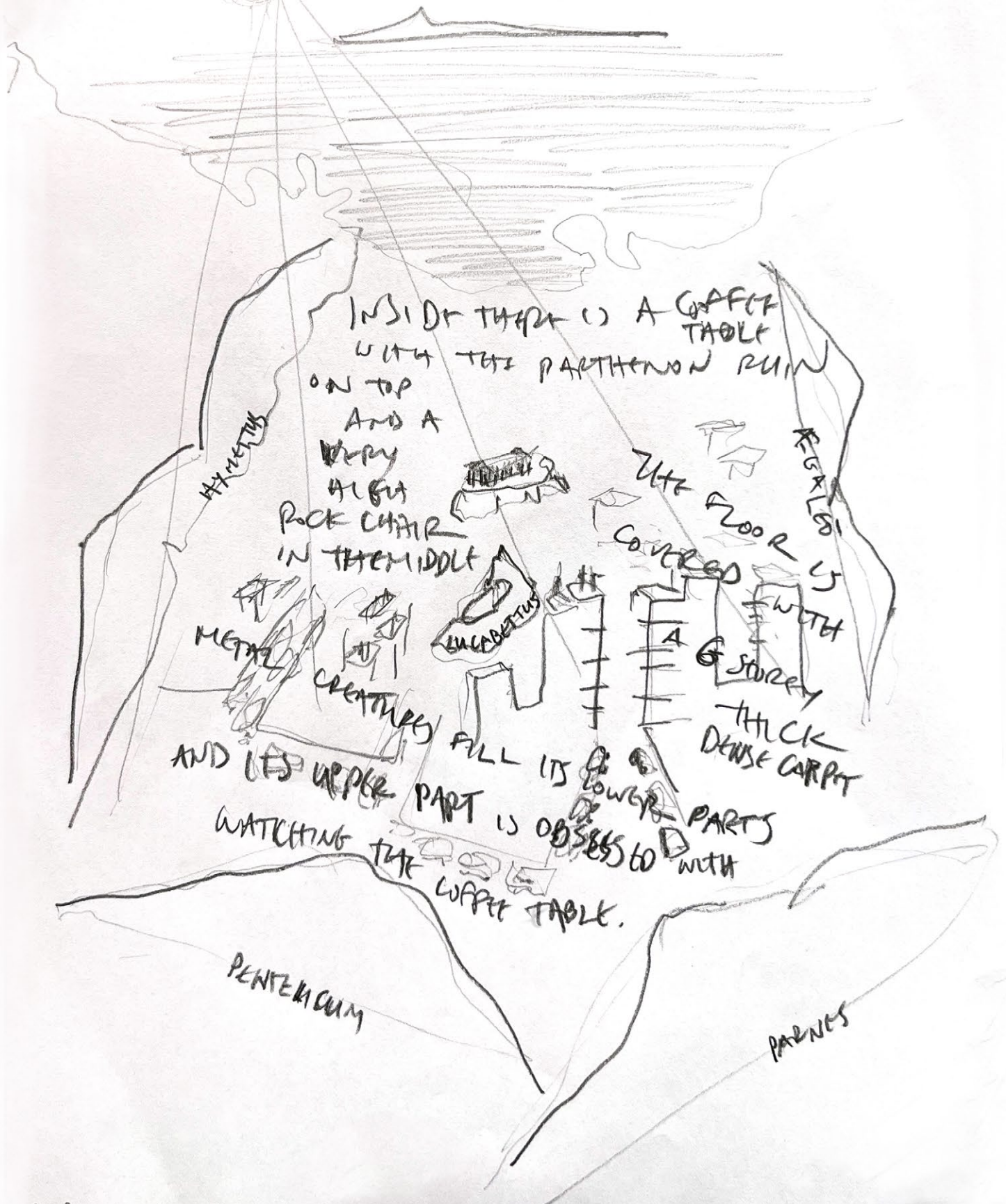
,
ask for the Luck Supreme Hotel Hipster Lover and the Hellenic Urban Poverty Vibes cocktail

wait time brings them right into the 21st century
wait time awakens their standard sold out senses





IMAGINE ATHENS IS A ROOM WITH
THREE MOUNTAIN WALLS AND A LARGE
WINDOW TO THE SEA



EVERY NOW AND THEN THERE IS A HOLE IN THE CARPET WHERE THE ORIGINAL FLOOR POPS OUT

imagine athens is a room with three mountain walls and a large window to the sea, inside there is a coffee table with the parthenon ruin on top and a very high rock chair in the middle, the floor is covered with a 6-storey-thick dense carpet metal creatures fill its lower parts and its upper part is obsessed with watching the coffee table, every now and then there is a hole in the carpet where the original floor pops out



SEX
IN ANCIENT GREECE

A erotic
PLAYING CARDS

Bridge ♠ ♣ ♡ ♠
Canada ♠ ♣ ♡ ♠





Orange colored golden hours

Heavy returns

Window reflections flashing in a hurry

Apocalyptically messed up

Crippling quietness

Refreshingly Raw

Cruel

Soul crushing

Alive corners

Naked

Let Alone

Left alone

Historically confused

Confused in history

Drunken with memories

Cemented, Exhausted

Vitamin D

Too much sun too little time

Skinny artworld

Blue Antagonism

Healthy tables, cigarette butts on family ashtrays

water bodies on fire

destination for the soul-full

and the soul-sucked

Athens is the most expensive city in Greece.
Average wage: around 1000 euro/month
Minimum wage: 500 euro/month
Climate is temperate
Most of the days of the year sunny
It never rains more than two days in a row
And most of the times the sun comes out soon after the rain
The first spring flowers appear in February
By the beginning of March you can come upon amazing colorful carpets of flowers
across the city hills or parks
The city doesn't have many big parks
On top of it public spaces disappear fast
As fast as gentrification, commodification, sterilization, surveillance and repression sprawl
Please don't be a tourist in this city
Most probably you are coming from a place that is suffering from the same
So be conscious
Support co-ops and community projects, support local struggles
Discuss with the less privileged citizens
Find out about its recent history and its subcultures
Avoid touristic attractions
Climb on the city hills:
Lycabettus, Strefi, Filopappou, Tourkovounia
Trace the routes of the ancient rivers, now covered in concrete:
Kifisos, Ilisos, Eridanos
Introduce yourself to the oak on the corner of Akadimias and Ipokratous
Get to know the city's plants and bees
Lower your glance and observe the greens
Wild onions might be emerging from the concrete
Invite the weeds to your dreams
Meditate next to the flowers
Bring them to your altar
Summon their magic powers



Bridge above Ilisos river at the beginning of last century where Vasilisis Olgas avenue is today

SMELL | Bigarade (sour orange) trees grow through the square patches of earth between the paving slabs that cover the narrow pavements. In spring, the thick, lemony scent of their white flowers mixes with the omnipresent smell of dog pee.

FEEL | The tight grip of your keys in your hand as you return home at night μόνη σου (if you have a home, that is). But also: drops of seawater running from your wet hair down your spine as you ride the crammed bus back to the city.

TEMPERATURE | On warm summer nights, the cement radiates heat. Muscles get loose and happy. I used to call this: “the temperature of existence”. When I moved to a humid city with no wind, I realised that it’s not just the temperature: it’s also the dryness in the air and the fresh breeze.

SOUND | You know when a new Airbnb is opening in the neighbourhood by the roaring sound of the old wooden door frames and wardrobes being torn out. You know your rent is going to go up in the next few months.

VIEW | The city map opens before your eyes as you climb one of the many hills and surrounding mountains. You are flooded with a fleeting but clear sense of control.

TASTE | What I miss most when I am away are the different types of weeds (chorta), which are combined in pies or boiled and served with lemon, oil and salt.

FORGETTING | Once upon a time, there was a minaret popping out of the Parthenon towards the sky.

REMEMBERING | The Acropolis does not allow anything else - any other official memory - to cast its shadow over Athens. This was the comment of someone coming from another city regarding laws that prohibit the construction of tall buildings. At the same time, however, vernacular monuments and guerrilla-placed street names commemorate the dead, including those whom the state prefers to forget.

DREAMING | My room was filled with white ash. Only, I woke up and it was no longer a dream. Sleeping with the window open during a late-night wildfire.

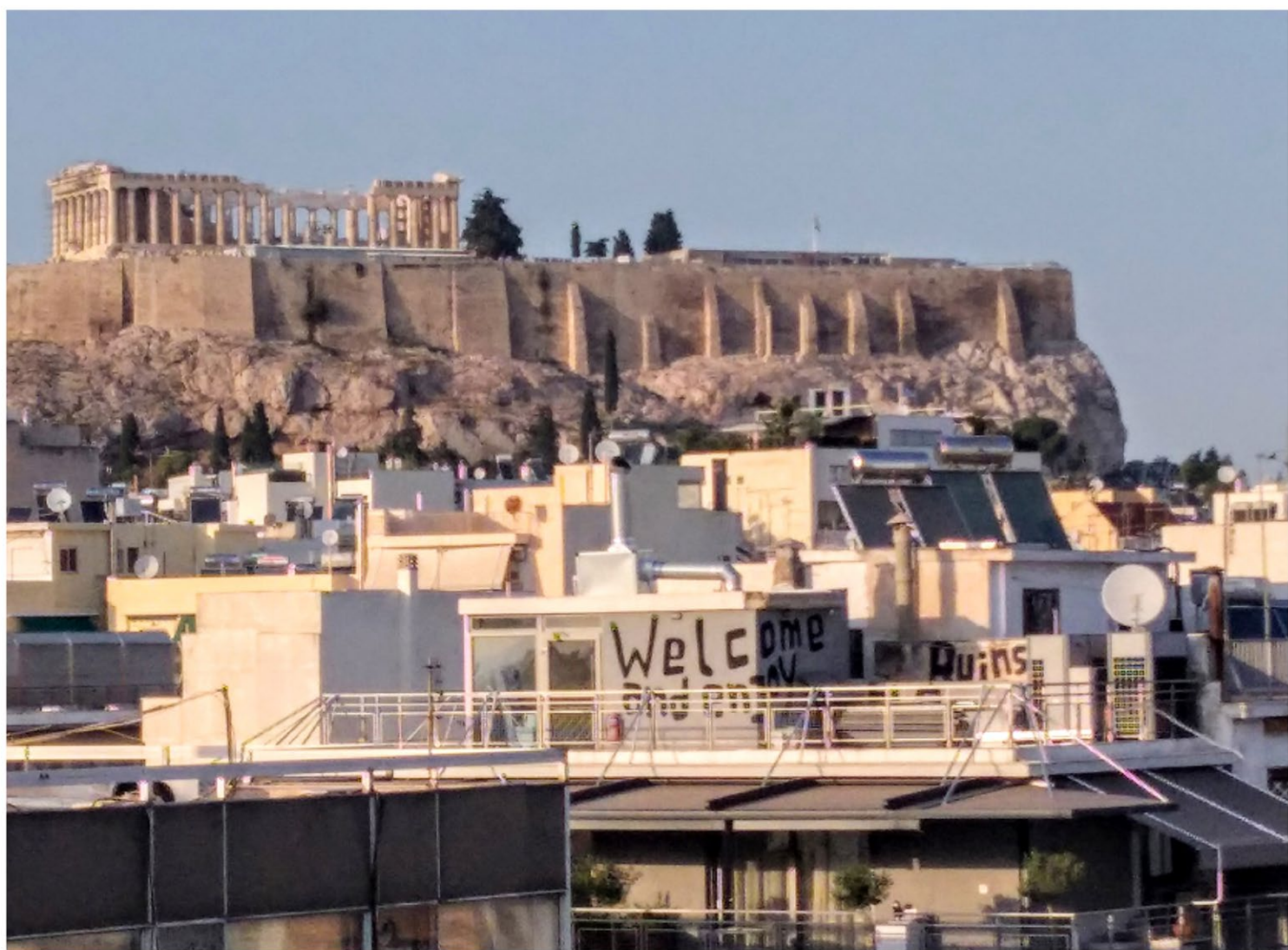
DRINKING | Drinking the words, the eyes, the movements of friends. And when I am drunk with their cosy company, I allow myself to slowly fall asleep as their sentences mix up with my dreams, on a terrace under the stars –at least those that are still visible against the city lights.

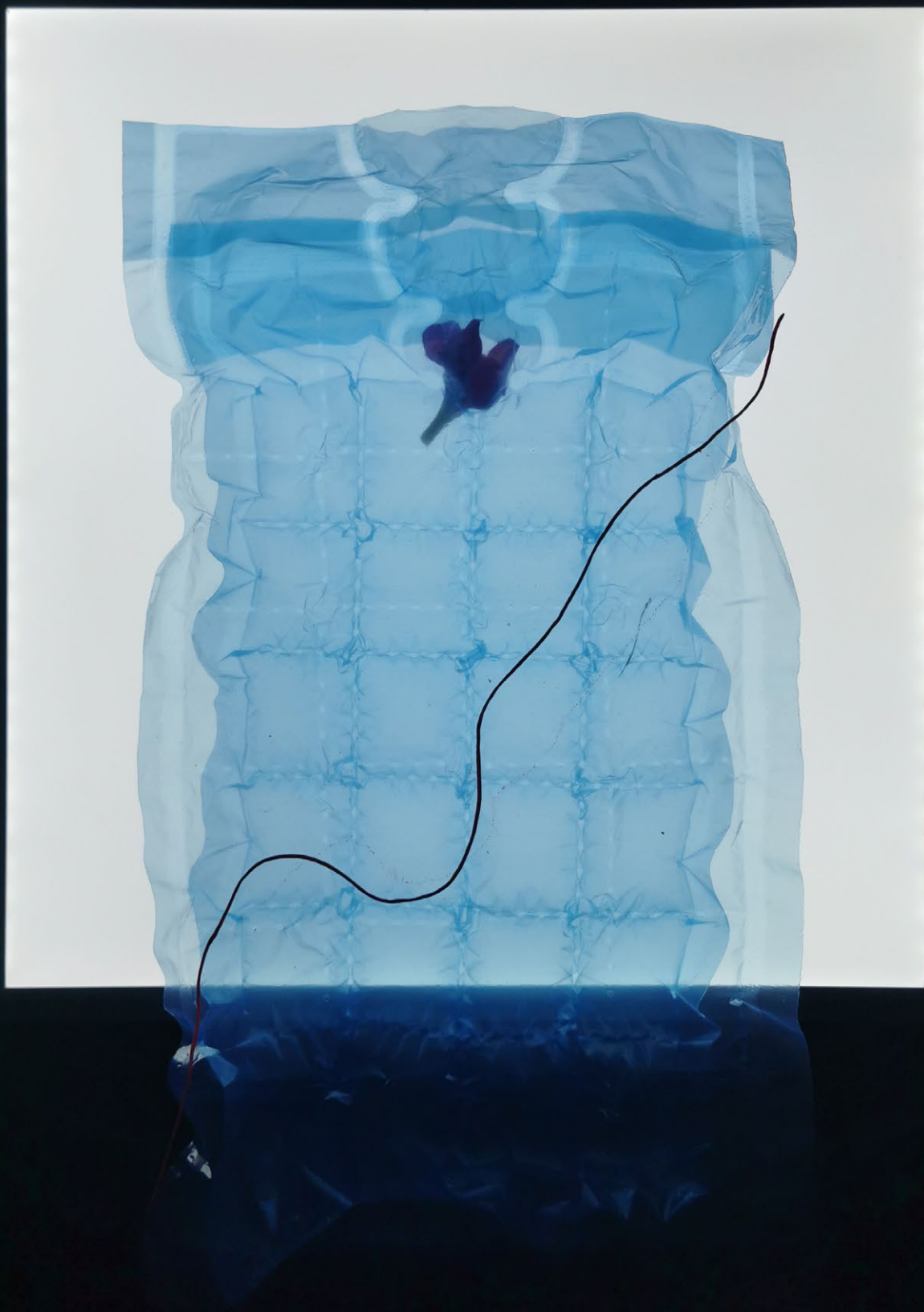


Welcome and enjoy the Ruins. Intervention by Nektarios Pappas in front of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), 2017. Picture by Julia Tulke, sent by Petros Lolis.



Welcome and enjoy the Ruins. Intervention by Nektarios Pappas in front of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), 2017. Restored in 2023 by Closing Soon. Picture taken and sent by Petros Lolis.





5.10.23

Dear Eliana,

You invited me to describe Athens to a stranger. I'm currently on a plane leaving Belgium and coming back to Athens after 13 months, so I'll use this time to write you this letter. I'm trying to be invisible. I'm wearing grey clothes, head to toe and I've given into this liminality. I will be arriving in Athens one minute into the new day.

I'll tell you about how I remember Athens while pretending not to be Greek among the rest of the passengers. While I was waiting to board the plane, a Greek (Athenian) father behind me said "My son always brings bad luck, we always lose when he goes to our team's football matches", while being glued to his phone screen, watching the live game. Athens is ahead of its time. I feel that more or less, this is what the world will look like in 17 years. At least, that is when they predict societal collapse. Greece is a very macho country, with everyone being very judgmental, but very insecure and guilty at the same time. It starts with a feeling of worthlessness and then turns into what I call "Athensitis". It's a disease in which society forces you to lock your centre and inner voice in a dark room and completely lose any sense of self-care. Then, you start filling the void in many different ways and end up weighing 5-30 kilos extra.

If Athens would be a movie, it would probably be *Mad Max*. A concoction of speed, masculinity and DIY, in a race that doesn't make much sense. In Belgium, urban tagging happens in the form of stickers on street signs. In Athens, proper tagging is done on marble and concrete surfaces and can extend to covering a whole building. It takes some effort to leave your mark. One of the sticker tags that I've been following in Belgium, is a picture of either a nipple or an ass hole. There is some sort of reverse in that imagery I guess. Nevertheless, whenever I see the ass whole one, I think of Athens. It's Europe's asshole. Situated on the edge, working as a barrier to the inners, and at the same time, it's a place where one could have great fun. But(t) it can get itchy if you stay for too long.

Speaking about tags and marks, my dog also tags street signs. He is somewhere on this plane, below the passenger seats, with the luggage. In Belgium, I never washed his paws. In Athens, he would always pop into the tub and we would give those paws a good scrub. Athens has grey cracked pavements, with black spots from chewing gum. It's alive. It's a city that runs 24/7 and still, I haven't understood why there is no investment in solar panels. Athens is where the Acropolis rock lies. Seven out of ten Tinder profiles around Europe have a selfie with it. Athens is basically a beige marble rock with traces of red soil on it with a smell of cigarettes and gasoline. A broken concrete-marble something, sun-bleached and thrown next to shades of blue. In Athens, I find belonging. I can't explain it, but in Athens I find reason. All the suffering leads to insane actions that in the end make sense and push the barriers. People are more into sharing and connecting. They are not privileged individuals who think highly of themselves.

I'm scared. I don't want to go back to Belgium, but I might not be able to gut Greece anymore. Have to go, we are landing.

T.

10.10.23

Dear Eliana,

4 days in, I think I can gut Athens and want to stay.

www.pressenza.com
Οδός Γλάδστωνος ή Zackie oh;

● omniatv
Οδός Zackie oh για πάντα - omh...

Efsyn
Αφαίρεσαν την πινακίδα «Οδός Zackie O...

News.gr
Αφαιρέθηκε η επιγραφή «Οδός Ζα...

Antivirus Magazine

🕒 The Press Project
Στους δρόμους για τον Ζακ - The Press...

Gazzetta.gr
Αφαίρεσαν την επιγραφή «Οδός Zackie Oh...

— taNea.gr
Ζακ Κωστόπουλος : Άγνωστοι αφαίρε...

Kosvoice | Η Φωνή της Κω

Efsyn

Κάλυψαν την πινακίδα «Οδός Zackie Oh» | ...

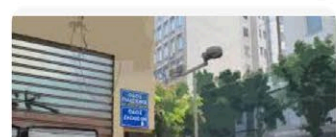
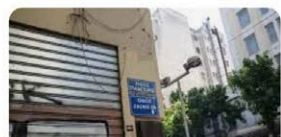
Εβγαλαν πάλι την πινακίδα «οδός Zac...

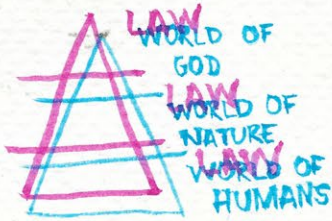
LiFO
Οργή και θλίψη: «Πλημμύρισαν» οι δρ...

News247
Ζακ Κωστόπουλος: Άγνωστοι αφάιρεσ...

taNea.gr
ακ Κωστόπουλος

AAAA
Candle-lit Concert for Zackie Oh by Alexandros Droso...





SECTION II Relations of Church and State Relations of Church and State

Article 3 Article 3

1. The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.

2. The ecclesiastical regime existing in certain districts of the State shall not be deemed contrary to the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

3. The text of the Holy Scripture shall be maintained unaltered. Official translation of the text into any other form of language, without prior sanction by the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited.

20
20



156 Syntagma uk new 12-03-09 12:19 "ΑΙ. 1. 21
156 Syntagma uk new 12-03-09 12:19 "ΑΙ. 1. 21

maintained unaltered. Official translation of the text into any other form of language, without prior sanction by the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited.

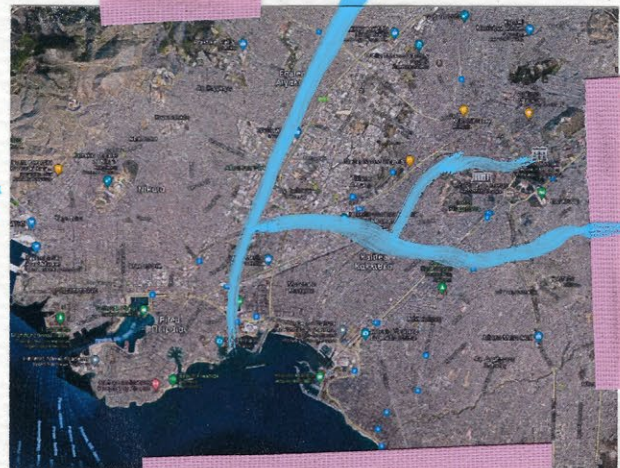
GREEK CONSTITUTION
GREEK CONSTITUTION

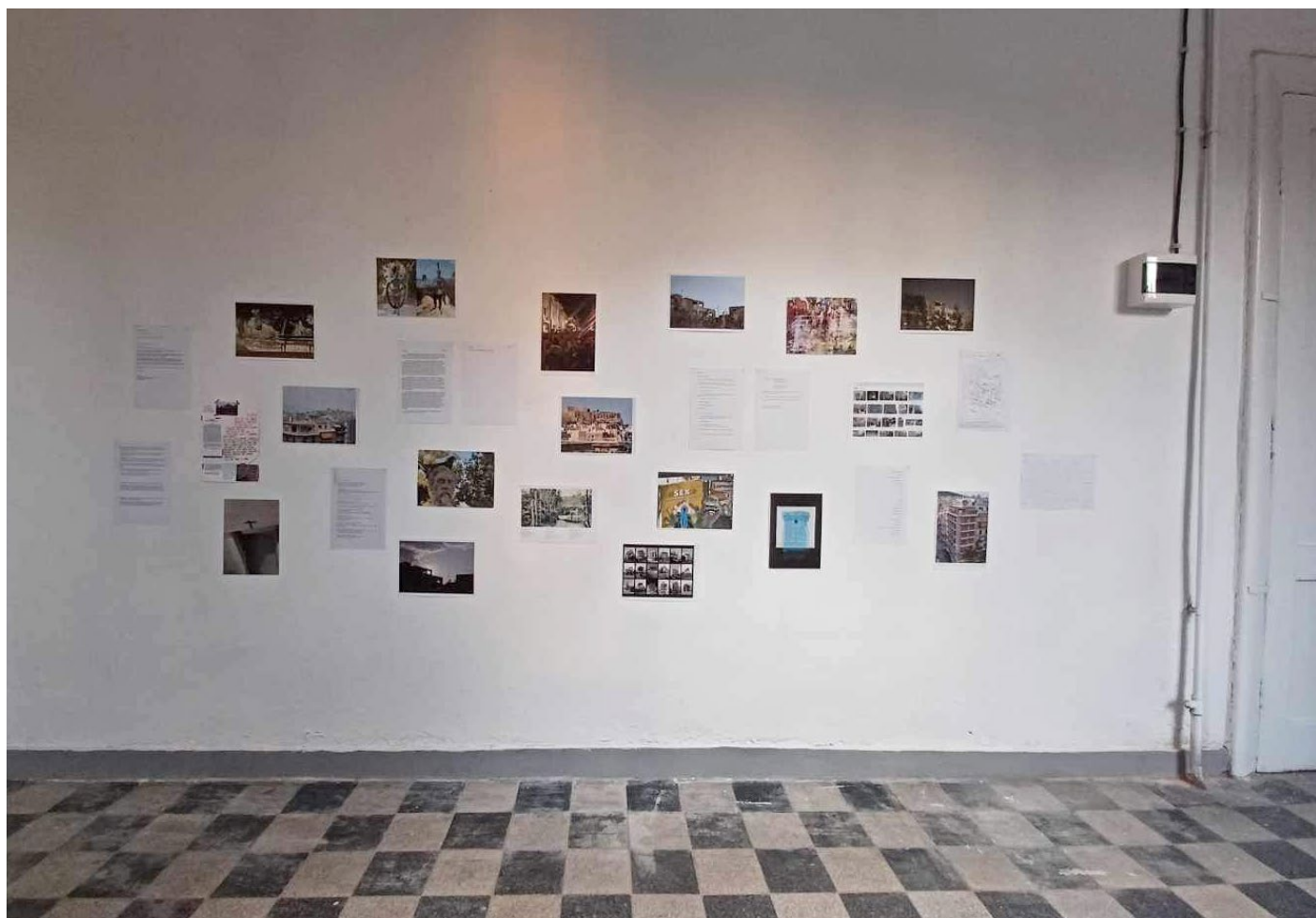
A LARGE
PART OF THE FOOD
PRODUCTS COME FROM
OUTSIDE THE CITY.

OF ALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS
IN GREECE, THE ONE
THAT PRODUCES THE LEAST IS
ATTIKI (WHERE ATHENS IS LOCATED)

DEAR STRANGER,
EVERY TIME I MEET SOMEONE, STRANGER OR
NOT, WHO COMES TO VISIT THE CITY OF ATHENS,
I HAVE THE HABIT OF TELLING THEM SOME
THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT THE CITY. THEY
FUNCTION AS A SERIES OF OPTICAL
INSTRUMENTS WITH WHICH ONE CAN
OBSERVE THE CITY BEYOND STEREOTYPES,
PROJECTED FANTASIES AND COLONIAL
MYTHOLOGIES.
THESE ARE THREE OF THEM.

MODERN ATHENS
IS THE ONLY EUROPEAN
CAPITAL THAT
HAS NO RIVER FLOWING
THROUGH IT
ALL ITS THREE
RIVERS ARE
BURIED!





Exhibition views at Matka - L1 Studios, Bucarest.



Exhibition views at Matka - L1 Studios, Bucurest.



ATHENS FOR A STRANGER

An invitation made by Eliana Otta to:

Anna Apostolidou p. 2 - ionio.academia.edu/AApostolidou
Vasiliki Sifostratoudaki p. 3-4 - vasilikisofostratoudaki.gr - @vasilikisifostratoudaki
Katerina Botsari p. 5 - katerinabotsari.com - @katerinabotsari1
Sofia Bempeza p. 6 - sofiabempeza.substack.com - @sofakiwut
Dimitra Ioannou p. 7-8 - @hotel_repertoire/ - @aglimpseof_net
Fotini Gouseti p.9 - fotinigouseti.com - @fotinigouseti
Maaïke Stutterheim p. 10 - maaïkestutterheim.nl - maaïkestutterheim
Dimitris Theodoropoulos p. 11 - dimitristheodoropoulos.com - @dimuntsk
Alkisti Efthymiou p. 12 - 220.academia.edu/AlkistiEfthymiou
Eva Giannakopoulou p.13 - evagiannakopoulou.com - eya_giannakopoulou
Dimitra Kondylatou p. 14 - dimitrakondylatou.com - @ceres.k
Marina Miliou-Theo p. 15 - @de_l_eau
Eleni 'officinalis' Bouro p. 16 - @officinalis.drogeriii - @teuf.exceptionelle
Sofia Grigoriadou p. 17 - sofiagrigoriadou.wordpress.com - @sofia_grigoriadu
VASKOS (Vassilis Noulas and Kostas Tsimoulis) p. 18 - vaskos.net - @vaskos_
Petros Lolis p. 19 - @petless
Sphinxes (Joanna Tsakalou and Manos Flessas) p.20 - sphinxes.eu - @_sphinxes_
Timothy Laskaratos p.21-22 - @timothy_lsk
~~cross-section-archive~~ (María Lalou and Skafte Aymo-Boot) p.23 -
@cross_section_archive - cross-section-archive.org
Nuno Cassola p.24 - nunocassola.com

In occasion of the Ntizeza Residency at Matka in L1 Studios, Bucharest. 12-17 October 2023.

With big thanks to all the participants, Anastasia Diavasti from Ntizeza, Mihaela Cîrjan from Matka and my fellow Ntizeza residents: Andromache Kokkinou, Vivi Papanikola, Irene Stenioti, Olga Vereli, Cristina Peraki, Furasu Yoru. To Dimitris and Rosa for the good company and to Juan de Dios Solano for the cover.