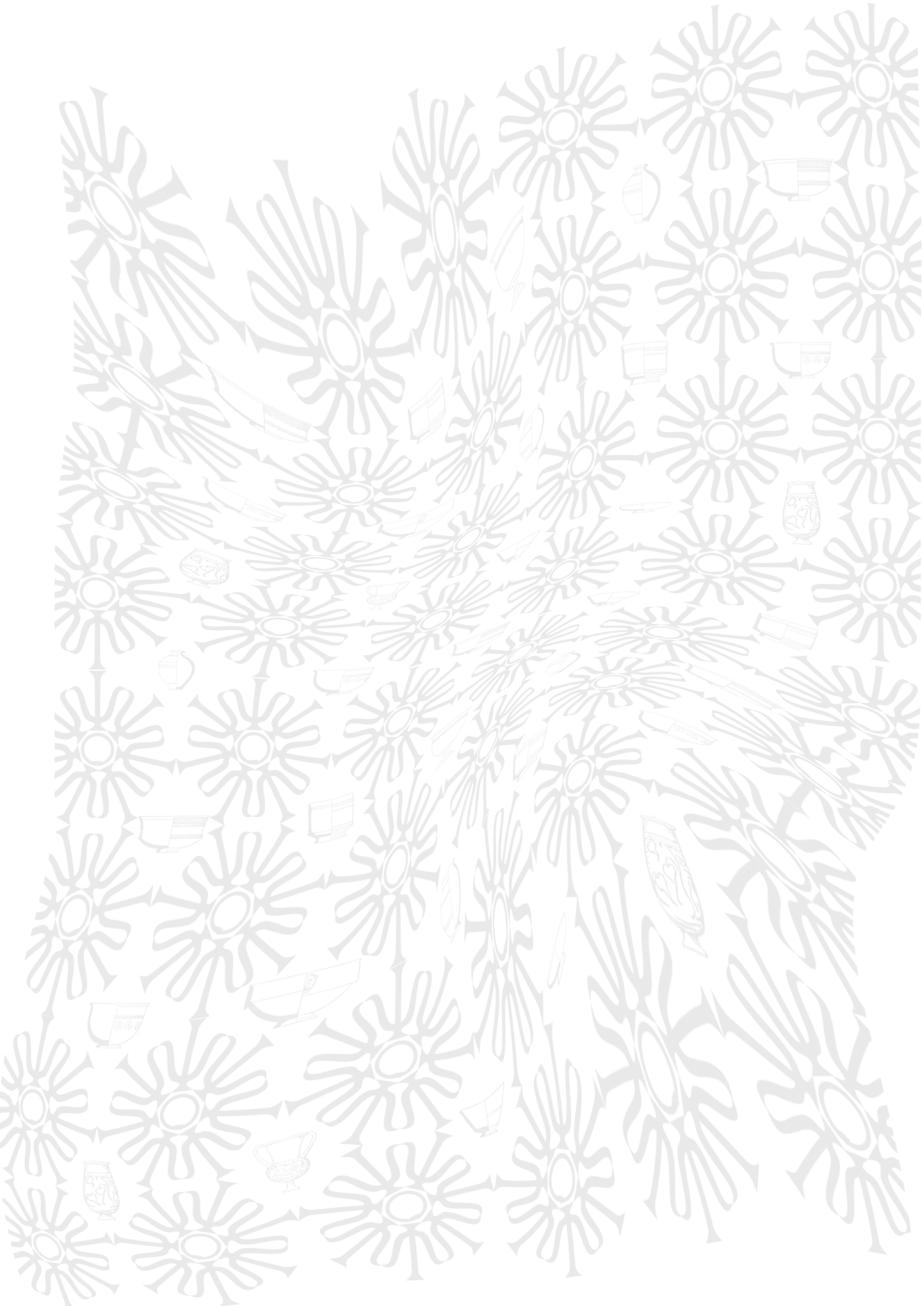


Ψ



Fokidos

Is about bringing people home.

Not Vital always tells me, 'art can never be too personal'.

Fokidos is exchanging, hosting, studying, cooking, reading, building. Sofia Stevi and her collaborators are freed from the constraints of a programme; instead they can focus on what touches them, right now. What a relief! It could be a poetry reading in her bed, or a film screening on the roof. Fleeting moments are happening here, a celebration of the present. Fokidos is a place to be experienced, to dive in head first. Sofia is intuitive. Her quiet confidence is the building block of Fokidos. In the beginning, Fokidos was run by Sofia and her ex-partner, Bobby Dowler. They were a good team. Now Bobby lives in Paris and Sofia continues to grow the organism that is Fokidos.

I like people who are able to identify, and then really use what is at their disposal – Sofia created Fokidos in this apartment that is also her home and sometime studio. It takes generosity to share and open it to others, but it takes loving oneself to truly enjoy the outcome.

Fokidos is named after the street it is located on, in the neighbourhood of Ampelokipi in Athens. This is a very local neighborhood, so the art exists alongside different, routine everyday moments. As an 'art-tourist', you come here specifically to visit Fokidos, as opposed to a gallery district. The journey to the gallery from the centre of Athens is part of the experience.

Without funding or PR or staff, Fokidos is far from being a victim of its situation. It is free. It is elegant, intimate, serious and experimental. It is rooted in Athens, yet there is a constant stream of international visitors and guests. Likewise, Fokidos has been hosted in London and the Swiss Alps in recent months.

Sofia is also an artist: her life doesn't revolve solely around curating and project-managing Fokidos. I would like to ask her: how much does the experience of Fokidos affect your artistic practice?

Maybe she will have something to say about chance encounters.
Or friendship.

Alma Zevi

Notes on Psi

*By the help of an image
I call to my own opposite,
summon all that I have handled least,
least looked upon
And I would find myself and not an image*

- 'Ego Dominus Tuus', W.B. Yeats, 1918

This project originated from a conversation between Navine G. Khan-Dossos, Sofia Stevi and myself in Maastricht, in December 2014. Our shared interests in Psi phenomenon and parapsychology led us to develop a group exhibition primarily concerned with the transfer of thoughts from one person's mind to another. The seven invited collaborators – Brian Dillon, Gary Lachman, Quinn Latimer, Paula Meehan, Sophia Al Maria, Marco Pasi, and Mark Pilkington – were asked to provide in writing an idea or image that possessed some personal significance. These texts were then interpreted by artist Navine G. Khan-Dossos and translated into gouache paintings upon the gallery walls of Fokidos, Athens.

In most cases the contributed writings originate from dreams or liminal states of mind. In other cases the text is more akin to a body of images that preoccupies the contributor; in one instance the image or 'scene' is one the contributor was striving to summon in his mind but seemed paradoxically unable to do so.

In some, the material is presented in a raw and ambiguous form, or else it is more finished and composed. The act of producing the wall paintings took place after Khan-Dossos had spent several months considering these writings, envisaging them in her mind and imagining if and how they might relate to each other. It is perhaps at this stage in the process that she assumed a role comparable to that of the medium; a conduit through which the thoughts of another – that would usually never be given any physical form – are made visible. Through this 'channelling' process some of the sensibilities and stylistic idiosyncrasies of the artist are inevitably imposed upon the artwork, but the resultant painting is ultimately a work authored by several individuals.

Artworks that emerge from this process might be seen as a synthesis of two personalities; what might be termed a 'third mind'. This dynamic between author

1 The Third Mind is the title of a book by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin published in 1977 (The book was first published in French. The English edition the following year). In it they considered how the collaborative process can result in the emergence of a new author: 'It is not the history of a literary collaboration but rather the complete fusion in a praxis of two subjectivities, two subjectivities that metamorphose into a third; it is from this collusion that a new author emerges, an absent third person, invisible and beyond grasp, decoding the silence. The book is therefore the negation of the omnipresent and all-powerful author – the geometrist who clings to his inspiration as coming from divine inspiration, a mission, or the dictates of language.' (New York, 1978. p.12)

Pádraic E. Moore

ship and production is central; the project aims to devise a situation in which subjectivity could be shared and transformed into a transpersonal work of art. In going beyond the individual creator and focusing instead upon the polyphous potential of the group, this project is an investigation into the collective dimension of consciousness and creativity. What might be termed the 'creative process' never occurs in solitude but inherently entails complex communications between artist, artwork and viewer.

The title of this project (comprised of this publication and the accompanying series of wall paintings) refers to the term 'Psi', coined by the parapsychologist B.P. Wiesner in 1942 to describe the spectrum of phenomenon contested by orthodox science – including clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, precognition and psychokinesis². The source of this term is the 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet and the first letter of the Greek word ψυχή (psyche), which refers to the human mind or spirit, but also to the psychological structure of an individual. The spectrum of Psi phenomenon seems relevant when considering the unique way visual art can communicate and disperse knowledge and ideas via unwritten and unspoken methods. One of the central aims of this collaborative project is to emphasise the idea that subjective intuition activated through engagement with works of art is a vital and valuable part of a person's consciousness and may ultimately contribute to a situation in which consciousness can be shared between people.

The period in the 1940s, when the term Psi emerged, marks the end of an age in which the spectrum of phenomena proposed by parapsychologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was still considered worthy of serious consideration³. Today, there exists much scepticism towards the possibility that occurrences involving psychic activity even take place. Universities that were once supportive of parapsychological research are now no longer willing to affiliate themselves with such fields of investigation⁴. Conventional science and psychology, refuse to accept that parapsychology is a 'proper' science, dismissing the entire field as pseudoscientific⁵. One of the reasons parapsychology – and Psi phenomena – is so often dismissed is because modern science, with its physicalistic orientation, is itself at a loss to provide definitive explanations as to how the human brain is capable of giving rise to conscious experience. Regardless of the

2 J.B. Rhine, 'The Present Position of Experimental Research into Telepathy and Related Phenomena', Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, 47, part 166, 1948, pp. 1-19.

3 In 1957 the Parapsychological Association was formed and became affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1969.

4 Although there are some exceptions (such as Edinburgh University) many of the laboratories established for the investigation of parapsychology in the past such as those at Duke and Stanford University have disbanded.

5 This is epitomised in the work of individuals such as Ray Hyman who has been referred to as the leading critic of academic parapsychology.

accuracy of the theories proposed by parapsychologists, they nevertheless offer useful models for thinking more openly around how cognition and perception function.

In his *Phantasms of The Living* (1886), Frederic W.H. Myers describes a region of the unconscious that he terms the ‘subliminal self’ and proposes the existence of a ‘metetherial’ world. According to Myers (who co-authored the text with Edmund Gurney), this world was comprised of a depository of images formed from electromagnetic ether that could potentially be accessed by attuned individuals. Myers proposed that the human mind could temporarily reach this web of images or projections which would most likely be perceived as a ghostly apparition. Ideas like this were widespread in the late 19th century and were elaborated upon by parapsychologists in the 20th century such as J.B. Rhine. More recently, John Palmer suggested that certain patterns of brain activity can give rise to integrated ‘packets’ of psychic content called ‘Psiads’⁶. Once formed, these Psiads exert psychokinetic effects on the brain before ‘drifting’ free and coalescing with other host brains. Like a virus, these Psiads go on to produce activity or mental content similar to that originally occurring in the ‘mother brain’. What unifies such parapsychological ideas examined above is the notion that the brain and nervous system operate as a filter, selecting and organising content from extensive subliminal domains for inclusion in the limited field of everyday awareness. The suggestion is that if this filtering is disrupted, previously occluded material or ‘content’ can emerge.

In the late 19th and early 20th century individuals affiliated with science and psychology were not the only ones engaging in research into Psi phenomena. Numerous spiritual leaders claimed to receive material from discarnate spirits that became the basis for important teachings, leading to the emergence of several esoteric systems. This is exemplified in the material allegedly communicated to Helena P. Blavatsky via the Mahatmas, or Ascended Masters that eventually formed the basis of *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), Blavatsky’s masterwork on the origin and evolution of the universe and humanity, and the most important book of the Theosophical movement. Several years later, in 1904, *The Book of the Law* was ‘received’ by Aleister Crowley, said to have been transmitted via the spirit Aiwass. From this, the esoteric movement known as Thelema developed – just one of many belief systems that emerged throughout the 20th century founded upon supposed communication with spirit entities. In the late 19th and 20th century instances of Psi interaction also led directly to the emergence of significant works of art. Several artists closely affiliated with the emergence of literary modernism were informed by invisible presences. For six years, Irish poet W.B. Yeats was engaged in channelling sessions with his wife Georgie that resulted in substantial quantities of automatic writing. In these sessions Yeats would pose questions to his wife – who was apparently in a trance-like state – which would

⁶ Douglas M. Stokes, *The Conscious Mind and the Material World: On Psi, the Soul and the Self*, Jefferson, North Carolina, 2007, p. 103.

be answered by several spirit entities. As the body of material increased over the years, Yeats began to see in it the basis of a complex, esoteric philosophical system. Eventually Yeats would formalise this channelled material into his treatise *A Vision*, first published in 1925.

There are also numerous instances in the history of visual art in which communication with spirit entities has influenced the work of artists. One of the most prolific artists to have produced work via the channelling process is Hilma af Klint, who is now recognised as a pioneer of pure abstraction. Allegedly af Klint began regular conversations with the spirit that would become her long term collaborator in the 1890s during participation in spiritualist séances with four female friends. This group referred to themselves as ‘The Five’ and were the recipients of messages from spiritual entities calling themselves Gregor, Clemens and Amaliel. Through Amaliel, af Klint was introduced to a universal language of symbolism that was to form the foundation for her abstract painting. In the beginning, the spirits apparently directed af Klint’s hand in the work. Later in her career, af Klint familiarised herself thoroughly with the work of Blavatsky and claimed that although a spirit guide remained by her side, his instructions were mediated in words and appeared as images to her inner eye that she then interpreted on canvas.

In the interwar period the Surrealists – who were persistent in their efforts to explore the more arcane aspects of human consciousness – attempted new ways to unlock creative potential. One of these was through the dream and the other was the séance. M.E. Warlick has outlined how, from 1922 to 1923, several Surrealists conducted séances not necessarily to commune with spirits but to enable them to access what André Breton defined in his *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924) as ‘pure psychic automatism’. In the initial phases of the Surrealist movement, ‘pure psychic automatism’ was essential in allowing its members to access what they termed the ‘true functioning of thought’⁷. To begin with, ‘pure psychic automatism’ was applied as a written technique but it soon extended to the production of graphic or pictorial automatism, a gestural equivalent followed later by techniques based on frottage, and decalcomania. This evolution into predominantly visual techniques gave way to practices that were more concerned with the surrender of control via methods of chance that connected to physical process⁸. Although initially fruitful these experiments did not completely liberate the Surrealists from the aesthetic rules that they sought to escape from, instead developing into a formal methodology more concerned with stylistic effect. In

⁷ The first Surrealist manifesto, written by Breton in 1924, states: **SURREALISM**, noun, masc., *Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.*

Manifestoes of Surrealism, Michigan, 1969.

⁸ This is the bridge that connects Surrealism to painters working in the US in the post-war period (known as the Abstract Expressionists), such as Jackson Pollock.

their early years the work of the Surrealists was characterised by a desire to give the dream or liminal state of mind priority, in the hope that the resultant material might be somehow informative or capable of exposing that which would otherwise remain concealed. A similar motive lies at the centre of this project, as does a desire to examine the thresholds of transfer between one mind and another.

The work of artist Susan Hiller has informed much thinking around this project and many of her own experiments act as precedents. Hiller's *Draw Together* (1972) was conceived specifically as a kind of ESP experiment following her reading of Upton Sinclair's book *Mental Radio* (1930), emerging as an experiment into the possibilities of thought transfer. Hiller invited 100 artists from around the world to take part in this project. It featured Hiller gazing at images cut from magazines for extended periods of time; she then attempted to send out these images to individuals in different parts of the world at different times. These individuals would then execute drawings that, in some cases, were said to bear some connection to the 'original' image. This project is thought to have led to the work *Sisters of Menon* (1972–79), which was created entirely through automatic writing. Hiller, however, was not alone in working with such methods. In the early 1970s a number of artists, particularly those working in the realms of performance or Fluxus events, including Marina Abramović, Joseph Beuys and Carolee Schneemann, produced works in which some form of Psi activity was key to their meaning.

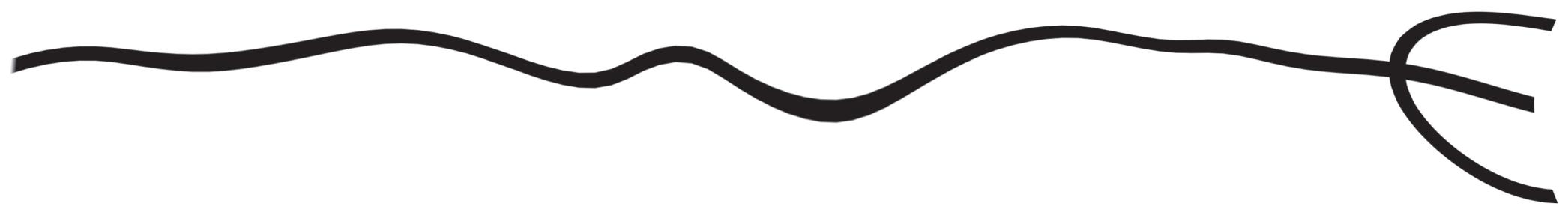
While the methods of the séance are to some extent referenced in this project, the main intention is not so much to channel spirit entities but to create a scenario in which traditional modes of authorship are altered and explicitly expanded – where a group mind becomes possible. The notable difference between this project and others outlined above is that, while the basis of the exhibition centres around a process of channelling, the mediator – Khan-Dossos – is very much part of this human world, and the messages she is translating themselves come from living beings.

In addition to the transpersonal nature of the project, the process of giving form to what might otherwise be dismissed from more rational modes of thought is crucial. The manner in which the material – originating in the minds of the contributors – is treated and 'processed' gives substance to evanescent information. The act of writing this material down was an important stage, but the translation process carried out by Khan-Dossos gives the material a new symbolic potency. The material leaves the realm of language – a medium which is limited in its capacity to communicate – and becomes an image. The verbal made visual. This process could be seen as an iteration of the possibility that 'thoughts are things' comparable with physical actions and commensurable therefore with physiological law. In concentrating upon liminal states of mind and the way in which invisible exchanges occur between individuals, this project undermines the idea that the physical world is all that exists and that 'oneself is nothing

more than one's physical body'.⁹ It could be argued that the reason the existence of Psi, and other forms of anomalous phenomenon become more contentious as time progresses is symptomatic of a tendency toward techno-rationalisation, which has intensified over the course of the past century. The increasing incredulity towards phenomenon that seemed entirely plausible a century ago can be viewed as evidence that we are being coerced ever further into self-restriction, into narrower perceptions of ourselves and our potential.

However, visual art offers a space of experiment, where phenomenon that is to some extent inexplicable – in that it cannot be explained according to the codes of rationality – can be examined and rethought. Traditionally, human 'progress' has to date denied what might be termed instinctive or imaginative perception, so that intellectual perception is permitted to dominate. And yet the most profound and important things can be felt and experienced, even whilst they shirk from comprehensive human expression. Visual art's vitality rests in its capacity to create and communicate knowledge and ideas via methods which are often unwritten and unspoken. It speaks to a sphere of the psyche that unconsciously exerts an enormous influence upon our lives. Visual art thus stakes the claim to a site of pure mind/matter interaction.

9 Stokes, p. 3.



Charisma

The word derives from the Greek *charis*, which means grace and gives us the verb *charein*: to rejoice. (Follow a devious path through Old German and Old English, and you will find that *charein* is related to the verb to yearn.) In its rigorous uses, *charisma* is first of all a spiritual gift or talent; early Christians used the word to describe the power of prophecy, the ability to heal the sick and the tendency to speak in tongues. In time the word wandered, but not far at first: before it devolved to its current weak sense of character or personality – so ruinously associated with mere rhetoric, or worse: mercantile persuasion – *charisma* denoted a fully supernatural power or virtue. The historical journey of the word is something like that undertaken by ‘glamour’, which once signified a bewitching or spellbinding charm, and now means something more superficial. You can get closer once more to the original meanings of *charisma* by recalling some related terms, which are less familiar and so less devalued: *charism* and *charismata*.

The Charismatic Renewal is a movement inside the Catholic church that draws on early beliefs in the gifts or *charismata* of the Holy Spirit: healing, prophecy and glossolalia. Charismatics aspire to a direct conference with Christ, unmediated by liturgy. The movement began in the United States in the mid 1960s, and spread worldwide in the decade following. While traditional Catholics sometimes deplored the Charismatic turn away from conventional ritual, the church authorities (Papacy included) welcomed the renovation of spirituality that the movement brought, and did not baulk at the boost to church attendance that came with it. Prayer took place in parish churches, in believers’ homes, and in mass meetings attended by hundreds or thousands of the faithful. Hands were laid upon the sick in hope of healing, instances of speaking in tongues were reported, and the horizon of faith that surrounded these meetings was a belief in the real possibility of miracle.

For several days now I’ve been searching online for photographs of Charismatic prayer meetings. There are plenty to be found: amateur snapshots in which congregations raise their arms and rejoice (or is it despair?) and individuals, sometimes, at the front or centre of the crowd, open their mouths in what might be moments of glossolalia. An Irish press photograph from the 1980s shows a portion of the congregation at a large meeting in Dublin – about a dozen figures, all of them women in middle age. Almost all have their mouths open in prayer or song, a few have got their eyes closed, and many raise at least one hand in a gesture that is halfway between supplication and something else: a revealing or deictic movement such as you might find arrested among a choir of Renaissance angels. All of

these women look so familiar from my childhood: with their sweaters and coats and cardigans, their complicated hair and complicated glasses, they far too easily compose a devout type, except that each of them – and especially a slightly older woman with a near-ecstatic look in the foreground – is locked in her own place and moment of expectation, waiting for certain gifts to be bestowed.

The face I’m looking for is not there – my mother’s. I know she attended more than one of these meetings, held in the exhibition hall of the Royal Dublin Society, on the south side of Dublin, in the 1980s. But perhaps this image derives from a slightly later time: after she died, in fact. She had been ill for many years: first with an intractable depression, then with an autoimmune disease that would kill her not long after her fiftieth birthday. She had always been devout, then at some point turned for consolation to a local Charismatic prayer group. Later she went to these big national conferences at which, so she’d relate on her return, the sick presented themselves for prayer and the laying-on of hands. As a child, I was terrified by my mother’s descriptions of the vulnerable faithful lining up to be healed, hoping to be healed. Some of them, she said, felt a great heat suffuse their bodies at the moment they were touched by hands or voices. I am quite sure she never claimed any of these people had actually been healed – there were no spectacular reversals – but something had happened to them. Nor did she describe the moment she submitted herself to this scene, the moment she was attended, surrounded, touched and cared for in ways that even now, unbeliever, I cannot credit. Perhaps her eyes were closed, her hands raised, maybe warmth poured through her stiff and sore body as she waited for the miracle, the gift, the grace of charisma. This is the image I have been trying to find, and cannot, or to picture in my mind, and cannot.

Brian Dillon’s books include *The Great Explosion* (Penguin, 2015), *Objects in This Mirror: Essays* (Sternberg, 2014), *Ruin Lust* (Tate, 2014) and *Sanctuary* (Sternberg, 2011). He is UK editor of *Cabinet* magazine, and teaches critical writing at the Royal College of Art, London. He is working on a book about the essay as form.

Gary Lachman

I am submitting this dream from 17 May 2015 as my contribution:

I am at a conference or seminar in a beautiful old university library. Dark wood furniture, walls and shelves, old style lamps and ceiling lighting. I am sitting at a long table near George Steiner, who is lecturing very articulately about something, but I can't remember what. Then I am cycling in New York, but a part of New York I don't know well. I stop at a house, rather like the kind of terraced houses you find in London, but not in New York.

I see a cardboard box and look through its contents. Among other things I find two short booklets or pamphlets by Steiner. I am happy to find these and I put them in my bag. Then I see that this is Steiner's house. He opens the door and comes out. I say 'Dr. Steiner, will you be lecturing any more at the conference?' He is on his way somewhere but is friendly and says 'No, I'm afraid not,' or something along these lines. I say 'I wanted to hear more about Walter Benjamin,' or something like that and he smiles and says, 'You can't do anything with Benjamin in this town' and walks on. I get the impression he means that Americans aren't really interested in the kind of deep philosophy Benjamin represents.

I am then back on my bike, and am cycling along a motorway that runs through the city. The area is industrialised and vacant. Traffic, but not many people. I follow the motorway and find myself on a very high bridge, like a roller coaster. At the top I can see for miles. The downhill side is very steep and curved.

Quinn Latimer

Your Mother Comes Back as Your Driver, or Scene in Yellow and Silver

Do not take the mountains personally /
They are only mountains /
They offer nothing /

Do not consider the sea a thing /
You own because of your childhood /
It is only water /

Consider the community you emerged from /
And which you disowned, and fled, and fear /
A community /

You watch their lives, as from a great distance /
Pass on monitors. You click through their /
Images. They hurt you /

Families that are still alive. Your family /
Does not live, it stands alone /
Cornered /

Feeling itself a failure, or singular /
Feeling itself – what – a failure /
Or singular, feeling some sovereignty /

You watch the city from a taxi, stuck in a demonstration /
Feeling yourself a failure, or some thing /
Shhh, says your driver /

I know a lake with lithium in its waters /
I know a lake /
She says, of lithium and daughters /

Quinn Latimer is the author of *Rumored Animals* (Dream Horse Press, 2012), which won the American Poetry Journal Book Prize, and *Sarah Lucas: Describe This Distance* (Mousse Publishing, 2013). She is based in Basel and Athens, where she is Editor in Chief of Publications for Documenta 14.

Gary Lachman is the author of several books on the link between consciousness, culture, and alternative thought. His books include *Turn Off Your Mind: The Mystic Sixties and the Dark Side of the Age of Aquarius* (Disinformation, 2003); *A Secret History of Consciousness* (SteinerBooks, 2003); *In Search of P.D. Ouspensky* (Quest, 2004); *A Dark Muse* (Thunder's Mouth, 2003); *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His Life and Thought* (Tarcher, 2007). As Gary Valentine he was a founding member of the rock group Blondie, played guitar with Iggy Pop, and fronted his own groups the Know and Fire Escape. He is a regular contributor to Fortean Times, Independent on Sunday, Strange Attractor, and other journals in the US and UK.

Lee Birdy

I can't tell you why but we are holding hands.
walking down an avenue. An Ave. like any 5th.
skyscrapers cast glare onto the cracked sidewalk.
these be the towers of terror that magnify the sun.
their shining makes the bare feet burn.

but these streets don't make it Manhattan. This is the other city.
A city with no name. Every city. THE city, America.

all is well until we all start to hear the growl.
a new tinnitus.

not swimming pool aliens. No secret agencies. No frequency out of CB range.
it's the rumbling of unspoken undercurrents.

That is the ringing in our ears. A righteous deafening. A just threat.

And it's up. Like it's always been.
that spread frame is hanging lower than it should. That unnatural natural.
that all-steel wheel. that whale of Brushed steel. that bridger of seas. that trailer of
chems. the welder of times. Triple seven.

what's that painted on its tender white underbelly? a new name.

'Lee Birdy' in Shadow Black.
An ad for Liberty.
The way 'we' say it: 'leebirdi'. 'plaidge'. 'aleegints'.

You ask for the time. i check my wrist. a final glint – meager fuel before riding into
an unmapped battle.

And this manna, it's one stinking mirage from a filthy, rotting heaven. And it hits
us. a burning engine shearing through the elevated rail. brains blistered with the
unspeakable searing. the downdraft of death. And beyond our suffering there is
sky. not the sky. a sky. A firmament not ours.

A bright place we see seeds being planted. Thousands of things thrown like millet.
Giant grains sinking in the sea above us like trails of white phosphorous. Our
global Gaza. Our tarred sky. Forever.

but that is nothing, that is beautiful. mere aesthetics of pain.

because in this dream. above all else is the sound, the un-trebled pitch of a million
screams. a shrieking sky without shelter. it comes from the above. and i is the.

because it is only. we forget pissing or shitting or the routes we walk. function is
irrelevant when chicken little calls it. 'the sky is falling!!!!'

and Like everyone. you and me. lovers. leavers. we run. barely hatched. without
skill. we run faster than we have rights to. every glass door opens, responding to
the confidence of our bounds not the authority of our accounts. And For a while
we find Refuge. In A bank. In A hotel. Then in A mall of commerce in full flux
but no apparent malfunction.

You and me, babe. We feel like we can't fuck it up.
Even if we lose – it's just a game. That's the lesson of 199X. That's the received
wisdom. It's never over until it's over.

And finally our underused adrenal glands are engorged with all the unlikely likeli-
hoods, the many manners of impossible death. the man hands you a lock. and you
tell me we're on a cliff but there's no drop. The gravity here is like the moon but
everyone else is playing mercury. crawling belly down to the banks of a dry crater.
blood boiling into black pudding on the bank of a hot, dead sea.

We hear word from the minders. G4S, the largest mercenary army the world has
ever known say: the only safe place is a door marked The Albury. 'yeh' you say,
'we saw it once on a walk before the air went out. Before the street went empty.'

On the way – there's this ache. That everything is too right. Too safe. That we are
what is wrong. They offer us shelter in the corpse of a fallen angel. There is truth.
But it's hidden. This Albury. The place by the underpass. With all the pine trees.
And there's a janitor and the sound of pigeon wings. He hobbles out and asks for
\$20. we climb the chain link and heave. There's no back but there is safe. 'there' is
the end of the hallway. A frosted glass door. he says, 'look for the smiling woman.
she'll be on your right.'

the threshold is too easy. there is no drama. no ceremony. the chaos is in the ease of
the transition. in its uneventfulness. it is painful and it is violent because we don't
know it's done until it's over. like a stabbing. no pain until death.

now i can never again call you. love you. see you. you are gone. i can't tell you the
safe place. or where to find the wise man. the bank security guard. the man who
stocks the ice. the woman who washes the floor. I can't.

Sophia Al-Maria was born in Tacoma, grown in Doha, educated in Cairo and now lives in London
where she writes screenplays for a living. She wrote a book called *The Girl Who Fell to Earth*
(HarperCollins, 2012) and is googlable if you're a super curious person.

The Food Chain

*I could eat the moon, the breaking waves,
the moonlight sifting through the pine trees;
I could eat you, my beauty, your gaze*

*following that scrawny village cat
who stalks the plump frog who stalks the bug
who labours over the hessian mat*

*while we eat little silver fishes
and are nibbled on in turn by flies
glazed by the shine of this blood moon's rise.*

Therma, 7 May 2015

Europe has become an unfashionable idea in these days. Distrust and malaise roam around, hearts have grown cold. Athens's plight is seen as an alien business, and all over the continent particular interests prevail. No love, no sympathy, no solidarity. And the Eastern frontier is again under the threat of war. We are prisoners of a history that hasn't happened yet. Crimea. The image I have on my mind is coming from there, from this disputed corner of land where so much European blood was spilled two centuries ago, and which is once again the epicentre of telluric passions. It is there that Adam Mickiewicz was sent in exile 20 years before another European war touched it. He fell in love with it, and wrote a series of sonnets that every European should read today. Before it is too late. The image is the green grass of Crimea, caressed by the warm wind of the Ackerman Steppe. It's the sea-meadows across which the boat of the poet's imagination can sail, hoping one day to return to his long-lost Ithaca.

*Paula Meehan, poet and playwright, lives in her native Dublin. She has published six critically acclaimed collections of poetry, most recently *Painting Rain* (Carcanet Press and Wake Forest University Press, 2009). She is Ireland Professor of Poetry 2013–16.*

*Marco Pasi is Associate Professor in the History of Hermetic philosophy and related currents at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). He has published extensively on the history of modern Western esoterism, especially in relation to magic, art, and politics. Among other things, he is the author of *Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics* (Acumen, 2013) and has edited *Peintures Inconnues d'Aleister Crowley: La collection de Palerme* (Archè, 2008).*

Mark Pilkington

I am trying amid unspeakable difficulties. It is impossible for me to know how much of what I send reaches you. I feel as if I had presented my credentials reiterated the proofs of my identity in a wearisomely repetitive manner. The nearest simile I can find to express the difficulty of sending a message is that I appear to be standing behind a sheet of frosted glass, which blurs sight and deadens sound, dictating feebly to a reluctant and somewhat obtuse secretary. A feeling of terrible impotence burdens me

*Mark Pilkington is the author of two books, *Mirage Men* (Constable, 2010), now an acclaimed documentary feature film, and *Far Out: 101 Strange Tales from Science's Outer Edge* (Disinformation, 2007). He has written for the *Guardian*, *Forteana Times*, *Sight & Sound*, *Frieze*, *The Wire* and many other magazines and journals. Mark also runs Strange Attractor Press, edits and publishes its occasional journal and organises events and exhibitions. When not working with words, Mark plays synthesisers and electronics with musical outfits including *The Asterism*, *Teleplasmiste*, *Raagnagrok* and *Urthona*. He lives in London, England.*

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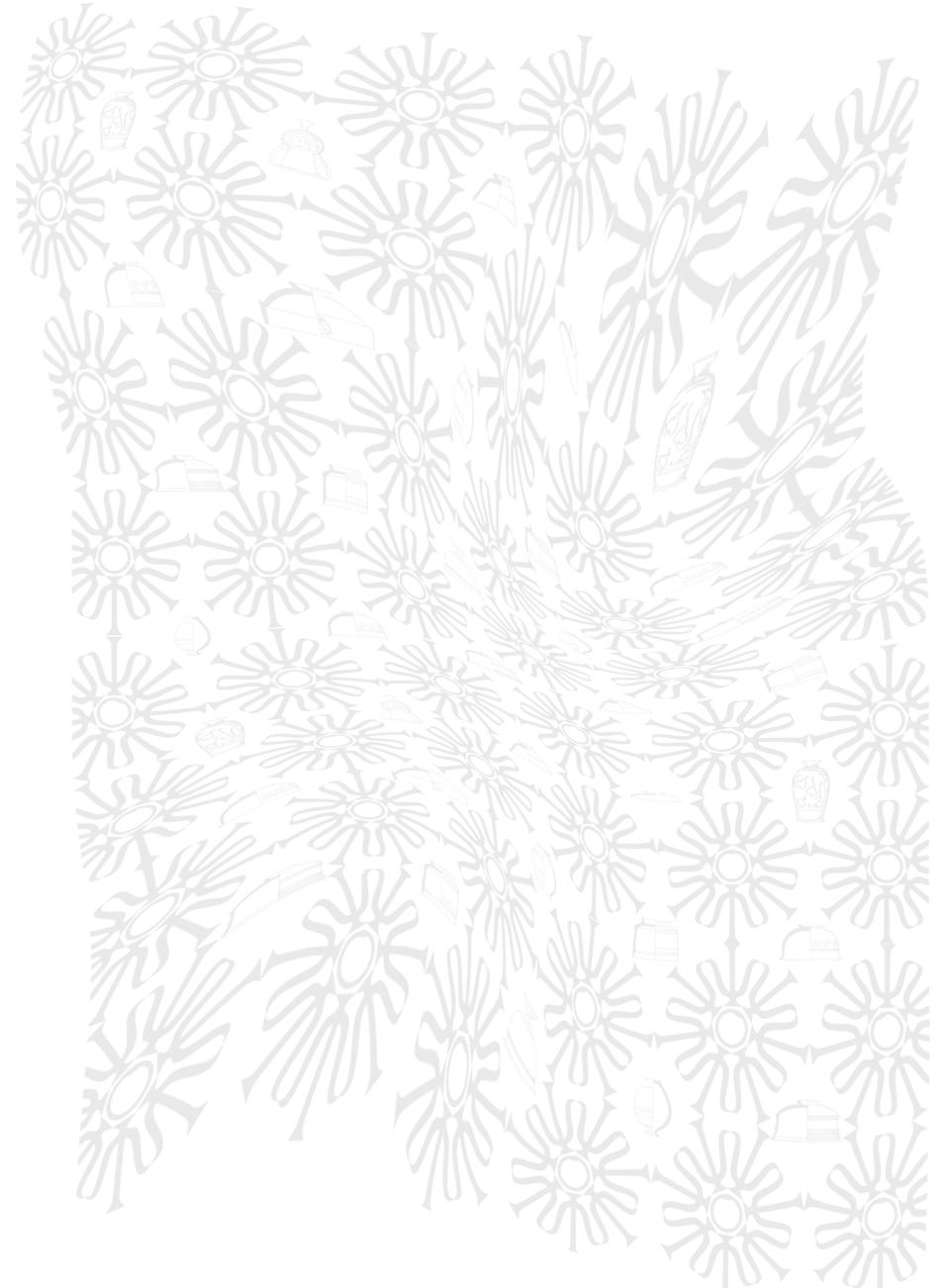


Navine G. Khan-Dossos is a visual artist. Her research process is rooted in a traditionally 'Western' History of Art education, whilst her painting is based on a rigorous training in the philosophy and crafts of Islamic art. Her interests include Orientalism in the digital realm, geometry as information and decoration, image calibration, and Aniconism in contemporary culture. She has exhibited and worked with The Museum of Islamic Art (Doha), Witte de With (Rotterdam), The Delfina Foundation (London), Leighton House Museum (London) and the A.M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah). She has published work in The White Review and The Happy Hypocrite.

Pádraic E. Moore is a writer, curator and art historian. The various facets of Moore's practice are shaped by the conviction that visual art facilitates modes of communication and experience that are vital in an increasingly virtualised, techno-rational world. Moore's curatorial methodology is meticulous but subjective, and is informed not by abstract theoretical dispositions but an in-depth, intuitive analysis of the artist's individual positions. In his work as a cultural producer, he strives to support and nurture art and artists with devotion, diligence and enthusiasm.

Sofia Stevi is an artist (amongst other things) that lives and works between Athens and London. She also co-found and directs Fokidos project space in her apartment in Athens.

Alma Zevi is an independent curator and writer, specialised in contemporary art. She founded Lendi Projects (Celerina, Switzerland) in 2013 with the aim of creating a non-profit venue where early-career artists can work and exhibit. Since 2010, Alma has been working closely with Not Vital, compiling and writing his Catalogue Raisonné. She has also curated several of his museum exhibitions, the most recent being at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève (2014) and Museo d'Arte di Mendrisio (2014-2015). Personal curatorial projects include exhibitions in galleries, museums and artist-led spaces in Austria, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, and the UK. She frequently contributes to numerous art periodicals, including The Art Newspaper, as well as co-authoring gallery and museum catalogues.



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