



DigiLabAiR 2023



ON BODY AND CITIZENSHIP

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The three artists partaking in the “On Body and Citizenship” digital artist-in-residence have been invited for the urgency to dialogue with the subjects of a crisis considered globally only for its economic-financial aspects but which has had profound cultural and social repercussions. Dealing with issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda (SDGs, No. 9, 11), their videos cluster around individual resilience. Using their personal living space — often forced into the physical shell of their skin and the metaphysical one of their thoughts and emotions — their cultural heritage emerges through their artistic gestures in terms of democracy, solidarity, survival of identity, belonging to humankind, Nature, reaction to the constraints and injustices perpetrated by the societies in crisis towards the weakest.

Virginia Mastroiannaki re-reads the “Treaty on European Union” and the “Treaty establishing the European Community”. However, only the paragraphs and articles containing the word “Union” remain in her spoken text. In contrast, terms relating to the economy, the concepts of State and Nation, and military and strategic alliance have been removed. The result is that the text of ENOSSIS (Union) refers more to a humanitarian manifesto than an economic and monetary treaty.

Sourcing from the concept of the individual—*prosopo*, the Greek word for individual, also indicating “face”, and the notion of identity in their various meanings and declinations, in Universal Rights i.e. Naked Statelessness Yiannis Pappas develops an aphoristic game of statements about the constrictive, illiberal, and selective use of the face for identity purpose, thus of the person, relating to their geographical and political place of belonging, supposed to be predisposed to solidarity, multiculturalism, tolerance: Europe. Then, he expands this problem to a universal level, considering Nature as a subject we discriminate against negatively like humans do against each other.

Despina Zacharopoulou tackles a theme in conjunction with her pregnancy. In her performance for the camera *Courotrophe*, she breastfeeds her newborn son, creating a living sculpture similar to *Wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt* (How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare), a performance piece staged by the German artist Joseph Beuys on 26 November 1965 at the Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf. Zacharopoulou embodies a mythical figure—Artemis *Kourotrophos* (from Greek: *κουροτρόφος*, “who feeds children”, adjective used to attribute to the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece also the ability to protect children), and the text *Das Nachtlied* (The Night Song) from “Thus spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None” by Friedrich Nietzsche (1883–1892). However, Zacharopoulou distances herself from the strength of philosophical and artistic references in an almost organic process, thus enhancing those substantial aspects of nourishing/protecting/transmitting in which rationality and social conventions lose their centrality and give space to everything else—life to a naked language and a freed image.

All three artists make use of the Logos. They take care of informing by radically reconsidering the founding concepts of our civilizations. They metaphorize the actions of nourishing-protecting-transmitting. In doing so, they take on responsibility by creating a space for reflection and resilience through the strength of the living image, the word, and the artistic gesture. Here, Artificial Intelligence is present as a shadow. It is an invisible counterweight relocated to the function of a medium, of a vehicle of ideas that does not induct to de-formation and does not inform but preserves and bequeath. The artists’ bodies and presence detach from the permanent historicization of the eternal present imposed by media images. They are deployed to restore the artistic image’s ana-historical strength and make us participants in a more in-depth but direct semantic universe valid today as a po(e)litical (poetic and political) statement. Ana-historical, in this case, means above history—not participating in the chronological sense of history and relating to it transversally across the eras, whereas the Greek prefix *aná/an* is for “upwards” and similar in learned compounds or generally indicates elevation.

Francesco Kiais | Mind the G.A.P. (Gathering Around Performance), October 2023