

# TODAY



Anna Galkina, *Untitled*, collage, 2013 - Courtesy of the artist

# TODAY #7

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*Published by Through Europe, November 2013.*

<http://th-rough.eu>



# THE HOLY SOUTHERN EMPIRE

## a proposal for Southern European anarcho-papism

*Federico Campagna*

*Cura hominum potuit tantam componere Romam,  
quantam non potuit solvere cura deum.  
Hildebertus, Carmina Minora, no.36*

### Beyond the Latin Empire

A few months ago, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben published a short [article](#) on the opportunity to rethink the EU along its cultural traditions, rather than its economic dogmas. Agamben based his article on the work of the Russian-French philosopher Alexandre Kojève, who presented the case for the political union of France, Italy and Spain in a culturally homogeneous Latin Empire which was to be politically and economically lead by France, and opposed to the Anglo-German block.

Despite the violent public reaction that followed Agamben's piece, I would claim that, if Agamben is to be judge guilty of something, it is not of having been too provocative, but not enough.

As noted by Kojève over sixty years ago, the nation state is today progressively turning into an updated version of the ancient form of the Empire. Both Agamben and Kojève correctly noted the tendency of the Anglo-German world towards the creation of a Northern Empire, and the opportunity for Southern Europe to create its own counter-Empire. However, I believe that the culture homogeneity which the two philosophers deem to be the sufficient glue for such a union, will not be enough for the task of Empire-making. As I will unfold my argument, I will first discuss the missing position of the Emperor, and then I will argue for the role of Catholicism as the main element of such an Empire. Finally, I will present the case for the creation of a Holy Southern Empire.

### A Powerful Person in a Position of Power

Any Empire requires an Emperor, and none of the Prime Ministers of the states of Southern Europe – perhaps with the exception of Berlusconi, although the Italian Trimalchio might have at last run out of energy – has neither the qualities or the ambition to be one. The importance of the figure of the Emperor goes hand in hand with the current, progressive unveiling of the truth about power, as exerted in a hierarchical social institution such as a State.

Any organisation that is built around institutionalised power requires for its successful functioning that a powerful person occupies a position of command within its structure. A powerful person is not only an empty vessel of power – such as many, meek Prime Ministers have been, – but s/he is the mystical embodiment of power itself. For this reason, the Italian voters who elected an unsavoury character like Berlusconi were the only ones – perhaps together with the anarchists – to recognise the truth about power, and to act accordingly. Whenever a social institution based on power is lead by a non-powerful

character, such as it is the case in most Southern European countries today, its power-fuelled machine simply stops working. A typical anarchist response to this understanding, would be to ban power from the functioning of social institutions, and to strive for voluntary associations of equals. Despite my agreement with the anarchist position, it is safe to state that, today, the anarchist turn is nowhere in sight. While we work for anarchism to take place at a pre-social, individual or inter-personal level, we should recognise the importance for our power-fuelled society to act in accordance to its nature and its natural needs. Hence, the importance of an Emperor to lead the Southern Empire. But who could be such an Emperor?

## The Catholic Exorcism of Religion

Before reaching an answer to this question, we must first challenge Agamben's and Koveje's claim that Latin culture can effectively function as a unifying factor for the Southern Empire. While it is true that Southern Europeans share approximately similar lifestyles, I would claim that it is not just their vague 'culture' that makes them so similar to each other, but more specifically their peculiar religiosity. With the exception of Greece, all the countries mentioned by the two philosophers – to which we could add Portugal and perhaps subtract France for reasons that will be discussed later – share the same Catholic faith. From the point of view of an atheist and individualist anarchist such as myself, Catholicism embodies perhaps the most advantageous form of religion currently available. As noted by the Italian philosopher Mario Perniola in his beautiful 2001 book *Del Sentire Cattolico*, Catholicism can hardly be considered as a religion. Rather, it is an intricate complex of rituals and practices, which allow their practitioners – here a more precise term than 'believers' – to establish a looser relationship with the tight structures of institutionalised social life, and indeed with religion itself. The emancipatory character of Catholic ritualism – as perfectly embodied by the Baroque style – can be explained in Lacanian terms, if we understand the religious drive as a declination of the unsettling 'real' which each and every one of us carries within themselves at all times. While both Protestantism and traditional atheism don't allow for any relevant 'imaginary' expression of such drive – thus empowering and amplifying its haunting presence – Catholicism does exactly the opposite. The incarnation of the religious spirit in countless, astonishingly luxurious figurations, statues and rituals, achieves the effect of exorcising the religious, trapping it in the loop of ritualism. If we are to always be haunted by the spectre of the religious and by the call of the transcendent, Catholicism displays an exceptionally effective array of tools for their exorcism. Having performed their religious rituals in the most spectacular way every Sunday morning, Catholics have the rest of the week to revel in the most beautifully liberating and hypocritical immoralism.

After all, it was on the recognition of such immoralism and of the loss of the purely religious dimension to the Catholic Church, that the first Protestant movements gained their legitimacy and their spiritual driving force. It might also not be a coincidence that much left-wing atheism, with its complete refusal of any ritualistic element in any way connected with traditional religions, is in fact often intimately corroded by a powerful, guilt-ridden and ultimately paralysing religiosity. Repressing or fully internalizing the religious dimension, rather than exorcising it as the demonic force that it actually is, is possibly the best way of being deadly poisoned by it.

## The Holy Southern Empire



Having considered both the necessity for a society based on power to function according to its nature, and the exorcism of power which is enacted by its very display, I can now proceed with my actual proposal for the constitution of a Southern European Empire.

Differently from Kojève and Agamben, I will not identify the shared Latin culture as the core element of this future empire. Catholicism, understood as the spectacular exorcism of power and religiosity, has to be at its centre. Not just an Empire, then, but a Holy Empire. And of course, there is only one possible candidate for the position of the leader – indeed, the Emperor – of such a holy empire: the head of the Catholic Church, the Pontifex Maximus, the Pope-Emperor.

My claim isn't only grounded in theoretical considerations about the nature of power and the virtues of Catholic immoralism, but it finds proof of its relevance in the face of today's geopolitical challenges and opportunities. Countries such as Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece (which, although not Catholic, shares a similar type of spectacularly exorcising religiosity), have never really fared well as Nation States. Each one of them has only really flourished when it was part of an Empire (and, in the case of Italy, also briefly as a galaxy of mercantilistic city-states). Within the current European scenario, and especially in the light of the recent proposal of a two-speed European currency, all these countries risk indeed to be part of an Empire – the Anglo-German Empire – but only as its impoverished, pathetic periphery. Although the situation is different for France, which has been for centuries a powerful Nation State, the decadence of the very form of the Nation State might encourage even France to rethink its position within a larger, imperial assemblage.

If a Holy Southern Empire was really to be constituted, Southern European countries should relinquish at once their territorial sovereignty to the head of what is now known as the State of the Church, which would incorporate all such territories in the higher form of the Empire. The Pope would become the sole representative of this newly formed geopolitical formation, of which he would officially be declared Holy Emperor. In exchange for the huge donation of territories and wealth, the Holy Emperor should graciously grant his new subjects complete freedom in sexual and biological affairs, thus concentrating the strength of the Church in the display of religious magnificence and in the actualisation of true political power, rather than in petty personal interference. At the same time – and as part of its therapy of religious exorcism – the Holy Empire would renovate that generous patronage of the arts which has always been the true backbone of the Church's *Propaganda Fidei*. All of a sudden, Southern Europe would find itself united under the strong leadership of a powerful person shamelessly occupying the position of power, it would rediscover its vocation for the arts which is perhaps the main visible outcome of its historical legacy, and would be effectively liberated from the stranglehold of deep-rooted, Protestant, guilt-heavy religiosity. For the first time since the golden age of the Baroque, emancipatory individualism would be again possible.

But there is more. While the social democratic dream of modern Nation States has long shipwrecked under the storm of Neoliberalism, the Church has always maintained a strong focus on the provision of welfare services to the dispossessed. As the unfortunate dwellers of the Protestant North will struggle under the hailstorm of neoliberal privatisations, the subjects of the Holy Southern Empire will enjoy a mix of generous social services especially aimed at the proletariat, wide-ranging anti-work policies and unparalleled cultural patronage. At the same time, as long as they offer public homage to the exorcising rituals of the Catholic Church, they will also be free to indulge, without guilt or any deep

moral pressure, in the astonishing rainbow of sins and vices which made the age of the Baroque so infamous and stupendously decadent. While the North will giggle hysterically at the impotent pornography of the epigones of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, Holy Southerners will enjoy the carnal sensuousness of a new breed of Caravaggios.

Thanks to its new status as a formal theocracy – although immorally Catholic – the Holy Empire would also find itself in a position of strength to negotiate a new common front with the constellation of Islamic States and movements throughout the world. It would be possible, for example, to imagine a common platform for religious banking, which would create a privileged connection between the Vatican Bank and the powerful networks of Islamic banking, thus opening the Holy Empire to a new, streaming flow of global capital. Similarly, by presenting itself as a religious, rather than secular power, the Holy Empire would be able to put the already existing diplomatic network of the Catholic Church to a profitable use in the interest of its political and commercial aims. For example, in a booming country such as Brazil, where 64% of the population is Catholic (for an astonishing total of 164 million people), the pressure exerted by local Catholics would be a formidable leverage in the political and commercial negotiations between the Holy Empire and the local Government. In the coming, formally post-democratic age (if there ever was a democratic age in the first place) claims based on a felt religious identity will play an increasingly powerful role in shaping popular demands to the political apparatus. It would be a wise move to slyly use this trend to one's own advantage, rather than blindly falling victim to it.

## Our Jesuit Masters

As absurd as all this might sound – especially coming from the pen of a self-confessed, atheist and individualist anarchist – an objective understanding of the nature of power as it is exerted in our society, and of the geopolitical challenges facing Southern Europe, sheds a strangely reassuring light on the possibility of creating a Holy Southern Empire under the control of the Pope-Emperor.

The future looks bleak for the people of Southern Europe, and even the beautiful claims of Koveje and Agamben for the primacy of the cultural difference of the South will not save those countries from plunging into an abyss of economic degradation, political irrelevance and general collapse of the quality of life. Rather than looking at the austere Protestant figures of today's Northern policy-makers, Southerners should look back at their own cunning, treacherous and ultimately brilliant scholars of the art of clever opportunism: the great, ancient minds of the Jesuit Order. Jesuits such as Baltasar Gracian and Matteo Ricci, perhaps even more than the often quoted Machiavelli, truly understood the strategy and tactic of realpolitik, and the wide spaces of personal freedom that a cunning and detached – in a word, Catholic – relationship with power can offer to the individual.

As the age of the steel-cold dreams of the 20th Century finally comes to a close, it is on the shoulders of the all-too-human wisdom of such shadowy figures that we can find a good point of view to look towards a possible future. If we will have the heart to put aside the deadening realism which has informed modern Protestant thought, and to fully embrace the paradoxical consequences of Catholic nominalism, perhaps this future will contain some light also for the now collapsing Southern Europe. As the first anarch-papist of this century, and in the name of the Holy Emperor of the Holy Southern Empire, I can safely and surely say that it will. *Deus Vult!*

## FRAGMENTS ON THE ZOMBIE MYTH

### the mortification of the general intellect and the half-life of the cognitariat

*Toby Austin Locke*

*The only modern myth is the myth of zombies—mortified schizos, good for work, brought back to reason.*

- Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari

The zombie is the point at which power's domination, the domination of the state and of capital in all its shades - subjective, existential, epistemological, even ontological - has entered so completely into our communities that the unquestioning automaton is the most recurrent and common form-of-life to be encountered. It is the point at which subjectivity has been so deeply infested by the love of power, the micro-facism that is diffused across the global bio-political mass, that life only appears as a half-death, an existence the potential forms of which are predetermined, prelimited, constrained. The images of loved ones appear, but terrify; intimacy gives way to disgust, and those who break free of their cages of isolation, who demand to reclaim life from its half-death, are confronted by the utter terror that surrounds them.

The zombie is a figure of diffuse terror and diffuse half-death. In its contemporary form, the zombie is never one monster, but a horde, a diffuse mass of more or less infected bodies. This form of terror, and of half-death, sits not only alongside mass production, mass culture, mass subjection, but also along side the diffuse and deterritorialised – biopower, affective labour, cognitive capital. The zombie form appears across the biopolitical mass, its base is spread wide, it does not return to a central power, to a vampire father or master werewolf, but is manifest anywhere. Regularly, the safe and secure companion that stood alongside the hero turns, falls to half-death, becomes the rotting automaton against which they fought in comradeship. The most intimate spaces of human experience and subjectivity are not free from half-death, just as they are not free of domination, of self-executing control and subjection under capital.

*The myth of the zombie, of the living dead, is a work myth and not a war myth*

- Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari

The half-death of the industrial worker, the hours of unliving enforced upon them by the working day, does not disappear with the diffusion of capital to the cerebral, emotional and immaterial. The mortification of existence, duration and experience manifests itself beyond the temporal limits of the working day. The zombie-like automaton experiences the half-death that was once localised within the working day as a generalised phenomenon, as their emotional and subjective detachment, as their reality, their function.

With the zombie, there is no more need for production, only reproduction and mediation. There is no more need to push the boundaries of production, only to extend the reach of capital. The myth of the avant-garde has been reeled in, and the true artistic practice now lies in the reproduction of creativity, innovation and critique as commodity, as half-dead form.

*In machinery, objectified labour confronts living labour within the labour process itself as the power which rules it ... In machinery, objectified labour confronts living labour as a ruling power and as an active subsumption of the latter under itself*

- Karl Marx

It is the mass grave of once living-labour that forms the foundation from which the zombie may arise. The dead-labour embodied in the mechanical, technical and scientific, means and modes of production and subjectification provides capital with a fully subsumed corporeality, assemblages of bodies mortified in the machinery of capital. It is this once living corporeality that allows for the subsumption of thought, creativity, emotion and experience through the practices of immaterial labour. The colonisation of the intellect by capital required first the absolute integration of the body to production, the automaton that now arises from this expanse of mummified flesh lives only through capital, thinks only through capital, and increasingly feels only through capital.

*There wasn't a clear, identifiable emotion within me, except for greed and possibly, total disgust. I had all the characteristics of a human being-flesh, blood, skin, hair-but my depersonalization was so intense, had gone so deep, that the normal ability to feel compassion had been eradicated, the victim of a slow, purposeful erasure. I was simply imitating reality, a rough resemblance of a human being, with only a dim corner of my mind functioning. Something horrible was happening and yet I couldn't figure out why-I couldn't put my finger on it.*

- Bret Easton Ellis

The figures of the American novels, such as those of Fitzgerald and Bret Easton Ellis, with their false facades and close to total subjective detachment, their non-existent fervently repressed emotional states and forms of experience, are as much zombies as the rotting presences of George A Romero's films. Indeed, that the likes of Clay and Patrick Bateman have not entirely succumb to the half-death of automation under power, of self-subjecting control, makes them all the more dangerous, their repulsion at their own mortification brings about horrific affect whereas the zombie's total lack of its own power, of its own control, of its own singular experience, leaves it in no position to enact the same level of malicious, carefully considered, atrocities that the *American Psycho(s)* are capable of.

*I shall bring up the dead to eat food like the living; and the hosts of dead will outnumber the living*

- The Epic of Gilgamesh

We can't pretend that the half-death of the zombie is new, that it is born of bourgeoisie society, or that it is historical specific to capital. The undead are threatened upon the Mesopotamians in the Epic of Gilgamesh. But it is not as infection but as summoning that the undead of Gilgamesh would appear. Contrary to the contemporary Zombie, these undead would follow command, be under a monarchist ruler, rather than being self-creating, self-expanding and self-(dis)organising. It is the parasitic, infectious nature of diffuse capital that leads to the contemporary zombie, that which sucks the life force from experience, emotion, thought and subjectivity in the form of simulated experience economies, hyper economies of desire, and immaterial labour.



Zombies need no god. They are a manifestation of terror and the-end-of-life after the death of god. When the extension of life after death is no longer promised by religion, by salvation, the only extension of life can be in death or infection, in the rotting, pathological half-death of the zombie. Zombies are not killed by religion, by the crucifix, holy water or the silver bullet, it is the absolute destruction of infected cognitive function that brings their half-life to death. This too shows the cynicism and despair that diffuse domination has resulted in – there are no more utopias to be sought, and even democracy, a pragmatic project aiming towards something better is an impossible ideal, a set of unrealisable religious guidelines.

*... they took on the status of machines: freed of all semblance, freed even from their double, they grew increasingly similar to the system of production of which they were nothing more than the miniaturised equivalent.*

- Jean Baudrillard

No longer just docile bodies, so too docile minds, docile passions, docile expressions. The flows of subjectivity must be malleable and flexible in order to ensure their subsumption, control must come from within. Capital no longer needs to exert disciplinarian, coercive force from above; it is from within and around that automata expand. Power no longer must strictly regiment bodies, spaces and times – control is reproductive of its own accord. *Dispositifs* and *encasements* now spread themselves thinly and subtly across the biopolitical mass.

*No desire, no vitality seems to exist anymore outside the economic enterprise, outside productive labor and business. Capital was able to renew its psychic, ideological and economic energy, specifically thanks to the absorption of creativity, desire and individualistic, libertarian drives for self-realization.*

- Franco 'Bifo' Berardi

1968 was the year that George A Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* would first arrive in the cinemas. The film marks a point at which the myth of the undead transforms, and assumes not only a metaphorical, but an allegorical and reflexive importance in relation to the emergent conditions of capital's dominance over day to day life and experience. Romero's undead are not bewitched, cursed or possessed. The speculation is that they have been brought to half-life due to a radioactive satellite returning from Venus which has stimulated the brains of the dead. Monsters without a god, without spiritualism, these zombies are a result of human experimentation gone wrong, of the products of general intellect turned against their own creators; they are subjects of a biopolitics that invests itself deep within subjectivity.

1968 it was during this year that industrial workers and students would stand side by side in resistance to capital's domination over human existence. The cry of the student movements, *workers and students united in their fight*, manifests the emergence of a different form of capital, the expansion of production lines from the factory to the seminar room, the subsumption of intellect by economic valorisation. Here we find a clear articulation of emerging cognitive labour, of the proletarianisation of the intellect and the crystallisation of the cognitariat. It is the expression of human intellect turned against itself – of general intellect turned against its own creators.

It is in the zombie, the foul, rotting, mound of flesh that serves no other purpose than the accumulation and expansion of its self-destructing pathology, that we are confronted with

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the most vile aspects of our own subjectivity, of capital's relentless march against our forms-of-life and communities.

## THE SADNESS OF 'I QUIT' VIDEOS

*Paolo Mossetti*

Like many other viral videos on Youtube, [this](#) liberating, mildly choreographic effort to say “goodbye” to a despotic boss made me release more depressant toxins that it apparently did to other million viewers.

The story behind it is now a popular fabula: Marina Shifrin, 25, was employed by “an awesome company” (her words) that produces animation videos. “For almost two years”, she explains, “I’ve sacrificed my relationships, time and energy for this job”.

It’s 4.30am and she’s still at work. It doesn’t seem to be an exception.

She positions her camera in strategic spots, looking straight into it with her thick glasses, then she unexpectedly starts to dance around the office, lonely yet glowing. “I quit”, is the caption flashing multiple times under her moves.

American history is full of chronicles of fugitive slaves. White historians and physicians labelled as “Crazy Negroes” those who rebelled against the fifteen-hours days in the plantations and tried to flee, sometimes after destroying the crop while in convulsions, before being almost always recaptured and hanged.

Of course, it was other era. In her video, Marina doesn’t destroy or damage anything. How could she? She could spend years in jail even only for one smashed monitor. Her company is based in Taiwan and Taiwanese justice is notoriously harsh. Her co-workers would have probably ditched her. While on strike, Italian Marxist-Leninist unions used to interrupt the assembly lines by clanging metal bars and throwing heavy bolts on the scabs. Sabotaging factory equipment and breaking into factory offices was a widespread practice back in the 1970s. Their slogan was: “Shitty Work for a Shitty Salary” [1]

But now? Which tools of sabotage does Marina possess? The land of cubicles is a true “hell frozen over” of misery and bore, and the her only weapon seems to be just enough post-modern irony to navigate a glacial environment. Like a schizophrenic patient in isolation, she puts on a show of her own helplessness, even smiling about it, as if mocking her own induced “insanity”.

What’s worse: perhaps unconsciously, she is speaking the Master’s language: despite her miserable conditions, her cutesy manners seem to mirror to the same corporate “smartassness” which exploited her in the first place. The same aspiration to a superficial, de-politicized, easily comprehensible, “viral” popularity that leads companies to humiliate individual intelligence.

And you know pretty well what is going to happen, after: once she has escaped her office, and guzzled down a drink too much in some sports bar, off she goes to another office, and then to another one. “Quitting videos” on Youtube aren’t career killers anymore (the system of oppression and humiliation they expose is left untouched) but rather an opportunity, a Linkedin medal. What it is really at stake is not the message behind the hype, but the hype itself.

There is also another choice: the Temporary Escape from Civilization. “I’m going to help Africa’s children for a year”. “I’m gonna be a missionary in Thailand”, or the hundred thousand schemes for provisional self-help: industrially-generated escapism, reflecting the very same grayness of office life, and the lack of any truly emancipatory options in today’s existence.

During the video, Marina's boss is sleeping. But rather than shaking him up, in the middle of the night, we keep ourselves busy laughing at our impotent insomnia. And dancing as we do it.

Amen.

*[There is probably only one thing worse than this video - and it's the company's official [reaction](#): a visual representation of voluntary servitude.]*

[1] "A salario di merda, lavoro di merda"

## JOURNEY TO SEOUL (1)

*Franco Berardi Bifo*

### Incheon Airport

I had been hesitant for weeks. After accepting the invitation I had a second thought and tried to call off my early availability. I was scared by the distance, and the humid hot weather of the summer of Seoul. So I declined the invitation of the Korean publisher of some of my books.

I sent him an email: "I'm too sick for this journey. I suffer from asthma, the long flight and the sultry moisture would be bad for my health."

But my publisher, who is a very nice guy, kindly insisted: "Do you really believe that the Northern Koreans will launch a nuclear bomb while you stay here?"

The sarcasm of his message made me hit the roof.

"Do you think that I'm stupid?" I replied "I know that the Northern crazy boy is staging the menace as a ritual way to cash money from the Americans. Anyway I don't give a shit about the nuclear bomb. I'm more concerned about my asthma than about Kim Jong Un."

Then I overcame all my worries and I went to Seoul.

I had a great time there, as I finally saw the purest version of the desert of the.

I studied the signs of the urban environment and of the daily life, and I tried to decipher the marks left by the historical past on the skin of the present.

By the end of the 20th Century – after decades of war, humiliation, starvation and horrific bombings – both the physical and the anthropological landscape of this country had been reduced to a sort of devastated abstraction. At that point, human life and the city gave themselves with docility to the transforming hand of the highest form of contemporary nihilism.

Korea is the ground zero of the world, a blueprint for the future of the planet.

At Incheon airport two organizers of my lectures came to welcome me: the artist and architect Eunseon Park, director of the magazine *Listen to the City* – and the young scholar Kim Junsung.

The Airport is built on an island, and the connecting bridge runs along the sea. From the windows of Kim's car I looked at the landscape. Chimneystacks all along the coastal line – dissolved in a mystical fog, gray on gray. Gray abstraction.

The sea has receded and the ground is grey and brownish like the sky.

Calmly, intensely, hopelessly, the ultimate abstraction invaded my soul.



## History Obliteration Simulation

Although culturally influenced by the Chinese, the Korean peninsula managed to remain isolated from the rest of the world until the beginning of the past Century.

The peninsula was invaded by the Japanese Army in 1910. The annexation marked the end of the Yi (Chosun) Dynasty, which had ruled the country since 1392. The ensuing occupation was brutal, and aimed at erasing the national identity, the national language and the national pride. In 1933 Kim Il Sung – supported by the Soviet Union – led a relentless small-scale guerrilla along the Manchurian border.

After the final Japanese defeat, the country was divided into a Northern entity, occupied by the Soviet, and a Southern part, occupied by the United States. While the North was ruled by Kim Il Sung, the Americans supported Syngman Rhee's military government in the South.

A new war was inevitable, and broke out in June 1950.

The war lasted three years and was punctuated by atrocities against civilians and devastating bombings, mass starvation and countless casualties. The country emerged from the war in conditions of poverty and destitution, divided in two zones.

Two different simulations emerged from the obliteration of the past: the Juche simulation of Kim Il Sung, a sort of mystical communism with hyper-nationalist overtones, and the hyper-industrialism of Park, which led South Korea – at that time one of the poorest countries on the planet – to rapidly surge to the position of the eleventh most industrialized country in the world. I speak of simulations, because both Kim Il Sung and Park Chung Hee's shared an imagination of the future which was based on the simulation of a no longer existing identity of the Korean people.

Traditional cornerstones of the Old Confucianism were family and respect for parents. However, in North Korea a new concept of family emerged: the work collective, the party, the National State, submitted to the unquestionable authority of a new father figure, the Great Leader, the Suryong.

The Southern simulation is based on the militaristic application of the economic creed.

The display of happiness is less mandatory in the South than it is in the Northern communist paradise, but it is strongly recommended if you ever want to be successful in the only game that counts: the game of money.

While the North seems motionless, unchangeable in the repetition of rituals that have lost all their meaning but still have to be performed immutably, Southern Korean politics have changed a great deal in the last few decades.

After two decades of military dictatorship, after the Kwangju insurrection of 1980 against the dictatorship, and after the elections which renovated the political elite, South Korea has known a period of democratic transformation accompanied by the explosion of the electronic revolution both in the field of production and in people's daily life.

Yet, throughout all these transformations, the economic creed never ceased to be the common ground of identification of a society which has lost almost entirely the landscape of its physical and spiritual past.

## **The May 18, 1980 Kwangju Democratic Uprising**

*This section is taken from the website [libcom.org](http://libcom.org), a resource for all people who wish to fight to improve their lives, their communities and their working conditions.*

Events in Kwangju unfolded after the dictator of South Korea; Park Chung-Hee was assassinated by his own chief of intelligence Chun Doo-Hwan on Friday October 26<sup>th</sup> 1979.

In the euphoria after Park's demise, students led a huge movement for democracy, but General Chun Doo-Hwan seized power and threatened violence if the protests continued. All over Korea, with the sole exception of Kwangju, people stayed indoors. With the approval of the United States, the new military government then released from the frontlines of the DMZ some of the most seasoned paratroopers to teach Kwangju a lesson. Once these troops reached Kwangju, they terrorised the population in unimaginable ways. In the first confrontations on the morning of May 18, specially designed clubs broke heads of defenseless students. As demonstrators scrambled for safety and regrouped, the paratroopers attacked: "A cluster of troops attacked each student individually. They would crack his head, stomp his back, and kick him in the face. When the soldiers were done, he looked like a pile of clothes in meat sauce." [Lee Jae-Eui, Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age, p. 46]

Bodies were piled into trucks, where soldiers continued to beat and kick them. By night the paratroopers had set up camp at several universities.

As students fought back, soldiers used bayonets on them and arrested dozens more people, many of whom were stripped naked, raped and further brutalized.

Despite severe beatings and hundreds of arrests, students continually regrouped and tenaciously fought back, and the city mobilized the next day.

Paratroopers once again resorted to callous brutality - killing and maiming people whom they happened to encounter on the streets. Even cab and bus drivers seeking to aid the wounded and bleeding people were stabbed, beaten and sometimes killed. Some policemen secretly tried to release captives, and they, too, were bayoneted. Many police simply went home, and the chief of police refused to order his men to fire on protesters despite the military's insistence he do so.

On May 20, a newspaper called the Militants' Bulletin was published for the first time, providing accurate news - unlike the official media. At 5:50pm, a crowd of 5,000 surged over a police barricade. When the paratroopers drove them back, they re-assembled and sat-in on a road. They then selected representatives to try and further split the police from the army. In the evening, the march swelled to over 200,000 people in a city with a population then of 700,000. The massive crowd unified workers, farmers, students and people from all walks of life. Nine buses and over two-hundred taxis led the procession on Kumnam Avenue, the downtown shopping area. Once again, the paratroopers viciously

attacked, and this time the whole city fought back. During the night, cars, jeeps, taxis and other vehicles were set on fire and pushed into the military's forces. Although the army attacked repeatedly, the evening ended in a stalemate at Democracy Square. At the train station, many demonstrators were killed, and at Province Hall adjacent to Democracy Square, the paratroopers opened fire on the crowd with M-16s, killing many more.

The censored media had failed to report the killings. Instead, false reports of vandalism and minor police actions were the news that they fabricated. The brutality of the army was not mentioned. After the night's news again failed to report the situation, thousands of people surrounded the MBC media building. Soon the management of the station and the soldiers guarding it retreated, and the crowd surged inside. Unable to get the broadcast facility working, people torched the building. The crowd targeted buildings intelligently:

"At 1:00am, citizens went in flocks to the Tax Office, broke its furniture and set fire to it. The reason was that taxes which should be used for people's lives and welfare had been used for the army and the production of the arms to kill and beat people. It was a very unusual case to set fire to the broadcasting stations and tax office while protecting the police station and other buildings."

Besides the Tax Office and two media buildings, the Labour Supervision Office, Province Hall car depot and 16 police vehicles were torched. The final battle at the train station around 4:00am was intense. Soldiers again used M-16s against the crowd, killing many in the front ranks. Others climbed over the bodies to carry the fight to the army. With incredible fortitude, the people prevailed, and the army beat a hasty retreat.

At 9:00am the next morning (May 21), more than 100,000 people gathered again on Kumam Avenue facing the paratroopers. A small group shouted that some people should go to Asia Motors (a military contractor) and seize vehicles. A few dozen people went off, bringing back only seven (the exact number of rebels who knew how to drive). As they shuttled more drivers back and forth, soon 350 vehicles, including armored personnel carriers, were in the hands of the people. Driving these expropriated vehicles around the city, the demonstrators rallied the populace and also went to neighboring towns and villages to spread the revolt. Some trucks brought bread and drinks from the Coca Cola factory. Negotiators were selected by the crowd and sent to the military. Suddenly gunshots pierced an already thick atmosphere, ending hope for a peaceful settlement. For ten minutes, the army indiscriminately fired, and in carnage, dozens were killed and over 500 wounded.

The people quickly responded. Less than two hours after the shootings, the first police station was raided for arms. More people formed action teams and raided police and national guard armories, and assembled at two central points. With assistance from coal miners from Hwasun, demonstrators obtained large quantities of dynamite and detonators. Seven busloads of women textile workers drove to Naju, where they captured hundreds of rifles and ammunition and brought them back to Kwangju. Similar arms seizures occurred in Changsong, Yoggwang and Tamyang counties. The movement quickly spread to Hwasun, Naju, Hampyung, Youngkwang, Kangjin, Mooan, Haenam, Mokpo - in all, at least sixteen other parts of southwest Korea.

Hoping to bring the uprising to Chunju and Seoul, some demonstrators set out but were repulsed by troops blocking the highway, roads, and railroads. Helicopter gunships wiped out units of armed demonstrators from Hwasun and Yoggwang counties trying to reach

Kwangju. If the military had not so tightly controlled the media and restricted travel, the revolt may have turned into a nationwide uprising.

In the heat of the moment, a structure evolved that was more democratic than previous administrations of the city. Assembling at Kwangju Park and Yu-tong Junction, combat cells and leadership formed. Machine guns were brought to bear on Province Hall (where the military had its command post). By 5:30pm, the army retreated; by 8:00pm the people controlled the city. Cheering echoed everywhere. Although their World War II weapons were far inferior to those of the army, people's bravery and sacrifices proved more powerful than the technical superiority of the army. The Free Commune lasted for six days. Daily citizens' assemblies gave voice to years-old frustration and deep aspirations of ordinary people. Local citizens' groups maintained order and created a new type of social administration - one of, by and for the people. Coincidentally, on May 27 - the same day that the Paris Commune was crushed over a hundred years earlier - the Kwangju Commune was overwhelmed by military force despite heroic resistance. Although brutally suppressed in 1980, for the next seven years the movement continued to struggle, and in 1987 a nationwide uprising was organized that finally won democratic electoral reform in South Korea.

There is still some debate about the actual numbers, but the official report on the Gwangju massacre is that 144 civilians were killed during the clashes, in addition to 22 soldiers, and 4 police men; with many more being wounded. However, these figures are widely regarded as being inaccurate and played down, with some sources claiming that between one thousand and two thousand people actually died in the Gwangju massacre.

### **The perfect recombinant city**

Looking around, in art galleries and museums, inspecting the faces of young people, their signs and gestures, I was struck by the re-design of Seoul's visual environment.

The traces of traditional life are hidden, overwhelmed by designed life.

Social communication has been thoroughly redesigned by the cellular smartphone. Vision has been thoroughly redesigned by screens of all sizes.

The majority of people are constantly looking at their small cell-phone screens. In the land of Samsung, girls and boys are permanently connected, whenever they walk or sit or stand waiting for the subway train to approach. Their hands are busy carrying iPads, their fingertips run ceaselessly along digital screens.

One day, in a park, I sat on a bench and I looked for fifteen minutes at a group of three young girls. They were standing under a tree, each of them looking at her phone, smiling at the camera, taking pictures around, taking pictures of herself, and showing each new picture to the others. All of them were standing silently.

Screens are everywhere: big screens on the walls of skyscrapers, middle-seized screens in the station's halls. But the small private screens of the smart-phones take over most of the attention of the crowd, calmly and silently shuffling without looking around.

After colonization and wars, after dictatorship and starvation, the South Korean mind, liberated by the burden of the natural body, smoothly entered the digital sphere with a lower degree of cultural resistance than virtually any other populations in the world. This, in my opinion, is the main source of the incredible economic performance that this country has staged in the years of the electronic revolution. In the emptied cultural space, the Korean experience is marked by an extreme degree of individualization and simultaneously it is headed towards the ultimate cabling of the collective mind.

These lonely monad walks in the urban space in tender continuous interaction with the pictures, tweets, games coming out of their small screens, perfectly insulated and perfectly wired into the smooth interface of the flow. In order to get access to the interaction, the individual has to adapt to the format, and his/her enunciations have to be compatible with the code.

Hangeul, the Korean alphabet invented in the XV Century by King Sejong, seems to be one of the sources of the late modern economic success of the country. According to many linguists and anthropologists, the exceptional ability that Koreans have to rapidly transmit digital content is an effect of the Hangeul writing system, which is ideally suited for digital technologies.

King Sejong, the fourth monarch of the Joseon Dynasty was an enlightened despot who decided to create a tool for expanding the participation of people in the knowledge of laws. He launched the *Hunminjeongeum*, today called Hangeul, an artificial alphabet which was intended to translate in the easiest way the sound of spoken language.

The aristocratic elite and the functionaries of court were culturally influenced by the Chinese, and did not approve the promulgation of a national alphabet, fearing that common people could threaten their power. Notwithstanding the opposition of the privileged class, Hangeul was adopted by a large part of the population, particularly by women, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it completely replaced the Chinese logographic system of writing.

Hangeul is the only writing system in the world for which the name of its creator and the date of its invention are precisely known.

“Unlike other alphabetic writing systems Hangeul has a similar number of consonants and vowels. Thus, when designing a keyboard it is possible to arrange consonants and vowels symmetrically, assigning 14 keys to the consonants on the left and 12 keys to the vowels on the right. Cellphone keypads have far fewer keys than computer keyboards, but since there are only eight basic letters in Hangeul before adding strokes or combining letters, sending text messages on a cell phone using Hangeul is more convenient and accessible than is the case with other alphabets. Korea’s leading cell phone makers applied the basic principles of Hangeul in their text-input methods.” (*Korea’s Unique Alphabet*, p. 62).



## JOURNEY TO SEOUL (2)

*Franco Berardi Bifo*

### Aerial protests

Only two generations ago Korean people were so poor that starvation was a frequent and widespread experience. Today, Koreans have reached the same level of wealth and consumption of the most advanced countries in the West. The minimum wage is 4.800 won per hour, more or less 3.5 Euros, and the majority of workers manage to cash around 1500 Euros per month. Teachers are paid better than in Italy or England, around 2000 Euros per month.

But for the youngest generation the prospects are not as rosy. Renting a house has become impossible for the majority of young people, who cannot afford to pay advances of fifty thousand dollars.

More and more youngsters take debts with the banks if they want to marry and have a house. More and more take debt to pay their studies.

In the past, the Korean workers movement used to be strong, while it is much less so now. Social resistance has become scattered, individualized. The rare cases of resistance are moral display of outrage and symbolic actions.

Aerial protests are a distinctive kind of demonstration that can be seen only in Korea. In other countries, members of environment organizations occasionally climb trees in protest, but hardly anywhere else workers climb up transmission towers for indefinite sit-ins.

“Workers today have no way to cope with their sense of injustice, so they use these protests to share their dilemma with others” says Bae Gyu-shik, a sociologist.

“Listen to the city” is the name of an art-architectural activist group that engages in the production of low price tent structures, especially conceived for sheltering and housing the aerial protesters who squat in high places like cranes and electricity pillars.

In a self-produced brochure, the activists of the group published a map of the main sit-in aerial demonstrations, listing twelve which adopted the shelter produced by the architects and carpenters of the activist group.

“The main function of this tent is to amplify the voice of the protestors, and to bring it to the citizens, politicians and other demonstrators. Regardless of weather, even in -25 degrees, people stay up there protesting day and night. Protestors are facing extreme living condition and this shows their sincerity.” (*Sit-in demonstration architectures*, Seoul, 2011).

I read from the brochure some stories of aerial protesters.

“On the top of the underpass is an eight lane highway: below it is a four-lane road. The bridge is always jittery from the cargo trucks that constantly roar by above and below. Tied by rope to the bridge railing is a plywood platform that measure 2m long and 1m wide. This

is the site of Hong Jong-in's aerial protest. Hong, 39, is leader of the YPR Ansan chapter of the Korean Metal Workers' Union."

Evictions are common place in the territory of the metropolis. Every day the police are evicting people from houses, shops, small markets, to make room for corporate building investments, and fashionable new buildings.

Hundreds of people were evicted for a project by Daniel Libeskind, which eventually was cancelled for financial problems.

The artist collective *Listen to the city* is the author of the film *Yongsan* (2010, 74min), narrating the Youngsan Tragedy which took place in Seoul 2009.

Youngsan is one of the main areas in Seoul. In 2009 the government and developers announced that the area was going to be turned into Youngsan international business district and hired the architect Daniel Libeskind.

The developers rushed to evict the people living in the area, but most of them weren't even aware that the project was scheduled to start, and therefore not ready to move. Evicted people tried to resist to the police and the thugs sent by the new contractors. During the resistance six people died. Among fires and cries of despair, women and children and men were evicted.

Youngsan international business district was recently cancelled for financial problems.

People receive the communication that their homes or their shops will be demolished only three months before the actual eviction. Just a short span of time is left to prepare for dislodgment, look for a new house, whose advance payment is so high that many cannot afford it.

## Introduction to hell

In the perfectly recombinant city the subway is protected from suicidal events. Walls of transparent material run all along the rails. The train stops and doors open in the crystal tunnel. In London people who intend to commit suicide in the subway are invited to go to do what they want elsewhere, so busy citizens do not waste their time waiting for dismembered corpses to be evacuated. British humor.

Koreans are less humorous, but suicide is widespread.

[South Korea](#) has the highest [suicide](#) rate in the world. Korea leads the gloomy contest with 28,4 per 100.000. Second comes Hungary with 17, then Finland and Japan.

Suicide is the most common cause of death for those under 40 in South Korea.

More than two thirds of the suicides are committed by males (in 2003, the ratio was about 2:1).

Two most common methods of suicide are poisoning and hanging, accounting for about 2/3 of all suicides.

Interestingly, the toll of suicides in South Korea has doubled during the last decade. From 6.8 per 100,000 people in 1982, to 28.4 in 2011.

Here probably lies the explanation of the extraordinary propensity of Koreans (both young and middle aged) to commit suicide: in the space of two generations their condition has certainly improved by the point of view of revenue, nutrition, freedom and possibility of travelling abroad.

But the price of this improvement has been the desertification of daily life, the hyper-acceleration of rhythms, the extreme individualization of biographies, and work precariousness which also means unbridled competition.

They come out from such a situation of underdevelopment and misery that seems impossible to complain for the new reality. High tech capitalism naturally implies ever increasing productivity and ceaseless intensification of the rhythms of work, but it is also the condition that has made possible an impressive improvement in life standards, nourishing and consumption.

Koreans look back to the condition of their grandparents and they cannot question the present alienation. But the present alienation is a different sort of hell. The intensification of the rhythm of work, the desertification of the landscape and the virtualization of the emotional life are converging to create a level of loneliness and despair that is difficult to consciously refuse and oppose. The compatibilised recombinant organism is perfectly efficient in the sphere of techno-production, but it is tremendously frail. Isolation, competition, sense of meaninglessness, compulsion and failure: 28 persons out of 100.000 every year succeed in their attempt to escape and many more unsuccessfully try.

As suicide can be considered the ultimate mark of the anthropological mutation linked to the digital transformation and precarization: not surprisingly South Korea is number one in the world when it comes to the suicide rate.

## **Lecturing at Suyonomo N**

The reason why I went to Seoul was to hold a workshop with the group of art-activists named Suyonomo N, and to talk at a meeting at the local university, organized by my publisher together with a group of students and researchers.

One of the reasons of my hesitation to go to Seoul was a moral consideration. Have I the right to export my present pessimism into a place that I don't know, to people who have the kindness of paying for listening to me? Have I the right to meet activists, philosophers and artists whose present activity I do not know, and tell them that in my vision I consider suicide as the most significant political act?

My guests puzzled and floored me, disorienting my expectations and changing the very terms of my philosophical proposal.

The Suyonomo N participants in the seminary were around forty five coming from different professional and cultural backgrounds. Professors and researchers of various Universities of the city, some artists and architects, a well-known philosopher who was jailed in the years of the dictatorship and has published various books on his political experience, a charming old woman who after teaching literature has retired in the countryside to grow plants and food, the owner of a gasoline station of the suburbs, an expert in Russian literature. Some very young students, a catholic clergyman, an anarchist, a buddhist.

Asked about their activity some of them declared to be independent researchers, and to consider Sujonomo N the place where their research could be developed and made public.

The neoliberal privatization of the University in South Korea, as in many countries around the world, is making studying and researching much harder for a growing number of people. Thus, more and more young Koreans are dropping out of University – which, as it becomes more expensive, also proves itself to be increasingly less useful in terms of giving access to regular jobs – and are creating spaces of self-formation and independent research.

The members of Sujonomo N meet regularly in two spaces in a popular area of Seoul. One is the place for living and sharing food, the other is the place for cultural activity and meetings. They have dinner together in the evening, do yoga and listen to music, and take part in seminars on various subjects.

In the same week of my workshop other groups were studying a book on sexuality by Michel Foucault, the thought of Walter Benjamin, and a workshop was dedicated to mathematical problems in computing science.

They are not the kind of naïf activists who want to be confirmed in their certainty that the multitude is winning, and the Empire will be defeated. Some of them have taken part in the workers struggles of the last decades, some are presently acting against the projects of devastation of what is left of the natural landscape, some are active in the denunciation of the daily evictions – but at the same time they seem totally aware of the dissolution of the old political ideologies and expectations.

Frankly speaking, in Seoul I had the clear perception of reaching the end of line of the contemporary hell, but meeting the Sujonomo people also made me understand that we are not bound to submit to the surrounding violence and to conform to the surrounding sadness.

Although they live under the permanent threat of nuclear bombing by a crazy tyrant who lives just a few miles away in the city of Pyongyang, although they are similarly threatened of final desertification by the tyrants of financial capitalism, my Sujonomo friends seem conscious of the fact that only their sense of friendship and the pursuit of a project of common research can give us autonomy and force.

My lectures at Sujonomo have been a sort of meditation on the contemporary paradox: richness is producing misery, knowledge is producing ignorance and violence, and the tendency towards the full development of the general intellect is entangled and perverted by financial capitalism, which is leading us towards the annihilation of what has been created by the past civilization.

**ZAKIRA / MEMORY***Nathan Witt*

This text comes at the time of great worry for the neighbouring countries of Syria as the violence threatens to spill over further and that there is a consensus to let Syria sort its problems out itself without foreign intervention. It is important to consider the fact that this following text exists as a result of illegal activity in neighbouring Israel that has continued since the second world war to present day and that any military intervention against Syria only serves Israel's interests, either as a diversion for the continual expansion and even advancement further into the West Bank, or for any additional advancement that borders Syria, either for water or land, or for testing out military capabilities. I find it genuinely hard to see if Israel has any concern for its civilian population given its behaviour in international and regional affairs over the last 65 years and the State's refusal to desist in both the advancement of settlements or further attacks and incursions into the West Bank, Gaza, Southern Lebanon, Jordan River or Golan Heights. An allied attack by the US, France - or Israel - on Syria is going to be catastrophic for the region's stability. Watching Britain's offering of televised democracy to pull out of military intervention was a tormenting relief that was almost surreal in both the immediacy of the decision and that the government was actually listening to the public.

Even more so was in the mainstream media, where both the BBC and Channel 4 announced for the first time that maybe there was evidence for the Free Syrian Army to have been using chemical weapons and not Assad, that there was no logic to Assad using chemical weapons when he had gained the upper hand against the FSA. I do think there is an intolerance towards Shia Islam from both the US and UK governments and their mainstream media, whether in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt or Iran but I am not qualified to answer anything any further than that and am not privy to facts about chemical weapons or the full extent of the differences in Sharia law; this text is simply about representation and children displaced by the State of Israel. I would also like to thank Ghassan Maasri and Nora Razian for their kind and generous support whilst staying in Lebanon this summer and this text is a token effort at understanding an incomprehensive politic that many fear for its resolution...

In Hamra, Beirut there is an archive called Zakira<sup>[1]</sup>, it is run mainly by volunteers who want to offer photography as a form of creativity and an outlet for children from the many Palestinian refugee camps around Lebanon; the collective provides children with a variety of cameras to document their daily lives in these camps. When I first came across the archive I was thinking about ideas of abandoning nationality and superstition and thinking if an image, or a photograph, or a life in photography is a way out of trauma. Whether a life in art has much differentiation within these particular values – or just art itself – or if they are worthwhile substitutes for each other; imagining the worst case scenario [sic] possible about the limitations and inefficacy of art, of working for nothing, of being a free researcher, or another case example for a curatorial premise to be wheeled out, whilst the notion of custodianship becomes either contested, absent, aberrated or something else. Such a situation doesn't necessarily make the curator amoral - or immoral - but like everybody else, they/ us are stretched. There is an always present chronology, though, to fall back on and really most of my questions are moral and ethical dilemmas about how one can get art to function in a moral and ethical way, if at all. This, for some reason, does not seem to be so difficult in Lebanon or Palestine.



Twice I have had a nightmare about a black shadow enveloping me and I stupidly deliberately took the dream as an excuse for defacing photographs from the archives publication called Lahza (which, ironically means ‘to grasp’), idiotically pushing the notion that we should not rely on images, or specifically *representation*, to discuss trauma, or that dreams can, also, pose some kind of deep seated fear, or that superstition’s strength lies in it’s implacable unknown-ness, which was why I encouraged the idea in the first place- to go somewhere else, even if it was at the expense of a certain egomania and narcissism. We know from first-hand experience, that the notion of art-as being-un-cathartic to be untrue, that any lack of trust can, understandably, be seen as offensive, even if such a position is scientifically and humanistically essential for the undertaking and understanding of an idea - or just a simple artistic or “democratic” freedom being used or abused. A journalist, Nayla Razzouk, inadvertently interviewed me one day and it turned out she worked for free on the project for 3 years after coming back from covering the Iraq war for 7 long years and she saw that I had defaced her publication of the archive that I had bought a week earlier. The book was defaced with all-seeing eyes scrawled on every page with a marker pen, it looked something like an idiotic teenager would do, learning to tag in their bedroom, and she was remarkably understanding and open-minded about such a terrible and crass idea, when really the best thing to do is to simply exhibit the photographs to as many people as possible. Making such mistakes through bad art is permissible/ acceptable and privately is easier to get away with but publically such activity runs the risk of being offensive. If anything there is a greater degree of an absence of judgement in the space of the exile, there is no overriding hierarchy, through peoples overwhelming need to escape certain traumas, and hopefully that applies to people walking in to a refugee camp as well as those who inhabit the space.

Certainly, emerging social and political practices in the West Bank’s refugee camps challenge the idea of refugees as passive subjects. In our work as architects, we aim to invert the conceptualization of the everyday practices of refugees as a reaction or resistance to an absolute sovereign power.” [\[iii\]](#)

The statement taken from Campus in Camps, a university in a UNRWA refugee camp in Dheisheh, Bethlehem and has been in existence since 1949. The statement almost refers to the refugee camp as resistant first *and then the inhabitants* but that would be twisting things and adding impetus to the displacement of people [\[iii\]](#) who are simply trying to come to terms and try to make sense of their ruptured location and reclaim a lost sense of identity, alienation, disempowerment and political abuse. There is an often cited agonism towards how art is made in the region, which is cited by Campus in Camps - and also Hanan Toukan in her lectures about resistance in Palestinian visual culture – (something which Hannah Arendt discussed a lot) but hopefully something more cathartic, or holistic, can be added to a term that is often used to describe the ritual of pain in a [representative] theatrical or performative setting – or culture as simply politicized. Additionally there is a case of other aspects of art that are not just visual but conceptual/ curator led that are subject to the same processes as visual art, which is disappointingly absent in Toukan’s lectures, which do not veer very far from the subject of representation, or historical representation. Representation is a crutch for many artists and politically looking at art from the outside in, is only one way of looking at art. This Quote from Blanchot’s Writing of Disaster springs to mind:

Theories are necessary (the theories of language, for example): necessary and useless. Reason works in order to wear itself out, by organizing itself into systems, seeking a positive knowledge where it can posit itself, pose and repose and at the same time convey

itself to an extremity which forms a stop and a closure. We must pass by way of this knowledge and forget it. But forgetting is not secondary, it is not an improvised failing of what has first been constituted as memory. Forgetfulness is a practice, the practice of writing that prophesies because it is enacted by the utter renunciation of everything: to announce is perhaps to renounce. The theoretical battle, even if it is waged against some form of violence, is always the violence of an incomprehension; let us not be stopped short by the partial, simplifying, reductive character of comprehension itself.” [\[iv\]](#)

However, the naming of any activity is a strange exercise; even as a readily identifiable agonism it ruptures the participant into *being the activity*, particularly as a refugee is by definition resisting participation by resisting their occupier- one would hope there is an unease in committing to such definition as our motives, situations and moods change... Essentially it would be more worthwhile to not carry one's philosophy of art into these liminal spaces. It's unpleasant being faced with your own inadequacy, which in my case is an inescapable inadequacy itself- and something I have always valued as deeply humbling.

## PALESTINIAN CHILDREN IN LEBANESE REFUGEE CAMPS WHO HAVE TURNED TOWARDS REPRESENTATION...

Abdallah Ahmed Oways  
 Abdallah Ali Awad  
 Abdullah Kallam  
 Abdallah Kazuh  
 Abdallah Munzer Yassin  
 Abdallah Nazir al Kayyim  
 Abdel-Dib Ibrahim  
 Abdel-Hadi Fateh al-Khali  
 Abdel-Halim Tayssir Mabda  
 Abdel-Hamid Nabulsi  
 Abdel-Kader Said Akl  
 Abdel-Karim al-Shayeb  
 Abdel-Karim Muhamed Khattab  
 Abdel-Majid Esmael Abbas  
 Abdel-Rahman Jamal Munazer  
 Abdel-Rahman Muhamad Nassar  
 Abdel-Rahman Salah Issa  
 Abed al-Hadi  
 Abed al-Rahman  
 Abed al-Safadi  
 Adham Damur  
 Afak Zaki Faraj  
 Ahmed Abdel-Rahman  
 Ahmed Abdel-Rahman Nawfal  
 Ahmed Adham Shehabi  
 Ahmed Bashir al-Dukhi  
 Ahmed Bilal al-Jajj Hassan  
 Ahmed Ghassan Ramadan  
 Ahmed Ibrahim

## through europe

Ahmed Ibrahim Omari  
Ahmed Khallam  
Ahmed Khald Ahmed  
Ahmed Marmar  
Ahmed Muhamed al-Tukhi  
Ahmed Muhamed Barhumi  
Ahmed Muhamed Jamal  
Ahmed Muhamed Mustafa  
Ahmed Muhamed Rahil  
Ahmed Muhamed Taleb Attieh  
Ahmed Mustafa Awad  
Ahmed Mustafa Mansur  
Ahmed Nehmeh Said  
Ahmed Omar  
Ahmed Osman Maaruf  
Ahmed Ramadan Ramadan  
Ahmed Shaalan  
Ahmed Walid Taha  
Ala' Ahmed Abu Khassem  
Ala' Ahmed Ahmed  
Ala' Ahmed Lubani  
Ala' Ezzeddeen  
Ala' Khayr Bashir  
Ala' Muhamed Hamadeh  
Ali Afif  
Ali Habib Samar  
Ali Hassan Ahmed  
Ali Jamad Abdel-Latif  
Ali Kassem al Hassan  
Ali Khaled al-Hajj Hassan  
Ali Khaled Badawiyeh  
Ali Khaled Najar  
Ali Khalil Bikai  
Ali Muhamed Jumaa  
Ali Muhamed Kassem  
Ali Muhamed Omrin  
Ali Muhamed Salem  
Ali Noureddeen Yussef  
Amal Ahmed Ezziyeh  
Amal Azar Azar  
Amal Nasser Salameh  
Amani Ahmed al-Sayed  
Ameen Ahmed Hussein  
Amina Yussef Abdel-Al  
Amneh Awdeh  
Amneh Omar Karzun  
Anwar Hassan al-Rukon  
Anwar Samir al-Ali  
Arafat Hussein Azzam  
Ashraf Hakam Fandi  
Asma Taha Abdel-Latif

Asma' Dallal  
Asma' Hani  
Aya Abdel-Hadi  
Aya Afif Awad  
Aya Bassan Hamid  
Aya Faruq Masrieh  
Aya Ghassan al-Issa  
Aya Hassan Muhamed  
Aya Muhamed Serhan  
Aya Salman  
Ayat Issa Awad  
Ayham Ibrahim Daoud  
Ayman Abu Sahyun  
Ayman Habbush  
Ayman Saleh Daoud  
Baha' Khodor al Khatib  
Bahaeddine Ahmed Merhi  
Baher Nasser  
Baker Ali Aki  
Bara' Barakat  
Bassel al-Ali  
Bassem Kassab  
Carole Abdallah Akkal  
Charbel Elias Berbara  
Charbel Marun Hajjar  
Dalia Muhamed Abdel-Hadi  
Dani Abdo Khalfeh  
Dareen Faysal Mooh  
Diala Adel Ghanumi  
Diana Hassan al-Arid  
Dina Bader Adbel-Razzak  
Dina Hussein Shatila  
Doaa' Mahmud Serhal  
Dunia Ahmed al-Ali  
Eliane Attieh  
Elias Mehri Mikati  
Elie Wahid Marun  
Elyo Riad Shaheen  
Elysah Attieh  
Esra' Abu Haider  
Esra' Al-Sayed  
Esra' Darwish Al-Safadi  
Esra' Khaled Obeid  
Esra' Shehadeh  
Eva Shadi Abdallah  
Fadi Azar  
Fadia Ali al-Jadaa  
Farah Abu al-Shabab  
Farah Ahmed Ali  
Farah Nazer Jibril  
Faten Muhamed Suleiman

## through europe

Fatimah Ahmed al-Ameen  
Fatimah Ahmed Bikaai  
Fatimah Jumaa  
Fatimah Kassem Wehbeh  
Fatimah Mahmud Bysaleh  
Fatimah Muhamed Kayed  
Fatimah Walid Issa  
Fatimah Yussef al-Muajal  
Fayza Wissam Aisha  
Fida Khalil Mustafa  
Fuad Salim Sbear  
Georgios Nehmeh  
Ghali Ghassan Hilal Ibrahim  
Ghassan Fuad Jumaa  
Ghassan Mustafa Awad  
Ghazir Mustafa Awad  
Ghazir Mustafa Abdel Rahman  
Ghina Ghassan Ibrahim  
Hadil Aki  
Haifa Khaled al-Darwish  
Hala Ali al-Hajj  
Hala Sawan  
Hala Taliha Rifaat  
Hamza Hussein Merhi  
Hanadi Hussein Suleiman  
Hanane Khaled Suleiman  
Hanane Yussef Abdallah  
Haneen Ahmed Nabulsi  
Haneen Ibrahim Al-Hajj  
Hassan Afif Abbas  
Hassan Ahmed Kaddoura  
Hassan Al-Ali  
Hassan Daabas  
Hassan Ibrahim Akl  
Hassan Merhi Hamad  
Hayat Samir Diab  
Hazar Said Shaaban  
Hiba Abboud  
Hiba Ahmed Muhamed  
Hiba Nasser Bishan  
Hiba Riad Awad  
HibaYehya Darian  
Hilal Abdel Hadi  
Hisham Yussef Kaoush  
Hussein Ali Awdi  
Hussein Ali Yussef  
Hussein Bassam Al-Saadi  
Hussein Hassan Hassan  
Hussein Taan Abdallah  
Ibrahim Ahmed Abdallah  
Ibrahim Al-Aloumi



Ibrahim Dib Al-Habash  
Ibrahim Fouad Taha  
Ibrahim Imad Abed El-Razzak  
Ibrahim Issa Aylawi  
Ibrahim Mansur  
Ibrahim Muhamed Akl  
Ibrahim Al-Dalou  
Ibrahim Muhamed Mansur  
Ibrahim Shehadeh  
Ikhlas Muhamed Abdel Hadi  
Imad Samir Hallak  
Imane Khalil Anani  
Imane Naim Abdel Karim  
Inas Mahmud Khalil  
Jaafar Omar Suleiman  
Jalaleddine Ali Al-Morshed  
Jamal Khaled Al-Sabeen  
Jamal Mohamed Attieh  
Jamil Sharif Daoud  
Jamila Akkal  
Jana Nazir Khodor  
Jihad Muhamed Dekka  
Jihad Walid Abu Tableh  
Jihnae Marun  
Josef Akkal  
Julien George Jabbur  
Kamal Hussein Abdel-Rahman  
Kamar Mustafa Kassem  
Khadjeh Ali Hassan  
Khadjeh Muhamed Ayyub  
Khaled Ghassan Aref  
Khaled Hussein Hassanine  
Khaled Mattar  
Khaled Nabil Dib  
Khaled Said Kassem  
Khaled Yussef Rifai  
Khalifeh Muhamed Khalifeh  
Khalil Kazuh  
Khalil Saad Huwaydi  
Khawla Jamal Shahrur  
Khita, Omar al-Maligi  
Khodor Ali Zayd  
Khulud Jihad Harb  
Khulud Mehri  
Khulud Walid Al-Issa  
Lama Sawan  
Lara Muhamed Abiad  
Layal Tufiq Rifai  
Layla Khaled Dhush  
Lima Muhamed Zaarura  
Lina Ali al-Hajj

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Maha Khaled Obadi  
Maher Imad Abdel-Moati  
Mahmud Ahmed al-Hajj Mahmud  
Mahmud Diab al-Hashem  
Mahmud Fathi Ghali  
Mahmud Hassan al-Dukhi  
Mahmud Muhamed Kassem  
Mahmud Nadwa  
Mahmud Said Hussein  
Mahmud Yaakub Saker  
Majed Abdullah  
Malak  
Malak Fadel Dahabiri  
Malak Riad Nebhani  
Manal Mustafa Diab  
Maria Ibrahim Said Aklan  
Marian al-Ahmed  
Mariam Muhamed Kassem  
Mario Ayleh Damuli  
Mario Jahshan  
Marwa Abdel-Karim Afghani  
Marwa Abdel-Karim Shehadeh  
Marwa Abdel-Nasser Abu Hayam  
Marwa Ahmed Abu Sahyun  
Marwa al-Afandi  
Marwa al-Shabiti  
Marwa Fawaz Hadara  
Marwa Hassanine  
Marwa Jamal Merhi  
Marwa Marwan Abdallah  
Marwa Ahmed Shehadeh  
Marwan Shehadeh  
May Mustufa Ali  
May Mustafa Awad  
Maya Mouaz al-Hassan  
Maya Philip Issa  
Maya khaled Saadi  
Mehdi Yussef Abdallah  
Michel Shatat Geddon  
Mona Abbud  
Mona Ahmed Abu Sahyun  
Mona Said Kassem  
Mona Yussef al-Masri  
Muhamed Abbas Awada  
Muhamed Abu Sekit  
Muhamed Ahmed Abu Salma  
Muhamed Ahmed al-Hajj  
Muhamed al-Hajj Hassan  
Muhamed al-Hajj Moussa

Muhamed al-Nabulsi  
Muhamed al-Rawi  
Muhamed al-Safadi  
Muhamed Ali Attieh  
Muhamed Ali Shahrur  
Muhamed Arafat al-Murshed  
Muhamed Bassam al Murshed  
Muhamed Bassam Attieh  
Muhamed Hassan al-Duhki  
Muhamed Hassan al-Hassan  
Muhamed Hasaan Awd  
Muhamed Hassan Esmael  
Muhamed Ibrahim al-Nasser  
Muhamed Issam al-Said  
Muhamed Izzo Hamadeh  
Muhamed Jamal Dandashi  
Muhamed Kurbaaj  
Muhamed Johad Kalaa  
Muhamed Khaled al-Yussef  
Muhamed Khaled Badawiyeh  
Muhamed Khaled Taha  
Muhamed Khalil Mustafa  
Muhamed Mahmud  
Muhamed Mahud Yussef  
Muhamed Moueen Zamzam  
Muhamed Murad  
Muhamed Mussa Agha  
Muhamed Mussa al-Hajj  
Muhamed Mussa Baalbaki  
Muhamed Mussa Suwayli  
Muhamed Nour al-Sharif  
Muhamed Said Abbas  
Muhamed Salem  
Muhamed Sami Attieh  
Muhamed Samir al-Waked  
Muhamed Samir Khalifeh  
Muhamed Taha  
Muhamed Talal al-Adi  
Muhamed Yasser Yussef  
Muhamed Ghassan Issa  
Munir Ghassan Bader  
Munira Maher Wehbeh  
Murad Abdel-Hadi  
Mussa Hussein Awad  
Mussa Issam Amuri  
Mustafa Ahmed Haneen  
Mustafa Ahmed Jaber  
Mustafa Ghassan Jumaa  
Mustafa Utour  
Mustafa Wattar  
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Nadim Nasser al-Sudaydani  
Nadira Riad Serhan  
Nagham Ghaleb Bekrawi  
Nagham Kamal al-Hajj  
Nagham Muhamed Naji  
Nagham Yahya Hijazi  
Nahil Muhamed al-Bar  
Najah Nasser Bader  
Najah Suheil Khadra  
Nariman Nemer Dewali  
Nesreen Kamul Abu\_Ez  
Nesreen Kamal al-Khatib  
Nesreen Nasser Maaruf  
Nibal Mussa Suleiman  
Nicole Antoine Karam  
Nicole Toni Daoud  
Niveen Jamil Siblini  
Nizar al-Shafii  
Nour  
Nour Ahmed Ali  
Nour al-Huda Shehadeh  
Nour al-Huda Ahmed Wehbeh  
Nour al-Huda Omar Jumaa  
Nour al-Huda Yussef Karzun  
Nour Attieh  
Nour Kanaan  
Nour Maidani  
Nour Muhamed Mansur  
Nour Shadi al-Natur  
Nour Yahya Karzun  
Nourhan Khaled al-Sabaa  
Ola Faraj Jumaa  
Ola Saleh Attieh  
Omar Akram Daher  
Omar al-Kotob  
Omar Bekrawi  
Omar Ghunayem  
Omar Ibrahim Ahmed  
Omar Ibrahim Ahmed  
Omar Issa Awad  
Omar Naim Abdallah  
Omar Riad Zidane  
Osman Ibrahim Hamad  
Osman Ismail Hassan  
Rabih Abdel Halim  
Rabih Rashid Mallah  
Rabih Yussef Dakur  
Raef Hanna Andraos

Ramez Hussein Awad  
Rami Ahmed al-Ali  
Rana Abdallah Abu Awdi  
Rana Ahmed Nabulsi  
Rana Ali Abdallah  
Rana Attieh  
Rana Khaled al-Fares  
Rana Luay Abdallah  
Raneen Jalal Yussef  
Rania Abdallah al-Masri  
Rania Muhamed Marmar  
Rania Oussama al-Hajj Hassan  
Rasha Al al-Abdallah  
Rasha Hassan Hamad  
Rawan Abdel-Rahmin al-Jammal  
Rawan Ahmed Shebab  
Rawan Hussein Mussa  
Rawan Khalil Jumaa  
Rawan Kheir Bashir  
Rayan Diab  
Rayan Munir Alawi  
Rayan Nasser Ahmed  
Razan Hussam Maidani  
Reem Abadi  
Reem Bader Hussein Bader  
Reem Hussein Jumaa  
Reem Ibrahim Hussein  
Reem Kamal Salem  
Reem Muhamed Khalil  
Reem Said Awad  
Riad Yasser Yussef  
Rihan Yussef Kaush  
Rima Salim Sbear  
Rita Sharbel Shalita  
Robert Rabih al-Assad  
Roua Adnan Utour  
Roy Samer Eid  
Safa Abdel-Nasser  
Salah Ahmed Abu al-Shabab  
Salem Salem  
Salem al-Nour  
Saleh Khaled Nasser  
Saly Suheil al-Habet  
Samah Ghassan Karzun  
Samah Kassem  
Samah Marwan Saleh  
Samer Khaled al-Mussa  
Sami Muhamed Yussef  
Sami Wael Taha  
Samir Yussef Ghazal  
Sara Jamal Shahrur

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Sara Shadi al-Boheiri  
Sawsan Izzao Hamadeh  
Sayed Karakeh  
Shadia Nazih al-Jammal  
Shaheen Muhamed  
Shaima Imad Barkaji  
Shaima Khassem Dabbur  
Shireen al-Sari  
Soha Yahya Hussein  
Sondos Abu Awdi  
Souad Muhamed  
Stephanie al-Hosh  
Stephanie Dani Twak  
Subhi Omar Suleiman  
Subhi Riad Arabieh  
Subhiyeh Ahmed Lubani  
Suhaib Ali al-Jersh  
Suhaib Hussain Serhan  
Suleiman Muhamed Khalifeh  
Suzanne Ghazi Mustafa  
Taha Muhamed Lubani  
Tala al-Shabiti  
Tarek Akl  
Tarek Ezzeddeen  
Tarek Ibrahim Ghanem  
Tarek Khaled Osman  
Tarek Suhail Khodor  
Wafa' Hassan Awad  
Wafa' Sharabati  
Wala' Ahmed  
Wala' Khalil  
Walid Ahmed al-Khatib  
Walid al-Safadi  
Wassim Muhamed al-Sayed  
Wiam Muhamed Shehadeh  
Wissam Abu al-Shabab  
Wissam Abu Eid  
Wissam Osman  
Yasmeen Hussein Azzam  
Yasser Awwad Azzam  
Yasser Dawan  
Yasser Fuad Jumaa  
Yasser Muhamed al-Safuri  
Yussef Al-Khatib  
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Yussef Muhamed al-Arab  
Zaher Hassan al-Arid  
Zaynab Ayash  
Zaynab Muhamed Salem  
Zeid Melhem Wehbeh



Ziad al-Alumi

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