



# LECTURES ON THE WEATHER

Performance and fieldwork

# LECTURES ON THE WEATHER

Performance and fieldwork

Contributors

Sandra Muteteri Heremans, Klara Hobza,  
Marx Machines Inc. (Filip Herbert, Anna Olszewska)  
Goda Palekaitė, Delia Popa

Curator

Anna Smolak

Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life  
Siliștea Snagovului, Romania

## LECTURES ON THE WEATHER

### Performance and fieldwork

Just after the end of the summer, at the invitation of the Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life<sup>1</sup> in the Siliştea Snagovului village in Romania – a cooperative initiated by the Tranzit.ro/Bucharest and a group of friends – we choreographed a series of lecture-performances seeking out different vantage points from which to open up a view of a fragment of the rapidly changing landscape.

The title *Lectures on the Weather* was inspired by John Cage's epic performance, an unsettling sonic and visual composition created in 1975<sup>2</sup>, commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on the occasion of the bicentennial of the United States of America. For the piece, Cage used excerpts from the literary works of the famous 19th century American thinker and naturalist Henry David Thoreau. He drew, among others, on *Walden, or Life in the Woods* – a series of essays reflecting on Thoreau's two-year self-imposed retreat in nature, an account of self-efficiency, materialism, work and leisure. Cage chose the quotations through I Ching chance operations to be recited simultaneously by twelve performers, all intended to be American men who had fled the country during the Vietnam War. Cage's composition was preceded by his momentous speech that made clear his political and environmental concerns.

On New Year's Eve, the meme '2022 is 2020 too' went viral, as we all looked to the future with scepticism due to the post-pandemic hangover. "In the aftermath of this calamity there is a danger that rather than offering sanctuary to all living species, sadly the world will enter a new period of tension and *brutality*. In terms of geopolitics, the logic of power and might will continue to dominate. For lack of a common infrastructure, a vicious partitioning of the globe will intensify, and the dividing lines will become even more entrenched. Many states will seek to fortify their borders in the hope of protecting themselves from the outside. They will also seek to conceal the constitutive violence that they continue to habitually direct at the most vulnerable<sup>3</sup>," Achille Mbembe wrote in his prophetic essay, in despair calling for a new beginning. I received this text by email from Raluca Voinea, the director of Tranzit.ro in Bucharest with whom we had had an ongoing exchange over the hardships of life and curating. In 2020, Tranzit.ro lost its garden-space in Bucharest to gentrification. The pandemic made the need for a new formula for the institution all the more urgent.

<sup>1</sup>For the manifest of the Station see p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>John Cage, *Lecture on the Weather*, 1975/76

<sup>3</sup>A. Mbembe, *The Universal Right to Breathe*, April 2020, transl. C. Shread, see: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/711437#fn2>

The Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life was conceived as a radical possibility for self-organisation, combining notions of self-resilience, collectivity, art, and nature into a visionary project. Underpinned by trust and friendship, it was created by the artists, curators, and theoreticians, who gathered around the idea of growing the institution from a seed, so that its very tissue would absorb organically the needs, imaginaries and stories of its participants, while remaining receptive to the outside world. The plans of the Station include the creation of a green infrastructure for art, based on reviving traditional skills and sustainable technologies. Strands of the programme focus on reimagining survival and healing strategies for the planet through ensuring biogenetic diversity, encouraging non-Western technologies and indigenous knowledge. We saw the *Lectures* as a way to situate the Station within more international debates on the emancipatory value of artistic labour, with its emotional and ethical challenges, and to reimagine ways of engaging with catastrophic and urgent agendas. The outbreak of war in neighbouring Ukraine made us delay the work and reformulate the initial ideas.

The first edition of the project adopted the format of a journey; the *Lectures* were performed in the bus that brought us from Bucharest to Snagov Palace, where Delia Popa navigating with humour the roles of a local artist and a tourist guide, drew our attention to how different powers and ideologies had left an imprint on the landscape. In the spectacular setting of Nicolae Ceaușescu's former summer residence, Sandra Muteteri Heremans staged a rehearsal for a screenplay about the lives of African students in the Soviet Union, through which to deal with gaps in knowledge and memory. On the site of the Station, amidst tall grasses and wild vegetation, in a performance dissected by three voices, Klara Hobza – from anonymous contributions – drew together a poignant psychological portrait of those behind collective actions. We looked into the aesthetics of idleness and withdrawal together with Marx Machines Inc., while the silver-coated flag capable of dispersing electromagnetic signals fluttered above the Station. As the sun was setting, we boarded the Dolce Vita boat, with Goda Palekaitė to resurrect vampires and other creatures of the night to life and to love, as they also need a challenge if they are not to keep repeating the same old violence.

*Lectures on the Weather* developed as an open-ended platform for unexpected solidarities and complex affairs: human, gender, interspecies, post-human. The themes and ideas that the artists have touched upon, emerged out of conflicted zones, and inhabited transitory spaces. They voice feminist perspectives – the shift from traditional structures to self-organised, horizontal movements and networks; from silence to sound acting, from absence to emergence; they recognise the radicality of the emotional and the vulnerable amidst – and against – the intensifying pressures of public life.

**Anna Smolak**

# LECTURES 5

# THE GUIDE — SEEING LANDSCAPE

## Delia Popa

Text for 1-hr performance, Romanian and English  
**Ghida, văzând peisajul – ghidaj de autobuz București-Snagov**  
 Guided tour on Bucharest-Snagov bus

**Dear tourists, hello and welcome** to a very special bus tour from the centre of Bucharest to the globally renowned Snagov commune. My name is Delia Popa and I am a local artist. As a local artist it is my honour and especially my duty to show you the most important tourist attractions of this area. Remember tourism is very important for our country so do give generously (*shows a hat for donations and gives it to the participants*). 7

**Dragi turiști,** bine ați venit la un foarte special tur din centrul Bucureștiului către faimoasa comună Snagov. Numele meu este Delia Popa și sunt o artistă locală. Ca artistă locală este o onoare și mai ales o datorie pentru mine să vă arăt cele mai importante atracții turistice din această zonă. Vă rog să țineți minte faptul că turismul este foarte important pentru țara noastră, așa că vă rog să donați cu generozitate. (*scoate o pălărie pentru donații și o dă participanților*)

**Acest autobuz este un veritabil** automobil Setra, a celebrei firme de tradiție din orașul Ulm din Germania, anul de fabricație 2017, cu numărul B128 WMW, motor Mercedes-Benz W6, 360 cai putere, care are un scaun special pentru ghidaje cu microfon, dispune de un număr de 35 locuri realizate dintr-un material textil ecologic și artificial și bineînțeles de propriul sistem de aer condiționat.

**This bus is a veritable** Setra vehicle, of the famous company of the same name from Ulm, Germany, that used to make carriages and carts until the

1950s when it became a bus fabricator. Its founder is none other than Otto Kaessbohrer, following in the footsteps of his father, Karl Kaessbohrer, the cart maker. Setra stands for perfection, so it is perfection that will carry you to Snagov. The registration number of this bus is B 128 WMW, it has a special guide seat with microphone and driver. It holds 35 seats made of an ecological synthetic textile fabric, and has its own air conditioning system. Regarding toilets, if you can wait until we get to Snagov it would be great, if you really need to go to the toilet we will make a special stop just for you in a space where our company has an economic agreement.

**Piața Victoriei** este unul din locurile istoriei națiunii. Era numit Capul Podului pe vremea când Calea Victoriei se numea Podul Mogoșoaiei și a inspirat o altă cale, cea a Victoriei Socialismului. Sigur că dacă ne gândim la protestele din anii 90, la Mineriade și mai departe la timidul protest anti-razboiul din Iraq din 2003 etc. 2012 - criza taxelor crescute, 2013 - Roșia Montană, 2015 - Colectiv, 2017- legile justiției șamd., putem spune că aici se duc lupte corp la corp pentru ceva.

**Palatul Victoria** este un palat din București, situat în Piața Victoriei și sediu al Guvernului României. A fost construit în 1937 după planurile arhitectului Duiliu Marcu, același care a proiectat noua fațadă a Operei din Timișoara. Palatul Victoria a fost început în 1937 și terminat în 1944. Din cauza avariilor provocate de bombardamentul din 1944, lucrările au fost reluate și finalizate în 1952. Proiectat inițial pentru Ministerului de Externe, Palatul Victoria a fost în timpul perioadei comuniste sediul Ministerului de Externe și al Consiliului de Miniștri și a devenit, în 1990, sediu al primului guvern al României post-comuniste. În 2004, Palatul Victoria a fost inclus în Lista monumentelor istorice.

**Victoriei Square** is one of the places of the nation's history. It was called Capul Podului at the time when Calea Victoriei was called Podul Mogoșoaiei, and it inspired another path, that of the Victory of Socialism. Of course if we think about the protests of the 90s, at the "Mineriales" and further on the timid 2003 anti-Iraq war protests, etc. 2012 – the crisis of increased taxes, 2013 – Roșia Montană, 2015 – Colectiv, 2017 – laws of justice etc., we can say that here there was body-to-body fighting for something.

**The Victoria Palace** is a palace in Bucharest, located in Piața Victoriei and seat of the Government of Romania. It was built in 1937 according to the plans of the architect Duiliu Marcu, the same person who designed the new façade of the Timișoara Opera House.

### **Casa Scânteii/Casa Presei libere.**

**Casa Scânteii** (cunoscută inițial drept **Casa Scînteii** - numele se scrie cu „î”, după modelul ortografic de inspirație sovietică, adoptat în 1953), în prezent denumită **Casa Presei Libere**, este o clădire situată în nordul orașului București, la intrarea în cartierul Băneasa. Numele construcției (care adăpostea principala tipografie a țării) provine din denumirea ziarului *Scînteia*, principalul instrument de propagandă scrisă al Partidului Comunist Român. Între anii 1956–2007, clădirea a deținut recordul de cea mai înaltă structură din oraș. Clădirea este un ansamblu format din patru laturi ce adăpostesc o curte interioară mare, plus încă două ansambluri sub formă de „U”, care sunt legate de corpul din față, ansambluri ce au rămas deschise pentru a se construi după aceea un teatru și o casă a sindicatelor. Deoarece cheltuielile de construcție au fost foarte mari, teatrul și casa sindicatelor nu au mai fost ridicate. Arhitectura a fost inspirată de clădirile înalte din Moscova, precum Universitatea Lomonosov, Leningradskaia Gastinița (Hotelul Leningrad). O altă clădire care a avut aceeași sursă de inspirație este Palatul Culturii și Științei din Varșovia.

**The House of the Spark**, currently called the House of the Free Press, is a building located in the north of Bucharest, at the entrance to the Băneasa district. The name of the building (which housed the main printing house of the country) comes from the name of the Scînteia newspaper, the main written propaganda tool of the Romanian Communist Party. Between 1956–2007, the building held the record for the tallest structure in the city. The building is an ensemble consisting of four sides that house a large inner courtyard, plus two more “U”-shaped ensembles that are connected to the front body, ensembles that were left open to later build a theatre and a house of the unions. Because the construction costs were very high, the theatre and the union house were not built. The architecture was inspired by the high-rise buildings in Moscow, such as Lomonosov University, Leningradskaia Gastinita (Leningrad Hotel). Another building that had the same source of inspiration is the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw.

**Parcul Herăstrău**, comes from ferăstrău/saw, a man-made, artificial lake made from draining the Bucharest swamps.

**Aurel Vlaicu and Henri Coandă Otopeni Airport.** They are beautiful. **Bucharest Therme (Balotești)** is the biggest wellness and spa resort in Europe, it is also the biggest botanical garden in Romania due to the

number of palms and other exotic plants they have near the pools. You can spend a quality day here, but your monthly income has to be well over the national minimum of 1500 lei, 300 euro, or the medium 3500 lei which is about 700 Euro.

**Tâncăbești village.** This area is so interesting and unique that I will tell you about the other side of Bucharest. **București-Crețești Centru-Sud:** The south side of Bucharest is poorer than the north. It does not have an airport yet. My family on my father's side comes from there and I recently started commuting from there to Bucharest, to the National Museum of Art where I work, mostly as a guide. The village is undergoing changes and although it is still rural, with a strong tradition of vegetable producing agriculture. About half the population of my village, Crețești, Vidra commune, (in Jilava you take a left turn to get there) commutes daily to Bucharest, starting from 6 am. There is now a bridge being constructed in Sintești, where the Roma neighbourhood is, that will make traffic on Bucharest belt much easier. Also, other notable improvements to the commune, where the famous Vidra neolithic Venus sculpture comes from, are the cutting down of all street trees for the canalisation system and enlargement of Drum județean DJ 401A Vidra -Domnești, over 30 km, maybe you can count how many trees that makes. Of course new and very small sycamore trees that will replace the sometimes 50 or 70 year old plums, walnuts, poplar, cherry, willow, ash-trees etc. But hey, what do you want, nature or pavements?

**Storcks:** Cel mai important moment al anului este când vin berzele. The most important moment of the year is when the storks arrive. Did you know a fun fact?

Storck is Storch in German, the fun fact is that there were some famous German sculptors in Romania called Storck: Karl Storck and Frederick Storck and a famous female painter, adică pictoriță sau femeie-pictor sau și mai bine femeie-artist? Cecilia Cutzescu Storck was the first female university professor of decorative arts in Europe at the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest. And another fun fact: there has never been a female painter- femeie professor de pictură la Universitatea de Arte din București, its already boring how many times we've heard that and said that.

**Fear:** Câteodată în fiecare an mi-e frică că de data asta nu mai vin, că rămânem fără ele și cuiburile o să fie goale tot anul. Și e un sentiment de neputință și disperare în același timp. Ce facem dacă nu o să mai vină?

Sometimes every year I am afraid they will not come back. It's a helpless feeling and a feeling of despair. What if they will just not come back?

**Aricii** ar trebui să aibă găuri în gard de măcar 13 cm ca să treacă dintr-o curte într-alta. Oamenii, chiar și cei de la țară, îi pot ajuta să trăiască. Ariciul poate străbate mulți kilometri în căutare de hrană și dacă vreți să scăpați de melcii care vă mănâncă salata și daliile, trebuie să sprijiniți aricii. În fiecare săptămână animale precum câini, pisici, vulpi sau arici sunt omorâte de autovehiculele pe bază de benzină, motorină și electricitate. Pentru acest fapt nu există nicio soluție.

**Hedgehogs should have** holes in fences of at least 13 cm so they can pass from one yard to the other. Even people from villages can help them live. Hedgehogs can travel many kilometres per day in search for food and if you wish to be rid of snails and slugs who eat your lettuce and your tomatoes, cucumbers and dahlias you have to support hedgehogs. Every week in Snagov dogs, cats, foxes or hedgehogs are killed by gasoline, diesel, petrol or electricity powered cars. For that there is no solution.

**Snagov** (population: 6,041) is a commune, located 40 km north of Bucharest in Ilfov County, Muntenia, Romania. According to the 2002 census, 99.2% of the population is ethnic Romanian, thank God. The name „Snagov” is probably of Slavic origin, either from the word *sneg* (meaning „snow”), which you can forget about or *snaga* (meaning „strength”), which is power, which is much more appropriate.

#### Comuna Snagov

The commune is composed of five villages: Ciofliceni, Ghermănești, Snagov, Tâncăbești and Vlădiceasca. Snagov is a tourist and spa resort of international importance. For example an informal meeting of the prime ministers of the seven states invited to join the NATO alliance was held at Snagov Palace on 4–5 April 2000. Snagov is located on the Wallachian Plain, on the shore of Lake Snagov (biggest natural lake in Romania: 600 hectares; 10 miles long) which is still partially surrounded by old oak forest, the remains of Codrii Vlăsiei.

**Codrii Vlăsiei** is the name of a vast forest that comprised Bucharest and Ilfov county before being deforested almost entirely in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Snagov forest is one of the parts that still remain, as is Comana forest in

the Southern part of Ilfov. Vlad Țepeș, the vlah ruler who inspired Bram Stoker for his *Dracula*, has been murdered in this area by boyar conspirators in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeologists confirmed human presence of inhabitants since 400 BC.

**Mănăstirea Snagov.** Snagov village was built around Lake Snagov and Snagov monastery, founded in the late 14th century on an islet in Lake Snagov, about 2 km (1¼ mile) north of Snagov village. The first written record of it is found in a document from the court of Mircea cel Bătrân and dated 1408. Deși i se mai spune și „Mănăstirea Vlad Țepeș”, nu a fost singurul care a reconstruit-o. Biserica acesteia a fost ridicată între 1517 și 1521 de Neagoe Basarab în stil bizantin, cu o serie de influențe grecești. Mănăstirea a fost gazda câtorva momente istorice deosebit de importante. Spre exemplu, aici a existat prima tiparniță din Muntenia în 1643. De-a lungul timpului, clădirea mănăstirii a fost inclusiv închisoare. The church is a very beautiful building, built between 1517-152 by Neagoe Basarab, a very important ruler for Wallachia, also the founder of Arges Monastery. A printing press existed here in 1643. Over time the monastery had many purposes, including that of a prison. The monastery used to be called the Vlas Tepes monastery, as a historical error.

12

Datorită asocierii puțin eronate cu domnitorul valah, în 2002, Guvernul României a decis să construiască un parc de distracții de tip Disneyland în Snagov, ce urma să se numească *Dracula Park*, dar din păcate acest frumos proiect a fost anulat în 2006. În țări mai avansate, precum Elveția, există *Heidiland*, o zonă întregă turistică dedicată faimoasei Heidi, care are și o casă-muzeu unde o poți întâlni și numeroase filme artistice dedicate ei (cam din 5 în 5 ani). Asemeni lui *Dracula*, Heidi are fani pe tot globul, dar mai ales în Japonia.

Snagov monastery was excavated in 1933 by archaeologist Dinu V. Rosetti.

In 2002 The Romanian government decided to build at Snagov a Disneyland-style theme park, called “*Dracula Park*”; the project was canceled in 2006. The connection with “*Dracula*” is due to a spurious 19th-century tradition that makes Snagov monastery the site of the tomb of Vlad the Impaler. In more developed countries, such as Switzerland, there is an entire touristic area dedicated to the famous Heidi by Johanna Spyri, called *Heidiland*, where you can ski and buy things and find Heidi’s house and Heidi herself with Peter and so on, and where they make the same motion picture about her every 5 years. Like *Dracula*, Heidi has

fans all over the globe, but especially in Japan. Snagov monastery was excavated in 1933 by archaeologist Dinu V. Rosetti.

**Lacul Snagov.** Este al doilea cel mai mare lac din România și cel mai adânc din Câmpia Română. Nu dimensiunile sale sunt impresionante, ci faptul că face parte din Marea Sarmatică, din care au rămas drept dovezi doar Marea Neagră, Lacul Balaton și acest lac Snagov.

Cultural attractions include the Snagov monastery, Snagov Palace, several monuments, the Snagov Museum, a set of four local traditions (fishing, braiding of vegetable fibres, pottery, traditional fabrics).

Natural attractions are associated with two protected natural areas, Snagov Lake (100–150 ha; approx. 300 acres) and Snagov Forest (10 ha; 25 acres), which are included in the Snagov Natural Complex Reserve. With an area of 1,147.7 ha (4½ sq. mi.), the nature reserve was established in 1952 and includes all the forests on the shore of the lake.

**Pădurea Snagov,** Dacă Lacul Snagov datează de 2,5 milioane de ani, Pădurea Snagov se trage din vechii codri ai Vlăsiei. Pentru turiștii care sunt în căutarea unei zone verzi și frumoase, această pădure este un adevărat parc natural, care se întinde pe 1470 de hectare. Dacă îți plac drumețiile, îți place să pedalezi prin pădure sau pur și simplu să admiri natura, este locul perfect unde o poți face. În această pădure vei descoperi stejari și frasini înalți de peste 30 de metri, aluni, soc, ghiocei, brândușe sau brebenei. În ceea ce privește fauna Pădurii Snagov, există o mulțime de căprioare, cerbi, fazani sau pisici sălbatice. În ultimii ani peste 3000 de stejari au fost tăiați ilegal.

**Snagov forest** comes from Vlasiei forest that is all but extinct, it spreads over 1470 hectars. If you like walking, biking or just taking a stroll in the forest, this is the perfect place. In this forest you will find secular oak trees, if they haven’t been cut down en masse like local NGO’s say (over 3000 oaks in the last 6 years) and ash-trees over 30m high, nut trees, crocuses or brebenei, also the faune comprised deer, pheasant, wild cats.

**Snagov Palace:** Este o altă clădire cu care această zonă se mândrește. Palatul a fost construit în anii 1930 de către Henrieta Delavrancea



Gibory și se află pe malul lacului cu același nume. 23 August 1944: Marshall Ion Antonescu, then Prime Minister of Romania, left Snagov Palace in order to go to Bucharest at the request of King Michael I, where he was arrested during the King Michael's Coup. Manfred von Killinger, who was also staying at a nearby villa on the shore of Lake Snagov, committed suicide soon after, because he failed to maintain Romania on the side of Nazi Germany, as requested by Hitler.

Palatul a suferit modificări importante la începutul anilor '70, atunci când Nicolae Ceaușescu a dorit să îl mărească pentru a-l transforma în loc de întâlnire cu Consiliul de Miniștri. Un detaliu mai puțin știut e că aici a fost cazat și Michael Jackson, cu ocazia concertului său din 1992 de la București.

**Romanian president** Nicolae Ceaușescu and his entourage used Snagov as a vacation retreat. Over 50 heads of state, prime ministers, top politicians from more than 40 states. In Snagov at the film studios Castel Film Romania, over 250 films have been produced. In the Snagov Museum, collections are presented about 130 personalities related to Snagov.

**Siliștea Snagovului**, which has an old church built in 1664, also hosts the recently built container of the Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life. There, in July 2022, a high level meeting was held, where representatives of the New Rural Agenda travelling from Documenta 15, presented their vision of the future and responded to eager questions from the Bucharest arts and humanities scene.

Thank you and have a pleasant stay!

**Surse/Sources:**

[https://www.setra-bus.com/ro\\_RO/brand/](https://www.setra-bus.com/ro_RO/brand/)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snagov>

[https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comuna\\_Snagov,\\_Ilfov](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comuna_Snagov,_Ilfov) <https://fundatiasnagov.ro/>

<https://centru-recuperare-fauna/> <https://calatoriaperfecta.ro/padurea-snagov/>

# IN SEARCH OF GILBERT AND IDRISIA: AFRICAN STUDENTS IN THE USSR

**Sandra Muteteri Heremans**

15

The 60s

October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1960, General Assembly United Nations. End of the afternoon.

A man, small in stature, looking nervous, about 50 years old, walks up the steps nervously. He sits down in front of the microphone, looks at the assembly. His posture is straight. His arms are up. There is a silence. He looks down at his notes that he took on a little piece of paper. He sits down in front of the microphone, looks at the assembly with a confident air, opens his mouth and speaks.

**NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV**

(with a tone of commitment)

*I am glad to have this opportunity,  
on behalf of the Soviet people,  
to welcome the young independent  
African states  
which have recently  
joined the United Nations  
and to wish them prosperity  
and success.*

*Our century is the century  
for the struggle of freedom,  
the century in which*

*nations are freeing themselves  
from foreign domination.*

*The peoples aspire to a  
dignified life  
and are fighting for it.*

*Victory has already been  
winning many countries and lands.  
But we cannot rest on our laurels,  
for we know that tens of millions  
of human beings are still languishing  
in colonial slavery and  
suffer serious hardships.*

The body of Khrushchev becomes stiffer with each word he utters. The tone in his voice is hard to define, it seems like something between anger and passion. Every word's value is recognised by a very expressive and precise articulation.

*We are in a period that we call  
that of the great and promising  
scientific discoveries.*

*We have designed the atomic bomb  
and we are penetrating  
the mysteries of the  
structure of proteins.*

*The extent of our knowledge  
is a source of astonishment  
even to ourselves.*

Nikita Khrushchev stops, bends down, and disappears from our view. Restlessness in the company. Whispers occurs in a nervous tone. It's like he vanished. He reappears with one of his shoes in his hand. The noise of his shoe gives a rhythm to the continuation of his speech.

\*tap\*

(Almost yelling)

\*tap\*

*This life, itself,  
depends on the effective  
power of the Pacific States,*

*and the support  
of the overwhelming  
majority of humanity.  
Life cannot be reduced  
to simple geometric rules.*

*If, instead of plundering  
and exploiting  
the metropolitan states.*

*Metropolitan states had been truly guided  
by the interests of the colonial people,  
if they had really given  
them the help they needed,  
the people of the  
colonies and metropolitan countries  
would have developed uniformly.*

*Instead of presenting such striking  
differences in the development,  
yes, in the development of  
their economy, their culture and  
their national prosperity.*

Nikita Khrushchev looks at the assembly with an inquisitive gaze.

*Look at what is happening  
in the colonies.  
Africa is bubbling and  
bubbling like a volcano.*

His voice replicates the voice of a bubbling volcano.

*No one can dispute the fact that  
the Soviet Union has spared no effort  
to ensure the continuation  
of this happy trend in the development  
of international relations.*

Nikita Khrushchev looks at the assembly and takes a deep breath to continue his speech.

Int., Oval office, Washington D.C, United States. Night.  
September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1961

A rather handsome white man of about 40 years old with brownish-blond hair, is sitting at his desk. He seems tired. The dark circles under his eyes are marked. He sips in a rhythmic manner from his whiskey. He takes the first from the stack of letters in the corner of his desk.

On the letter, elegantly written. "Letter to President John F. Kennedy from the Non-Aligned Movement."

John F. Kennedy whispers out loud:

*"We, the Heads of State and Government of our respective countries participating in the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in Belgrade from September 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 1961, take the liberty of addressing Your Excellency on a matter of vital and immediate importance to all of us and to the whole world. We do so not only in our own name, but at the unanimous request of the conference and of our peoples.*

*We are distressed and deeply concerned at the deterioration of the international situation and at the prospect of war which now threatens mankind. Your Excellency has often emphasised the terrible nature of modern warfare and the use of nuclear weapons, which may well destroy humanity, and has pleaded for the maintenance of world peace.*

*... we urge the opening of direct negotiations between Your Excellency and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who represent the two most powerful nations today and, in whose hands, lies the key to peace and war. We are convinced that, devoted as you both are to world peace, your efforts, through persistent negotiations, will lead to a breakthrough in the present impasse and will enable the world and humanity to work and live in prosperity and peace.*

*We send this identical letter to Mr. Nikita Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. "*

The phone rings. Kennedy takes another prolonged sip from his glass of whiskey. He picks up the phone.

**JOHN F. KENNEDY**  
(tiredly)

Yes, yes...  
I am coming...

Keep some food  
for me

**J.F. KENNEDY**  
(exhaustedly exhales)

...  
Yes, yes, of course

...  
I was finishing something.  
Yes of course, I am coming

Kennedy hangs up the phone. He takes a notebook and carefully notes the names of the officials who had signed the letter. While writing the names down, he reads them out loud and practices the pronunciation of their names.

*Cyrille Adoula, Prime Minister of Congo and Minister of National Defence*  
*Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia*  
*Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of the Republic of Ghana*  
*Aden Abdulla Osman, President of the Republic of Somalia*  
*Ibrahim Abboud (Farik), Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister of the Republic of Sudan*

He closes the notebook. He caresses with his forefinger on the title of the book, which reads 'African Statesmen,' written on the cover with a red marker.

Ext. Square in front of a University, Voronezh, Soviet Union. Afternoon.  
September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1972

A large, sleek building. White with yellow tones. The type of building that exudes authority and work ethic. In front of it, a snow-covered grassy plaza. Sound of steps crunching in the snow. A group of boys step up to the building. The first in the group has to use force to open the door.

Int., Eating Room in student dorm, Voronezh, Soviet Union. Evening, later the same day.

The walls are decorated in two colours, red and white. The room looks empty and is filled with dinner tables. Two groups of students are sitting in both corners. In one corner is sitting a group of white students and in the other corner sit two

black African students. One of the students eats with a big spoon, the other looks at his plate somewhat doubtfully. The radio is on, a voice seems to read the latest news in Russian.

**GILBERT**

*Idrissa! What's the matter?  
You have such a strange look  
on your face.*

**IDRISSA**

*It's only the food that manages  
to comfort me.  
I am really homesick!*

**GILBERT**

*Oh yeah, what are your  
impressions of the Russians?*

**IDRISSA**

*They seem to drink a lot.*

**GILBERT**

*Ha! You, with your quick conclusions!  
I find most of them nice,  
those Russians.  
Especially to foreigners.*

**IDRISSA**

*Yeah, the girls,  
some of them are a bit distant  
and others are really obsessed to  
see everything that comes*

*from abroad: clothes, songs,  
even my watch.*

**GILBERT**

*You have to understand:  
on the radio, on TV,  
in the newspapers,  
they only talk about  
the Soviet Union and  
the socialist states...  
It's normal, isn't it?*

*But besides,  
there are some surprises, no?*

**IDRISSA**

*Like what?*

**GILBERT**

*Well, contrary to what  
we were told in Rwanda.  
I see that there is freedom  
of worship here. In theory,  
everyone practises as they wish.*

**IDRISSA**

*Oh yes, didn't you go  
to church the other day?*

**GILBERT**

*But yes, when I talk to  
the Soviets I see that  
they have an atheist*

*upbringing from  
a very young age.*

*But the contradiction:  
the old people,  
on the other hand, believe  
in God and they even  
attend church a lot.  
When I was there,  
they were all old people!*

\*

### Backstory: Gilbert Basebya

Gilbert is born in 1952 in Ruhengeri, Rwanda. He's the first born of a family of 6 children. He was 10 years old, when the Rwandan Independence was announced. Thanks to a family friend, he could have a spot at the prestigious seminary school. School owned by Belgian priests. He had big dreams and wanted to continue his study and take a good position in his young proclaimed independent country. All the scholarships to the United States were already given to students that were friends with the government. That was initially his choice. He passed by the Russian embassy, as they were known to give scholarships easily. It would be his way, to study abroad and come back with a degree, maybe immigrate to the West. If possible.

Int. Dining room. Dormitory. Voronezh. Afternoon.  
February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1973

**IDRISSA**  
(joyfully)

*Ah Gilbert! Happy New Year!  
Tell me how  
the new year party was.*

**GILBERT**  
(excited)

*Aha, all the Rwandans were  
together with some friends.  
It's a good thing to study abroad:  
This opportunity to meet students  
from Vietnam, from D.R.A.,  
Latin America and Asia.*

**IDRISSA**

*How was it?*

**GILBERT**

*We get to talk, for a long time.  
And you know Idrissa, actually,  
I realise we all have the same problems.*

*Do you realise that there are more  
than 25 countries represented  
in this university?*

**IDRISSA**

*Yes, I met yesterday  
for the first time  
different Malagasy  
and Nigerians.*

*By the way,  
did the exams go well?*

**GILBERT**

*I am so proud of my Rwandan fellows:  
they all passed their exams well.  
We did not disappoint them!  
They always have  
a good impressions of us!*

**IDRISSA**

*I still don't get  
the assessment system here.  
Did you look into it?*

**GILBERT**

*The Soviets rate all the works on 5 points, 5=YB, 4=B, 3=AB, 2=M. The Russian students normally have a scholarship of 40 rubles, when a student receives 5 points during a year the scholarship is increased to 100 rubles.*

*When a student receives 4, he passes but his scholarship is not increased. If a student receives 3 points, he passes, but does not receive a scholarship and is kicked out of the university residences.*

**IDRISSA**

*Oh really? This is intense, right? I have sometimes the impression, that we are better treated than the actual Soviets.*

**GILBERT**

*I also have that impression sometimes. So, all the Russian students work a lot for fear that their scholarship will be cut.*

*I also kind of feel this can stimulate the students in their work.*

*Here, everything is provided for the students to study well.*

*Books cost almost nothing. Books that cost 2000 francs at home do not cost even one ruble here. And every night there is a teacher available for students.*

**IDRISSA**

*Yeah, I see your point of view. Let's discuss this with other students, and see what they think about it.*

**Backstory: Idrissa Kamàra**

Idrissa was born in 1950 in Guinea-Bissau. When Idrissa arrived in the Soviet Union, Guinea-Bissau was still fighting for its independence from Portugal. That would last from 1963 to 1974. Guinea-Bissau in its independence war, was among others backed by Cuba, The Soviet Union, Romania and Yugoslavia. Idrissa ended up studying in the Soviet Union, due to a family friend. The family friend was a member of the communist party of Guinea Bissau, he could fix a scholarship to study abroad, in Russia, in the Soviet Union. Idrissa saw it as an opportunity to study abroad.

Int. Sleeping room. Dormitory. Voronezh. Soviet Union. Afternoon.  
20 March 1973

Gilbert lies in bed, dressed and staring at the wall. Right in front of him, Idrissa is sitting in a chair. They talk seriously.

**GILBERT**  
(worried)

*Idrissa, you've hardly eaten at all.*

*What's going on?*

**IDRISSA**  
(in a cold tone)

*Do you know who Amilcar Cabral is?*

**GILBERT**

*Yeah, he wrote his own  
interpretation of the Marxist  
Theory, right?*

**IDRISSA**

*I received a letter  
from my mother  
this morning.*

...

*Amilcar Cabral is dead.  
He was killed. I don't have  
any more details, yet.*

A silence of a few minutes, pain and anxiety are suddenly strongly felt in the room.

26

**GILBERT**

(in a serious tone)

*This brings me back  
to all the murders in the 60s  
following the independences:  
Patrice Lumumba,  
with his unpredicted speech,  
Louis Rwagasore,  
the immense bright mind,  
the first prime minister of Burundi  
and for Rwanda,  
the king Mwami Mutara III,  
who mysteriously died,  
poisoned in a hospital in Burundi,  
after he started confronting  
the Belgians.*

*This is exactly  
why I didn't want to study in Belgium.*

\*Silence\*

**IDRISSA**

*You know Gilbert...  
never forget...  
that those powers that try  
to "modernise" us,  
or who supposedly  
have the authority on "morality",  
are the ones who  
created an atomic bomb.*

*Can you imagine that  
they actually used it?*

*So that's when you realise.  
Then, you can ask the question:  
who are the savages, here?*

**GILBERT**

*This makes me so scared.*

**IDRISSA**

*You know, the fear of  
a lot of my friends,  
a lot of students,  
was to be sent  
to the Soviet Union.*

**GILBERT**

*Why is that?  
Studying in the Soviet Union  
was badly seen in Rwanda.  
But I don't think,  
people were really scared of it.*

27

**IDRISSA**

*First, they thought that in this country the studies were too “easy” and especially those who come back from here were not looked at with the same admiration as those who came back from France, for instance.*

*The communist ideology, is and was fashionable in the discussions, but it ended up revolting some of us, and we did not wish to go to the country, which in our eyes, had replaced the former colonial powers.*

*You know that some of African leaders were inspired by Soviet governance?*

*To the point of maintaining the cult of personality typical of the USSR?*

*You know, Gilbert, I think a lot about: what comes after this?*

*Going back.*

*I remember an uncle coming back with a degree of the Patrice Lumumba University. He really had a hard time finding a job.*

*But you know, a degree from the Sorbonne is way more respected.*

**GILBERT**  
(worried)

*I think about it a lot, too. About my life after this...*

*Hope it was all worth it!*

5 years later  
Sleeping room, Odessa, Ukrainian SSR. Evening.  
5 May 1977

Gilbert is sitting at his desk, pencil in hand, drawing a plan of action on a blank sheet of paper. Idrissa knocks on the door and enters in the room. Gilbert ignores him and keeps on writing.

**IDRISSA**

*What the hell are you doing?*

**GILBERT**

*We, the Rwandan students, are preparing a big strike.*

**IDRISSA**

*But, why? Are you sure? This can be dangerous.*

**GILBERT**

*We have been asking a long time for the Rwandan government to grant us holidays back home,*

*but so far, the government has been silent...*

*I don't know if you understand, how we live in difficult situations.*



*Spending six years in the USSR  
without returning home!  
Can you imagine?*

**IDRISSA**

*But it's difficult  
for everyone, no?*

**GILBERT**

*But everyone agrees!  
It's very difficult to handle,  
and many people  
become mentally deranged.*

**IDRISSA**

*But what are you going to do?*

**GILBERT**

*We are thinking of going  
on a general strike  
until our demands are met.*

**IDRISSA**

*But how are you organising this?*

**GILBERT**

*Across the whole territory of the USSR  
Rwandan students have held  
meetings to study  
how the strike would be conducted.*

**IDRISSA**

*But the authorities,  
how will they react?*

**GILBERT**

*I don't know. We'll see.*

Int. Dining room. Odessa, Ukrainian, SSR. Evening.  
25<sup>th</sup> April 1977

Idrissa and Gilbert are sitting silently in the corner of the dining room. They both look a little stressed. They have trouble eating the food on their plates. They speak very silently. The conversation is hard to understand.

**IDRISSA**

*(in a nervous tone)*

*I have to tell you something, Gilbert.  
I've been talking about your strike plans  
with a good friend of mine.*

**GILBERT**

*I asked you to be discreet  
about this!*

**IDRISSA**

*I mentioned it to James,  
that Ghanaian student.  
You know him,  
he's trustworthy!*

*He said something  
that might interest you.*

**GILBERT**

*What did he say?*

**IDRISSA**

*That about 15 years ago, a group of Ghanaian students went on strike to address the mysterious death of one of their fellow students.*

*He was found dead in the snow some weeks before his wedding to a Russian girl.*

**GILBERT**

*What a horrible story!  
How did the authorities react to this strike?*

**IDRISSA**

*That's what I wanted to speak to you about  
...  
At that moment it was Khrushchev,  
as head of state.*

*He reacted really vividly.  
He declared that Africans could dance on their heads at home, but that they would not allow demonstrations in the USSR.*

*Can you imagine?*

*He then offered exit visas to those students who didn't like the treatment they are receiving in the USSR.*

*Just, be careful  
Gilbert...*

*Is this worth it?*

**GILBERT**  
(calmly)

*Thank you for letting me know this.  
But I can't let fear run my life anymore.*

Int. At a party in a bar, Odessa, Ukrainian SSR. Night.  
15<sup>th</sup> June 1977

A pub with sparse lighting, very quiet classical music in the background. The sound of bottles of alcohol on the tables make the music almost inaudible. Several groups of men are in the pub. Idrissa and Gilbert are sitting in a dark corner. A half empty bottle is between them on the table.

**IDRISSA**

*So how did it go  
with your ideas to invade  
the Rwandan embassy?*

**GILBERT**

*Look, our plans were aborted.  
The Soviet authorities noticed  
the uneasiness which reigned among us,  
and armed militiamen were placed to stop any enterprise  
of the students  
against the embassy of Rwanda.*

*It became impossible to do anything  
against the embassy and in our plans,  
the last measure was to invade the embassy  
and drive out the ambassador.*

**IDRISSA**

*But what did you do?*

**GILBERT**

*We decided to take the legal route,  
and asked the Soviet  
Ministry of Public Education  
permission to send a  
delegation to the embassy.*

*The delegation was received by  
the ambassador, who answered that  
he had not received any order from Kigali  
and that our requests were still under consideration.*

*The delegation returned unsatisfied  
And we started the strike.*

*The Rwandan students refused  
to attend classes until  
their demands were met.*

**IDRISSA**

*But how did the Soviets react?*

**GILBERT**

*The Soviets threatened to expel  
all the leaders of our organisation  
if we didn't calm down.*

*So, on the request of  
the central committee,  
we stopped the strike.*

*But this story is not over,  
Idrissa.*

*We decided to start it again  
if the Rwandan government  
continues to keep silent.*

Idrissa and Gilbert order one last drink for the road.

# CURRICULUM VITAE EMOTIONALE

## Klara Hobza

Performance text for Lectures on the Weather, 2022

**SPEAKER 1 – KLARA**

**1975** Empty on the inside for the first six years of my life. Getting lost in observing ants and worms in the cracks of concrete. Getting lost in listening to music or in drawing.

Nothing about my environment feels like a natural fit, more like a temporary shelter that I am waiting to leave.

**SPEAKER 2 – ADELINA**

**1980** People have tried all their lives to inflect me with the consciousness that there is a bond that exists beyond what it is in my power to control with my biological mother. That this bond has nothing to do with relations, habits, material conditions that I have shared with my adoptive mother and my grandmother. I always, since then had to explain how two mothers can co-exist and share a child, moreover to explain that there is nothing traumatic, that even in this constellation one can have a brother and only one father. I had always needed to defend what I knew, from what it was accepted. I end up anatomising it. This is also the time when "I" became very evident and could not escape it anymore. This became my identity, although there were few of us who shared the situation.

**SPEAKER 3 – VLAD**

**2004** Working alongside my family. Very hard times, lots of humiliation, lots of fights, emotional and physical exploitation. Some happy moments discovering my father's youth, his stories, his beliefs. The most important thing is that I only realise now how hard those times were, but without them I'll be much more naive, much more clueless, much more sensitive. Those times are an important part of who I am today, the way I see things. I know now that what can happen in a workplace is nothing compared to being yelled at by my father in front of the customers.

**SPEAKER 1 – KLARA**

**1981** Escape from the East to the West. The years of loneliness begin. Promising my favourite stuffed toy dog to fight for justice. First time being hit by a parent. Obsession with stories of orphans and adopted children.

**1990** Struck by lightning when seeing art for the first time. Art becomes the answer to all questions. Finally my real life begins. Years of art school are filled with intense freedom, happiness, exploration, self-realisation, ambition and strength. Founding and organising art space, performances, events, exhibitions, collaborating in artist groups. I found a way to have friends and to express friendship. Finally, I felt like I was somebody, like I defeated loneliness.

**SPEAKER 2 – ADELINA**

**1984** Spend all my time – as far as I remember – with a certain cat and a certain dog, in my grandparent's courtyard. During storms I would sit with her (the cat) in my arms, or maybe she would sit with me in her arms. There was a gigantic walnut tree that had a gigantic lily at the base of the stem. The one with a big round leaf. I remember looking at the lily from equal viewpoints. Now, at our workplace, there is a walnut tree with a lily at the base. The house was very small, in the centre of the city, in a park where lași crows are still meeting in the evening. The sound of them still makes me involuntarily smile and feel at home.

**1999** Graduated from the Sculpture department at the Art High school. First under the line for university admission. Could get in only by paying a big yearly fee. Begged my mother to sell the two room apartment, buy a one room apartment and get me into the university. This was happening while walking down Copou Boulevard. She laughed out loud and refused me. Got into Mural Painting department. Had two best friends: Adi and Dana. It was very peaceful time.

**SPEAKER 3 – VLAD**

**2005** Finally a student, away from home, feeling free, owning my life, deciding for myself, not letting my parents tell me what to do, at least in some ways. Feeling more like an adult than I feel now.

**2009** Master degree where I found friends and alongside them I found my voice, for the first time I was included, I was heard, I felt that I had something to say.

**SPEAKER 1 – KLARA**

**2001** The happy years continue. There are struggles but everything is filled with meaning and a sense of continuous growth. Married a scientist – anarchist – feminist and we are partners in crime. We are growing together, admiring each other, working together side by side and fighting the world back to back. It's true love.

**2013** He leaves. Horrible years of mourning follow. It's impossible to accept that you can get rejected not for what you do but for who you are. Putting my emotional and physical life in danger many times. Things like rape happen while at the same time, on social media, I appear like the professional I have always been.

**SPEAKER 2 – ADELINA**

**1990** In Eforie I got scratched by a rose bush. I jumped over it. For some reason, it stayed on my skin, on left leg, until now. I was always running. Nobody could catch me, but I did not understand how fast I was.

**2018** Realising that individualism is a luxury for rich people.

**SPEAKER 3 – VLAD**

**2012** I was very eager, very do-eyed, so terribly can't-believe-they're-into-me, defining myself by the context which validated my existence. Also, very fresh and able to put in huge amounts of work even for only that validation. I didn't assess the cost on my mental health, nor did I make some totals of my work hours and my expenses, to see what my dream job cost me. Nor did I take time to consider how few people could afford to do my job. So at which end of the bargain, of the salary did I find myself?

**2022** Still here in the real world. Trying to stay away from social media accepting that it is OK not to promote. Your art, the humbleness while working, doesn't need to impress.

**SPEAKER 1 – KLARA**

**2017** Many of whom I thought were my friends have left once they realised that now I need them more

**SPEAKER 2 – ADELINA**

**2016** Overworking, overproducing. Happy. Tranzit started. Working shoulder to shoulder. Our daughter was born. It was supposed to say she was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, but the doctor changed it to the 24<sup>th</sup> so she is not born on a socialist celebration.

**1991** Two boys were attacking me in the playground. Every time I went to my mother and cried, she went to talk to their parents who were nice, but nothing changed. After 4 attempts, my mother told me: go back, respond so that their parents are coming to me to complain. I went outside and responded. Never been attacked again by them.

**SPEAKER 3 – VLAD**

**2016** Here I was thinking I had made it, working with friends, soon to find this is the biggest trap. It's family who hurts you the most, lovers who break your heart after you let them in... Rebuilding trust is the most painful construction. It was the biggest failure, it felt like all plans in my life conspired to destroy my mental health. What I learned: trust your friends when they come to you and tell you what they've been through, work on your excuses and motivation, refusal is essential – know how to say no. Don't take on too much.

**SPEAKER 1 – KLARA**

than they need me. My chosen family is shrinking. The first ones who drop me are my beloved eccentrics, the colourful, beautiful outsiders whom I felt so close with. To my surprise, help comes from the conservative, even religious ones, the ones with children, regular jobs and conventional lives.

**2012** Because my soul had broken it's not possible to return to my old self. I try the only option left: inventing a different self. Everything feels like I should have died a few years ago and that now I am living an additional life, a bonus life. I can see a distinct separation between my young life and my adult life. The material of this membrane consists of overcoming difficulties.

**SPEAKER 2 – ADELINA**

**2020** Isolation is a feeling that I usually long for – I long for the quiet, the discreet hum of silence – it's a constant in my life. Isolation gives me clarity and lucidity. This time, it was next to unbearable. It felt no longer like a choice, but a leash. I feel the fabric of social relations thinning every day and people moving away from each other, I feel that in the chaos that will ensue we will lose each other.

**2012** Founding the path to go – knowing what to do without expecting assurance. I am finding new friends and allies.

**SPEAKER 3 – VLAD**

**2020** Home starts to be a place of consolation; I can breathe even though I'm alone. It's morning and I look outside the window, it's been the first night since many months that I fell asleep.

# A FLAG FOR ExStatRAL

## Marx Machines Inc.

### #1 machine mythology

Think of this flag as a machine.

Machines administer streams of labour and energy.

Engineered systems are envisioned as antagonistic to humans, operating regardless of social scales and constraints.

Machine mythology is built around notions of alienation and endurance.

41

The mythology claims the mechanism should never stop, it keeps on spitting out its products and overstimulating the surroundings, growth is their raison d'être.

We are Marx Machines, and we produce post-growth from the inside of the neo-liberal system.

Gold and carbon used to be a reference for global exchange in the 19th century, oil and weapons took their place in the 20th. Advanced autonomous systems are candidates for the next economy warrant - who owns machines, owns power.

As tech industry players we uptake production of Lazy Machines - a series of high-end responsive devices. LM's recognise ergonomic form, endurance, they are energy efficient, aesthetic, designed by renowned engineers.

The lazy machines formula enables sustainable accumulation of capital by equalising the distribution of the means of production among high-tech elite and time-strapped entreprecariat.

You may wonder how?

**#2 aesthetics of renouncement**

Laziness is the key. Unlike the majority of commercially attainable products, the lazy machines do not inject their surroundings with solids, signals or data noise.

Otherwise, the systems are built to drain, to soak, to filter and disperse. They are capable of renouncing processes around them, thus creating a space for silence to break in.

The proposed approach implies that an artificial system's creativity may arise from the withholding of movement or an energy flow reversion.

By commodifying negative creativity, we can neutralise the neo-liberal fetish of growth rate warrants.

**#3 the flag**

Think of this flag as a machine. [again]

There are flags waving over every research station, from the Arctic ice, through the Atacama rocks, to the Moon. Humans raise the banners to mark identity of the places they make, the places they settle down

The flag for the Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life is made of silver-coated, conductive yarn. The yarn has been chosen due to its property of screening electromagnetic waves. It disperses or glitches the transmission frequencies of the communication protocols for Wi-Fi signals and GPS connections around.

We can think of the Silistea Snagovului banner either as a classic landmark, or as a device that withholds streams of information.

The banner is a machine that creates a swirl, imperceptible to humans, detectable by satellites, mobiles, and other information devices.

While raising this flag we landmark creative communities aiming to retreat from and screen off overstimulated environments and eventually infringe dysfunctional patterns of economy, mythologies of growth and violence reproduction.

Think of laziness.

////////////////////////////////////

# VAMPIRE BEDROOM STORIES

## Goda Palekaitė

PERFORMANCE SCRIPT

[intro: people are getting on the boat, they are asked if they'd like to have some blood, and given a glass of wine]

I would like to start by observing that we do not live only by day; we also live at night, in our dreams. Sometimes we accomplish our greatest deeds in dreams.

As a rule, dreams do not appear to be integral components of our conscious psychic life; they seem to be random and inexplicable. This is because they do not arise from the same emotional and logical continuity like the other elements of our conscious. Instead, they follow a logic of their own, a logic of personal and collective memory. Jung thought that just as our bodies remember the patterns of knowledge from our ancestors, the unconscious remembers what our conscious cannot. Our dreams know more than we do.

Languages do not agree on the nature of the concept of the *dream*. In English, French as well as in Romanian the word dream refers to both, a dream at night and a daydream, an aspiration and a vision. This is not the

case in German, Polish, Chinese or my native Lithuanian, where night *dream* and *daydream* are two completely different concepts. The German *Traum* is related to ancient Greek *trauma*, which means a wound. A wound on your throat, the mark of a bite, the memory of an encounter that happens only at night, after the sun sets beyond the lake.

I would now propose to raise our glasses to the Vampire, who, along with other creatures of the night might be somewhere here, around or among us very soon, after the sun sets beyond the lake.

[pause: making sure that everyone has a drink, we drink]

On the island that we can see over there, there is a 14<sup>th</sup> century monastery, which is known as the Vlad Țepeș Monastery. Archaeologists found the signs of an initial monastic settlement from even earlier, but around the year 1456, Vlad Țepeș The Impaler (called as such because of his preference for executing his enemies by impaling, in other words, putting their body on a stake), also known as Vlad Dracula – ordered the construction of a defence wall around the territory, a bridge, a prison for traitors, robbers and enemies and an underwater tunnel, which still exists today. This place, full of mystery and haunted by the souls of the murdered, still functions as a monastery.

[I play the monks chanting from the monastery to the speaker from my phone. first at low volume. then increasing it]

I recorded the monks chanting in the monastery five days ago when I first visited it. Its walls still host Dracula's bones. There is a little altar for his memory where people kneel and pray. For those less familiar with Romanian history – Vlad Dracula is a historical character. He was born in Transylvania in 1431, where he learned the skills of war and peace. From the monastery's sources, we *know* that in 1462 he became the ruler of Walachia. What we *don't know*, however, is the time of his death – I found two distant dates

proposed. But what we *know*, undisputedly, is that after his death, his head was sent to Constantinople where the sultan had it displayed on a stake – a reference to Vlad's own practice of impaling. What we *kind of know* is that his torso is buried in the monastery. What we *don't know*, however, is if Vlad was a Vampire. Or is a Vampire for the sake of precision, as Vampires are undead. What we *know* again is that the monks today enjoy the fame he obtained when Vlad's family name was appropriated by the Irish writer Bram Stoker and popularised all over the world 400 years after his death.

Not only Vlad Dracula, also other Vampires are historical characters – for centuries they were real participants of our social fabric. Prosecuted by the law, and by the superstitious, they suffered public executions and humiliations for thousands of years throughout civilisations – we find historical records of Vampires in ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, in the Americas and later in Central and Eastern Europe. Vampires appeared in literary fiction long before Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). One of the earlier examples is a short novel *Carmilla* (1872), written by another Irishman Sheridan Le Fanu, which is an explicitly erotic lesbian horror story.

At the moment, I am writing a novel where a female Vampire, passionately in love with a female Christian Saint, is one of the eleven main characters.

[directing the torch up my mouth]

I am not a writer, I am a muse. They say I am ill. A muse is always ill, with melancholy or hysteria, or with eccentricity. The illness is transferred through bodily fluids, through blood, saliva, semen and breast milk. Between my legs there is a swamp, damp soggy wetlands, a landscape where the folklore discovered beasts and witches.

I saw her from a distance through a fence. In the garden of the monastery standing on the balls of her toes with her arms stretched up, with cheeks pink from December frost, with her pale blue eyes closed, her flat breasts covered under a



black cotton robe. I sniffed the air and instantly felt her scent being carried by the wind to reach my nostrils. Sweet it was, honey sweet, and it sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitterness underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood.

Hypnotised by her scent, I closed my eyes and fell to the ground with my face on the frozen soil, and in front of me, I saw a marvellous dream of what would happen next. You need but a little talent to forecast: I could see myself peacefully penetrating her soft neck with my sharp teeth, piercing one layer after another, of skin, then fascia, a thin layer of fat, capillaries, reaching for the vein fountain. My loved one sighs perhaps of pain, perhaps of satisfaction, exhales snoring, sinking deeply into the dream, dreaming, of course, of a black cat lying on her chest. Pain and pleasure, light touch and tough grip. A hypnotic flair, irresistible, inescapable, our scents together, the squirting streams of our blood.

Since that moment, I desired nothing more in this world than to get her by my side.

46

[torch down]

Probably the first famous Vampire story within the tradition of literary fiction was John Polidori's *Vampyre* (1819). Apparently, it was inspired by Lord Byron's invitation towards his young friends on a vacation in Switzerland – to write a horror story each. It was the same gathering where Mary Shelley, only 18 years old at that time, developed the plot of her *Frankenstein*. One horror story per night, read around the fire or on the evening boat ride. Just like our party today – perhaps someone will talk about it on a boat 200 years later.

In most regions where vampires were found, they have been seen as incarnations of evil beings, suicide victims and witches, but could also be awakened by a bad spirit possessing a corpse, or a living person after being bitten by a vampire. A vampire has always been a *loving character*: awakened vampires were known to first visit their loved ones – spouses,

lovers, and children. One has to first invite the vampire into their home, only then can they come and go as they please. The invitation into one's intimate space functions as a key to the intimacy with one's bodily fluids.

In the early modern era with the raise of scientific reasoning, there was no lack of scientific studies around the Vampires. The so-called *demonology*, with *vampirology* as its subdiscipline, has been a respectable academic field in-between theology, social sciences and humanities. It was intended to educate the misinformed folk on the history, practices and implications of non-human beings, next to the vampires also witches, werewolves and others. In some contexts, demonology as a field of study exists until now, as vampire-hunters do too.

Even though the vampires are older than Christianity, it has done its best to adapt the vampire figure to be the perfect inversion of Christ (or did it adapt the figure of Jesus to the vampire?): *at dawn* Jesus rose from the dead to eternal life, meanwhile Vampire rises *at sunset* to be eternally dead; Jesus is symbolically represented by the lamb, Vampire – by the wolf; Jesus gives his blood for the believers to consume, meanwhile Vampire drinks the blood of others.

47

[directing torch up my mouth.]

It was a very hot afternoon in a drought devastated Europe when I arrived at that hotel. They did not give me the room I had booked; I remember from the pictures it looked differently. But the one I got seemed decent. The interior from the 90s imitating the proper classical hotel style: lacked wooden furniture, warm colour bedcovers, fully covered by carpets, the colour of the Siena paint. The only problem, I thought, was that it was too hot – the attic room with a roof window in the middle of the heatwave. But I was so tired after driving all day in the heat that I didn't have the energy to go four floors downstairs and up again just to change the room. I am ok with heat – I reminded myself – I've always been ok with heat. And so, I fell asleep earlier than ever, at 9pm, shirtless.

It only needed to get fully dark for them to sense my breathing. They, who live in the tinniest corners, twists and whirlpools of the mattress, in the cracks of the wooden furniture from the 90s, in the gaps between the Siena coloured carpet, in the insulation layers of the walls, they became attracted by my breath like by magic – and they started crawling out of their hideouts. Families of them, young and old, weak and strong, from the dark in the dark, seeing nothing, only hearing and smelling me, sensing my vibrations with their whole bodies. My tired sleeping body as an enormous breathing mountain, a mountain filled with streams and minerals, with iron, copper, calcium, magnesium, and endless sources of water. In the European drought, living scarcely in the dry attic since the 90s – how can I blame them?...

And so, they started climbing up the mountain: my hands, my arms, then my shoulders, my neck, my back, while others started from the other side, from my ankles, up my hamstrings, my thighs, to my butt cheeks, crawling all over, sucking and suckling, releasing their amnesiac poison for me to sleep deeper, and sucking some more. Me like a Gulliver woman, laying there immobile and ignorant. Them, quick, smart and tiny, enjoying their meal. All night vampire party. Can it be that vampires have always actually been blood-drinking parasites? That people being sucked by the parasites, being drugged by their poison, used to dream of a fantastic erotic creature sucking their life substance?

I woke up after the feast. Like good partygoers, they cleaned up well. There was no sign of them being on me and into me, they all were gone, except for one small blood stain on the sheets. I opened my eyes and I thought – what a nasty hotel, they gave me a dirty sheet. I had no idea the blood was mine... I got up, showered, dressed up, consumed a bad breakfast, and left. A few hours later I stopped at a petrol station, went to the bathroom, and then I started noticing first red marks appearing on my arms. They grew bigger by a minute. They grew more. The anaesthetics lost their effect and the vampire bites showed one after another all over my transparent skin. One hundred eleven in total. It took six weeks for the bites to heal. But the memory of the night encounter, the bodily fluids we shared, me being touched, being sucked by them had transformed me forever.

[...]

She entered a dark room, which seemed old and full of memories. She approached the bed, the only illuminated object in the centre, a small rectangular elevated platform with my body on it. I must have been waiting for her for infinity. The light fell from the ceiling even though there was no lamp and no window.

When she approached the bed, she saw me lying there with my eyes closed, still like a corpse. I seemed rather dead. My face was strong, with the high bridge of a thin nose and unusually arched nostrils, with a lofty forehead. My eyebrows were massive and bushy, just like my exceptionally long thick dark hair spread all over and around the body almost reaching my ankles. My mouth had the shape of a sharp knife, with thin very red lips. And since it was slightly open, she saw my shining sharp white teeth. My skin was white and shiny as if covered in the dust of the diamonds. I was of unearthly beauty.

She leaned over and, suddenly, I could no longer resist her sacred smell. I felt my wicked burning desire and her deadly fear at the same time. My hand grabbed her arm. She gasped motionless. I felt she was melting, disappearing in my eyes, as the whole universe disappears in the black hole. The moonlight was shining on the moisture of my lips and, the red tongue lapped the white sharp teeth, I licked my lips. As quick as lightning, I pulled her towards me, reaching her neck with my mouth, then paused, then I proceeded...

The “amorous absence functions in a single direction, expressed by the one who stays, never by the one who leaves: an always present I is constituted only by confrontation with an always absent you” – wrote Roland Barthes. The end of this passionate love left me sick and depressed, nauseous and devastated. Blood has been seen running from my mouth and my nose, and my left eye always stays half open. It has caused me to develop an allergy to garlic, mustard seeds and wild rose. In a mirror I can no longer see my reflection nor do I cast a shadow in the sunlight. I cannot sleep but one hour every two days, at dawn. As every insomniac, I keep wondering – is solitude the way?

[torch down]

I would like us to raise a final glass to the future of the creatures of the night. To the dreams that are not only oriented backwards but also forwards – as they do have influence and determine what will happen next. You need just a little talent to forecast, as vampires say. To the collective future of the night!

# PROGRAMME 51



52



# DELIA POPA

## The Guide – Seeing the Landscape

Venue: The bus, Bucharest-Snagov, Victory Square, Bucharest, Romania

53

Starting with the radical social engineering projects of Nicolae Ceaușescu, through the wild capitalist developments of the 1990s and early 2000s, to the late globalisation phase, the countryside in Romania has been undergoing major mutations that continue to affect local life dynamics. It takes approximately 45 minutes to reach Snagov Palace from the centre of Bucharest by bus. On the way, Delia Popa will play the role of a local tourist guide giving insights into the rural area transformations and its consequences for the natural environment. As the landscape unfolds from behind the bus window, the guide might become destabilised, losing herself in the aleatoric mixture of stories, languages, and at times, moods.

Delia Popa is a visual artist whose work includes painting, video, installation, and performance. Her current research topic is the representation of local landscapes and topography in relation to recent ecological awareness in the global discourses, to gentrification and to climate change. She has been an activist for developing studio-like thinking skills for children and youth since 2013, when she co-founded ArtCrowd – Artists in Education, an art education NGO. Her works have been shown across Europe and in the United States. Delia lives in Crețești village, Ilfov county, Romania.



# SANDRA MUTETERI HEREMANS

## In Search of Gilbert and Idrissa: African Students in the USSR

Performed by Sandra Muteteri Heremans, Abir Hseini, Maissa Jannedi  
Venue: Snagov Palace, Snagov, Romania

In 1960, the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia was established in Moscow and thousands of young people from Africa would come to the Soviet Union to obtain education necessary to contribute to the construction of their newly independent countries. Little is known about the personal experiences of the African students in the Eastern Bloc, nor their trajectories after their return to their homeland. Using a screenplay as a research method, Sandra Muteteri Heremans enters this unknown space. Through the figures of Gilbert from Rwanda and Idrissa from Guinée-Bissau and their personal negotiations with the Cold War frictions, she explores the historical potentiality of the post-colonial and East-European intersections, often overlooked in the geopolitically constructed Western reading of history. In the picturesque setting of the Snagov Palace, once the summer residence of Nicolae Ceaușescu, intercontinental relationships, misunderstandings, and projections will unfold in the collage of historical and personal dialogues, rehearsing ways of engaging oral knowledge beyond and against reproducing violence as much inherent in the Cold War era, as in the present world.

Sandra Muteteri Heremans is a visual artist and filmmaker with a background in art history and anthropology. She was born in Rwanda in 1989 and was raised in Rwanda and Belgium. Her starting point are oral histories and personal archives as a materialised testimony of a larger political narrative. She is interested in how her experience of migration enables questioning the imposed notion of history and imagination around the past. Sandra is based in Brussels and works between Brussels and Kigali.

Thanks to Andi Gavril, Dr. Elena Cojocaru, Florin Poenaru, Ovidiu Țichindeleanu and Corina Doboș for help and recommendations in relation to this work.



# KLARA HOBZA

## Curriculum Vitae Emotionale

Based on anonymous contributions

Performed by Vlad Basalici, Klara Hobza, Adelina Ivan  
Venue: The Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life,  
Siliștea Snagovului

Collective social and political actions are inextricably linked to emotions. Anger, frustration, enthusiasm are responses to one's surroundings, and the stimuli to defend, overturn or reshape a given order of things. Drawing on the experiences of the group of friends and collaborators forming the artistic cooperative in Siliștea Snagovului, with its utopian desire to integrate their work with the natural environment, while intentionally responding to the the current state of affairs, Klara Hobza examines the variable connections between participants' individual inner states and how they form in time an emotional and physical common space. Curriculum Vitae Emotionale, though it uses a professional hiring format, is more of a personal quest, to understand and expose the motivations, doubts, and joys behind the artistic networks and self-organised projects that open paths to new forms of engaging arts in the political realm. We expect inspiring and poignant life patterns to be converted into a polyphonic voice.

Klara Hobza is a visual artist currently living in Berlin and working wherever she is able to. She was born 1975 in Plzen, Czech Republic, later raised in Munich, Germany and has been practising as an artist since 1990, professionally since 1998. Her mediums span from miniature drawing and various forms of storytelling to creating experiences through performative and sculptural encounters and large scale endeavours recorded on video. Her themes are reflections on being in the world as an artist, the scientific process, migration, transportation, disappearance-reappearance and breathing.

We thank everyone who shared their emotional CV.



# MARX MACHINES INC.

(Filip Herbert, Anna Olszewska)

## A Flag for ExStatRAL

Venue: The Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life,  
Siliştea Snagovului, Romania

There are flags waving over every research station, from the Arctic ice to the Atacama rocks, to the Moon. The ExStatRAL flag for the Experimental Research Station for Art and Life is made of silver-coated, electrically conductive yarn. Designed in collaboration with a smart textiles engineer Iwona Karbownik, the flag will subtly disperse or glitch the transmission frequencies of the communication protocols for Wi-Fi signals and GPS connection. Raising the flag in Siliştea Snagovului, we invite a discussion on expanding the creativity discourse to include concepts of detachment, idleness, and renunciation. The proposed approach implies that an artificial system's creativity may arise from the withholding of movement or an energy flow reversion. The withdrawal aesthetics campaign is endorsed by Marx Machines Inc. – a post-growth company co-founded by Anna Olszewska and Filip Herbert, which deals with critical engineering and new experimentalism.

Anna Olszewska is a researcher and curator based in Krakow, Poland. She has a background in art history and cultural studies and is currently involved in artificial vision and machine mythology research. Anna led the *Re:Senster* project of cybernetic art restoration and co-curated *I Was Lookin' Back to See if You Were Lookin' Back at Me to See Me Looking Back* at the Nowa Huta Museum in Krakow (with Magdalena Kownacka). She works as an adjunct professor at the Krakow AGH University of Science and Technology Faculty of Humanities.

Filip Herbert is a freelancer, producer and wine entrepreneur based in Krakow, Poland. He has a background in cultural and visual art studies and is currently involved in cross-sectional research between economics and automatization. He is a *Re:Senster* lab member.



# GODA PALEKAITĖ

## Vampire Bedroom Stories

Venue: Dolce Vita boat, Ponton Parc, Snagov, Romania

Vampires have not always been mythological creations – for centuries they were actual and tangible participants of our social fabric. Prosecuted by law, and by the superstitious, they suffered public executions and humiliations for millennia throughout civilisations – in ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, in the Americas and later Central and Eastern Europe. Vampires appeared in literary fiction long before Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. One of the earlier examples is a short novel *Carmilla* (1872), written by Sheridan Le Fanu – an explicitly erotic lesbian story between two young ladies, one of whom is a vampire, where the atmosphere is built not on spookiness and fear but rather on the joys of intimacy between the two friends. Through the figure of a female vampire, contagious and eccentric muse of horror erotica, and folklore, Goda Palekaitė addresses the liminal stages of cultural existence. We invite you to hear some stories written from a vampire’s bedroom.

Goda Palekaitė is Vilnius-born and Brussels-based artist working at the intersection of contemporary art, performance, artistic research, literature, and anthropology. Her practice evolves around the politics of historical narratives, the agency of dreams and imagination, and social conditions of creativity. Her recent solo shows were opened at Kunsthal Gent; Editorial, Vilnius; Centre Tour à Plomb, Brussels. Her performances and installations have been presented at Whitechapel Gallery, London; BOZAR Brussels; The Biennale Architettura, Venice; CAC Vilnius; among others. In 2020 Goda published her first book of fiction “Schismatics”.



## ANNA SMOLAK

is an independent curator, researcher and writer born in Krakow and currently based in Brussels. In her work, she develops critical collaborative formats that draw on existing resources and structures, and transform them into alternative and possible futures. Interested in the concept of locality and its intersection with global phenomena, she has curated numerous exhibitions and projects focusing on the post-Soviet region. Anna collaborated with PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warsaw and led a two-year artistic programme at the BWA SOKOL Gallery in Nowy Sacz, Poland, among others.

# THE EXPERIMENTAL STATION FOR RESEARCH ON ART AND LIFE\*

This is a project, a site and the expression of a utopia. It is a bet and a promise, an experiment and an investment into a future we can still shape.

The Station is the result of the shared desires and beliefs of a small community built over years, around values such as love of art, respect for nature, friendship, belief in emancipatory practices, sharing of resources, mutual trust.

The Station is a joint venture of a group of artists, curators, theorists, economists and others, who, together with tranzit.ro, co-own and co-manage a plot of land in the village of Siliștea Snagovului, 40 km north of Bucharest, in the proximity of a protected natural area (forest and lake). Situated with a long-duration perspective and throughout a participatory, open process of building and contextualising, the Station aims to become:

- a centre for contemporary art and research;
- a centre for the study of nature;
- a resource and residency centre;
- a prototype for a cultural institution grounded in a locality shared with its community, situated in a post-development narrative and based on ecological and ethical principles.

The Experimental Station for Research is collective work that addresses also our limits, not only our wishes. It is a learning site, where we try to act what we preach, and a test site, where we don't have to constantly produce and deliver.

The Station's members include the following people and institutions: Anca Benera, Andrei Gavril, Arnold Estefan, Dana Andrei, Eduard Constantin, Florian Niculae, Iuliana Dumitru, Livia Pancu, Maria Eichhorn, Marius Babias, Olivia Mihălțianu, Ovidiu Țichindeleanu, Raluca Popa, Raluca Voinea, Stoyan Dechev, Thomas Poeser, Vlad Basalici and tranzit.ro Association

\*The concept of "life" is used in the sense advanced by anthropologist Arturo Escobar, following the understanding of indigenous Latin-American groups for whom the destruction of "nature" or the "environment" signifies the annihilation of life itself. Arturo Escobar: *Territories of Difference. Place, movements, life, redes*, Duke University Press, 2008

*Lectures on the Weather*  
Performance and fieldwork

**Curator:** Anna Smolak

**Organised by:**  
tranzit.ro/București

**Project management:** Raluca Voinea

**Artistic production:** Laura Trocan

**Event assistance:** Catrinel Țoncu, Ioana Gemanar

**Accountancy:** Andrei Gavril

Many thanks to everyone who joined us in the effort to make this project possible.

**Publication:**

**Texts:** Sandra Muteteri Heremans, Klara Hobza, Filip Herbert, Anna Olszewska, Goda Palekaitė, Delia Popa, Anna Smolak and anonymous contributors.

**Design:** Eduard Constantin

**Photographs:** Mihaela Vezentan

**Proofreading:** Giles Eldridge

**Photo on the cover:** Klara Hobza, *Sunset*, Siliștea Snagovului 2022

Copyright: Authors and tranzit.ro/București

Bucharest - Siliștea Snagovului  
2022

ERSTE Foundation is the main partner of tranzit.

*Lectures on the Weather* is co-financed by The Administration of the National Cultural Fund. The project does not necessarily represent the position of The Administration of the National Cultural Fund. The Administration of the National Cultural Fund is not responsible for the content of the project or the manner in which the results of the project may be used. These are entirely the responsibility of the funding recipient.

tranzit.ro/ București



**ERSTE**  
Stiftung

PROIECT CO-FINANȚAT DE:

