



dAM | Espace de André-Missirlian

R o — c
Romainmôtier
contemporain



arc
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artist
residency

Filip Berte, « Gutta Cavat Lapidem »

WELCOME

**WELCOME HERE IN ROMAINMÔTIER
ON ONE OF MY TRANSITSTOPS WITH UN-HOME / MOVING STONES
I'VE BEEN ON THE ROAD
MOVING STONES**

**I WILL NOW UNFOLD SOME OF THE STORIES THAT ARE PART OF MY TRANSIT
TRAJECTORY
TRANSIT - ALWAYS IN BETWEEN - TWO REALITIES
HERE AND OVER THERE
IN BETWEEN
YOU AND ME
YOU AND YOU
TRYING TO COME CLOSER
TO CHRISTALLIZE THE SPACE IN BETWEEN
TO EVAPORATE
THE AIR
MEETING
THE LIGHT
STANDING STILL
STILL STANDING
TAKING TIME
OUR GAZE
OBSERVING
FOR A MOMENT OF REFLECTION
FROM ONE SIDE TOWARDS THE OTHER
AND BACKWARDS**

**I GO TO PLACES
CHOOSING SPOTS
HOLES AND CRACKS IN OUR SOCIETIES
CAVITIES
WHERE PEOPLE -WHO HAVE NO CHOICE- TEMPORARILY RESIDE
FORCIBLY
STANDING STILL**

DO WE SHARE THEIR ANXIETIES OF BEING SENT BACK FROM WHERE THEY COME FROM? -PUSH BACK POLICIES-
DO THEY SHARE OUR ANXIETIES TO LOOSE OUR CERTAINTIES AT HOME?
DO WE FEAR FALLING APART TOGETHER?
DO WE FEAR DISINTEGRATION?

LIKE STONES FALLING DOWN FROM THE CRACKS OF THE LIMESTONE CAVE
THE LONGLASTING LOAD OF DRIPPING CARBONIC ACID RAINWATER
BECAME TO HEAVY TO BEAR
RESOLVING
IN A DISSOLUTION OF THE MOUNTAIN
FORMED ON ANCIENT OCEAN FLOORS

ON THE OTHER SIDE
CAVES ARE NOT ONLY A COLLECTION OF CRACKS AND HOLES

THE SAME WATER THAT DISSOLVED THE CALCITE IN THE LIMESTONE
CAN BRING
DEPOSIT THE CALCITE
TO OTHER AREAS OF THE CAVE

CREATING WHAT WE ALL KNOW AS THOSE WONDERFUL FORMATIONS
OF STALAGMITES AND STALAGTITES
OVER A-GES OF TIME GROWING TOWARDS EACH OTHER
MEETING UP - COMING TOGETHER
BECOMING PART OF EACH OTHER
A MARRIAGE - A UNITY
OF ACID RAIN AND CALCITE OF AGEOLD OCEAN SHELLS

HERE WE CAN SEE
A FORM OF INTEGRATION
A TRANSFORMATION
INTO
PETRIFIED BEINGS OF STONE
MANLIKE CREATURES -
FAIRIES AND MYTHICAL MONSTERS

LIKE MEDUSA
HERSELF TRANSFORMING PEOPLE INTO STONES
IF ONE WOULD STARE INTO HER EYES

META FORMATION

I LOOK AT PEOPLE
CLOSELY
LOOKING FOR THE SELF
THROUGH A STONE CAMERA OBSCURA

HAVING TWO HOLES INSIDE

**THE HOLE ITSELF
IS DOUBLED AS WELL
A BIGGER HOLE - ON THE OUTER SURFACE
AND A VERY TINY HOLE - LYING DEEPER INSIDE
MORE DIFFICULT - TO OPTICALLY GRASP**

**TOGETHER THEY FORM
AN IN - LIMBO - SPACE**

AN ANTI-CHAMBRE

**IN BETWEEN
THE OUTSIDE VISIBLE REALITY
AND A DARK INNER CHAMBER INSIDE
THIS STONE IS A CAVE
WHICH - AFTER ALL - IS NOT MORE THAN A HOLE IN A MOUNTAIN**

**WHEN STANDING AT THE EDGE OF THIS HOLE
ONE CAN LOOK OUTSIDE
TOWARDS THE REALITY WE VALIDATE AS THE ONE WE ALL SHARE
AND PRETEND TO KNOW**

**FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW THERE IS A PERSPECTIVE
WE CAN SEE A HORIZON**

**LIKE A BIRD
OR FROM AN AIRPLANE
OR LIKE GOD, IF YOU WANT
YOU CAN DEFINE YOUR POSITION
WITHIN A CERTAIN CONTEXT
YOU CAN SEE THE CHURCH, THE BELLTOWER, THE CITYHALL AND OTHER LANDMARKS
HELPING YOU TO FIND YOUR WAY**

OR TO DEFINE YOUR GEO-LOCATION ON A MAP

**IN OTHER WORDS:
YOU POSSESS THE POWER TO KNOW
RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

**IF YOU WOULD TURN YOUR BACK WITHIN THE DARK GREY ZONE BETWEEN THE TWO
HOLES
THE TINY BLACK HOLE ON THE OTHER SIDE
WILL MERELY OFFER YOU INFORMATION
TO DEFINE YOUR POSITION**

THERE IS NO KNOWLEDGE
NO BIRD
NO AIRPLANE
NO GOD, IF YOU WANT

THERE IS ONLY A DARK, IRRATIONAL ABYSS
TO THE DEEPER UNDERGROUND OF THE CAVE IN THE MOUNTAIN
A DUBIOUS SPACE FULL OF LIMITS, OBSTRUCTIONS
AND ENCOUNTERS WITH CREATURES FROM THE UNDERWORLD
HARD AND FRIGHTENING CREATURES
PUSHING YOU BACK
FURTHER AWAY FROM THE LIGHT

THEY MIGHT BE PEOPLE
MEDUSA HAS TRANSFORMED INTO STONES
THEY MIGHT BE US

WHO KNOWS

THE UNKNOWN
NEGATIVE SPACE OF THE MOUNTAIN

THE DARK ROOM OF THE CAMERA OBSCURA IN THE STONE

WHERE LIGHT CAN ENTER THROUGH THE PASSAGE BEHIND THE HOLES
SLOWLY PASSING THROUGH
TILL IT GETS STUCK ON THE WALL INSIDE AND BEHIND

THERE IT WILL SETTLE ITSELF

IT WILL MAKE A NEGATIVE IMPRINT
OF THE POSITIVE REALITY OUTSIDE THE STONE

THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT GOES:

WHEN LIGHT - AN ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVE -
WILL FIND
EVEN THE TINIEST HOLE TO PASS THROUGH

INEVITABLY

JUST LIKE WATER DOES
INTO SOLUBLE CALCITE STONES
AND HOLES
AND CRACKS

IT WILL FIND ITS WAY TO ENTER
AND FIND A WAY TO TO BÉ

**TO AFFIRM ITSELF
AND BEHAVE LIKE A STRANGER IN THE DARK SPACE AND MATERIA**

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WHEN I MOVE MY STONE FORWARDS

**I BRING IT TO CRITICAL PLACES
WHICH - FOR ME - METAPHORICALLY RESSEMBLE
THE IN-LIMBO REALITY OF THE CAVE**

**THEY ARE LIMINAL PLACES AS WELL
SOMETIMES PHYSICALLY LOCATED AT THE BORDERS OF OUR EUROPEAN STATES
BORDERS - OPEN - SOMEHOW -STILL UNTIL NOW - FOR US
CLOSED
AND PACKED WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT RULES
FOR OUTSIDERS
ALIENS
STRANGERS
OTHERS**

**THE LIMINAL CHARACTER OF THESE PLACES IS REFLECTED AS WELL
AS SEEN
FROM A SOCIO-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

**THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CENTRES
CAMPS
AND OTHER RECEPTION CENTERS FOR ASYLUMSEEKERS AND REFUGEES
OFTEN ARE LOCATED BEHIND WALLS, BRICKS AND FENCES
MADE AND ORGANISED AS SUCH
IN ORDER TO BOTH PHYSICALLY AND SOCIALLY PUTTING THE PEOPLE INSIDE
OUT OF SIGHT OF SOCIETY**

**IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD ORDER AND SECURITY
AND TO MAINTAIN CONTROL
ON THE ALIEN SPECIES LIVING BEHIND THOSE WALLS**

**THESE PLACES
ARE BUILT LIKE HIGH-TECH PANOPTICA
TAKING OVER THE MILITARY AND POLICE LOGIC OF SURVEILLANCE
WHICH IN MANY CASES
ALREADY WAS PART OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PLANS
AND FUNCTIONALITY
OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDINGS**

**LIKE IN CASE OF 'LE PETIT CHATEAU'
THE LITTLE CASTLE IN BRUSSELS
THE LARGEST REFUGEE CENTER IN BELGIUM**

THAT I VISITED WITH MY STONE A FEW MONTHS AGO

THIS ACCOMMODATION CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IS HOUSING
INTO A FORMER MILITARY CASERNA
A FORMER PRISON FOR PRISONERS OF WAR
A FORMER RECEPTION AND SELECTION CENTRE FOR CANDIDATE SOLDIERS WITH A
PLIGHT TO SERVE THE ARMY FOR TWO YEARS

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IF A RECEPTION CENTER IS INSTALLED IN ANOTHER TYPE OF TEMPORARY PASSAGE-
PLACE

A FORMER GRAND HOTEL FOR INSTANCE
LIKE IN CASE OF THE SWISS-FRENCH BORDER-TOWN OF VALLORBE
WHERE I HAVE STARTED WITH UN-HOME / MOVING STONES

HERE
A SIMILAR TRANSFORMATION TOOK PLACE:
AFTER IT HAD BEEN A GRAND HOTEL FOR TOURISTS

- TOURISTS - IN FACT - IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY -
- WERE STILL CALLED 'STRANGERS'
 - ÉTRANGERS
 - AND SO
 - ALSO TOURISM
 - DESCRIBED AS 'THE INDUSTRY OF STRANGERS'

SO:

AFTER IT HAD BEEN SERVING AS A HOTEL FOR STRANGERS
IT ALSO SERVED AS A MILITARY CASERNE FOR SOLDIERS
BEING TRAINED IN UNDERGROUND MILITARY BASE
IN A MOUNTAIN FACING THE HOTEL AND THE FRENCH BORDER JUST BEHIND

NOWADAYS
IT SERVES A NEW FUNCTIONALITY
AS A REGISTRATION AND RECEPTION CENTRE
FOR ANOTHER TYPE OF STRANGERS
ENTERING THE COUNTRY AT THE BORDER

WE CALL THEM ASYLUMSEEKERS AND REFUGEES

NOW
THIS PLACE LACKS ALL THE OPENNESS AND HOSPITALITY
THAT IT USED TO OFFER BEFORE

THE BUILDING IS TRANSFORMED INTO A CENTER OF SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL
WHERE THE VIEW FROM THE WINDOWS
FOR THE INHABITANTS INSIDE
DOES NOT OFFER A REAL
TRANSPARENT VIEW
TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

ACTUALLY
THE REALITY THAT PEOPLE CAN SEE
IS NOT YET THEIRS

IT ONLY WILL BE DECIDED UPON
BY THE REGISTRATION OFFICE FOR MIGRATION

IN CONTRARY

ONE COULD SAY
THAT
THE WAY THESE BUILDINGS OPTICALLY BEHAVE
WITHIN SOCIETY AND THE URBAN CONTEXT
IS LIKE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW
OF AN UNDERGROUND MILITARY BASE
WHERE PEOPLE ARE PROTECTING THE BORDERS
AGAINST POTENTIAL ENEMIES AND INTRUDERS
COMING FROM THE OTHER SIDE

AND WHERE THEY CAN TRACK AND TRACE
ANY IRREGULAR MOVEMENT
AS SEEN FROM THE HIDDEN UNDERGROUND
OR FROM A COMPUTER-SCREEN TODAY

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WITH UN-HOME / MOVING STONES
I TRY TO COUNTER-ACT
THIS EXCLUDING WAY OF SEEING

WITH MY STONE - CAVE - CAMERA OBSCURA
I THEREFORE INSTALL
A 'MOMENTUM' -

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

ON THESE SPOTS

I USE

OR
ABUSE
THE FACT THAT THESE BUILDINGS ACT
LIKE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS
TOWARDS THEIR IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS

BECAUSE

WHEN I'M COMING THERE
WITH MY STONE
THE BUILDING CAN ACTUALLY SEE ME
FROM THEIR HIDDEN CAMERAS

THEY CAN TRACE ME
THEY CAN SEE
THAT SOMETHING IRREGULAR IS HAPPENING

A STONE DISPLACED

AN ERRATIC BOULDER

ERRARE - WANDERING

A MISTAKE OR MISFIT IN ITS SURROUNDING

THIS IS MY INVITATION

THIS IS MY WAY OF QUESTIONING
OUR WAY OF LOOKING AT STRANGERS

THIS IS MY WAY
TO GET CLOSER
AND TO START A TALK

A DIALOGUE

THE STONE IS MY MEDIUM TO CRITICALLY QUESTION
AND TO INTERVENE

I AM AN INTERMEDIATOR

I AM NOT A PERFORMANCE ARTIST

I ACT AS WHO I PERSONALLY AM

TO START
JUST TO START
A PROCESS OF APPROXIMATION

GETTING CLOSER

TO PEOPLE

WHO FIND THEMSELVES

IN PROCESSES

LINGERING

BETWEEN INNER AND OUTER REALITIES

OBSCURITY AND TRANSPARENCE

BETWEEN APPEARANCES

SIMULACRA

AND THE REAL WORLD
