

**NOW THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED
A COMMON GROUND**

**ELEANA ANTONAKI
ORLEE MALKA
SARA OUHADDOU**

CURATED BY LILA NAZEMIAN • MARCH 4 - APRIL 2, 2022



PROTOCINEMA





This Protozine is a collection of responses, texts, thoughts, process shots, and inspirational images that explore some of the many themes broached by the exhibition, **Now That We Have Established a Common Ground.**

Protozine Collaborators: Lila Nazemian, Eleana Antonaki, Orlee Malka, Sara Ouhammadou

Copy Editor: L. İpek Ulusoy Akgül

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Protocinema Team:

Executive Director, Curator: Mari Spirito

Cultural Manager, Curator: Alper Turan

Contact us

Lila Nazemian, lila.nazemian@gmail.com


Alper Turan, alper@protocinema.org, +49 17670518587, +90 5068706808

Mari Spirito, mari@protocinema.org +1 917 660 7332

Press Inquiries: Protocinema: Alper Turan, alper@protocinema.org, +49 17670518587, +90 5068706808; Mari Spirito, mari@protocinema.org, +1 917 660 7332

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Now That We Have Established A Common Ground

Eleana Antonaki, Orlee Malka, Sara Ouhaddou

curated by Lila Nazemian

within Protocinema's Emerging Curator Series 2022

March 4 - April 2, 2022

The Clemente Soto Vélaz Cultural & Educational Center

LES Gallery, 107 Suffolk Street, Lower East Side, New York



Launched in 2015, **Protocinema Emerging Curator Series (PECS)** is a mentorship program that provides professional training in the form of learning through doing. Protocinema Emerging Curator for 2022 Lila Nazemian is mentored by **Lumi Tan**, Senior Curator, The Kitchen, New York; **Tirdad Zolghadr**, Curator and Writer, Artistic Director of the Sommerakademie Paul Klee and **Mari Spirito**, Executive Director, Curator, Protocinema, Istanbul, New York.

Protocinema is a cross-cultural art organization that commissions and presents site-aware art around the world. Our purpose is to support dialogue between cultures on equal footing and create opportunities for listening & expression. By doing so, Protocinema aids the development of relationships both at the mindfully local & globally interconnected levels. Protocinema advocates for empathy, working towards an understanding of difference across regions through its exhibitions, commissions, public programs, publications, and mentorship. Founded in 2011 by Mari Spirito, Protocinema is an ambulant nonprofit 501(c)3, free of 'brick and mortar.' Our locations are varied, responding both to global concerns and changing conditions on the ground. protocinema.org

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PROTOCOLINEMA



On Generating Practices for the Future

by Lila Nazemian

Now That We Have Established A Common Ground features artists Sara Ouhaddou, Orlee Malka, and Eleana Antonaki and investigates the archeological practices, language, heritage and, ironically, the ambiguity of common ground that exists between the artists' works. While states and those in power push their own official narratives and socio-economic agendas through the use of institutions, artists, among others, have often challenged such structural and political forces through their practice. In varying temporalities, each work, here, sheds critical light on different institutional practices that have subjugated populations worldwide. Ouhaddou connects the colonization of two communities through their written traditions. Malka creates a space of conversation to engage with movements of restitution within the fields of archeology and ethnography. Anotaki addresses dehumanizing legacies within geological practice. By blending aspects of fact, the personal and the probable, the artists develop new environments for empathy and offer approaches that fracture practices of the past and ground us within our futures.

In her 'Atlas' and 'Aomori' series, Ouhaddou has been studying symbols from communities in the remote regions of the Atlas mountains (Morocco) and Aomori prefecture (Japan) that do not possess written records of their past. Through her research, the artist has met with various artisans, archeologists and anthropologists in order to decipher ancestral symbols still present in the everyday lives of both peoples. Many of the works Ouhaddou has produced in association with these projects serve as an archive for her. *Atlas (I)* (2018), for example, consists of handmade books created in the traditional Moroccan bookbinding technique in which she documents existing symbols in textiles, ceramics, ancient stone engravings, and fossils. The meanings of a majority of these signs are in large part lost and currently unknown.

The Atlas mountains are home to the Amazigh peoples, indigenous to North Africa, who have struggled to maintain their cultural, linguistic and political dominance since the Arab/Islamic conquests of the 7th-8th centuries and the French colonial occupation in the 20th century. They have continued to face subjugation under the current Moroccan state governance. In turn, Aomori is located at the northern tip of Japan's Honshu island and was part of the territories where the prehistoric Jomon civilization once thrived. The Jomon were a diverse population of hunter-gatherers and found to have direct genetic ties to the Ainu¹, an ethnic minority who have faced systemic suppression as the Japanese state pushed for a homogeneous monocultural society post-World War II.²

During a residency at Arts Initiative Tokyo (AIT) and in collaboration with the Kokugakuin University in Tokyo, Japan, Ouhaddou identified astounding correlations between symbols from the Moroccan Amazigh and Japanese Jomon prehistoric civilizations. As both communities have been historically subjugated to assimilate into the cultural groups that govern them, they have endured various forms of cultural erasure, including linguistic suppression. Despite these heavy losses, the artist determined seven symbols they have in common as well as their existing inscribed variations which are considered as signs for rain, tree, sun, spirit, cloud, bamboo and valley. In the installation *Aomori (1)* (2018), she worked alongside artisans in Tokyo to make ceramic pieces that recreate these engraved symbols shared between these civilizations that were never believed to have been in contact. Ouhaddou perceives this as a shared memory that transcends the bounds of written communication.

What is further significant about Ouhaddou's research is that both ethnic communities have recently made legislative gains with regards to their cultural/linguistic recognition. Following a decades-long battle by activists, Tamazight, the Amazigh language, was officially recognized in Morocco's new 2011 constitution³. In Japan, the Ainu represent a marginal percentage of the overall population and the Ainu language is critically endangered⁴. Nevertheless, it was not until 2019 that the Japanese parliament passed an act recognizing the Ainu, descendants of the Jomon, as ingenious peoples⁵. Ouhaddou's work goes beyond shedding light on the linguistic commonalities of the Amazigh and Jomon, it also highlights the struggles under which these communities had to fight cultural erasure. Although the stakes of cultural preservation undoubtedly differ for each community, Ouhaddou's research contributes to these forms of active resistance.

Cultural preservation is not always a reaction to thwart discrimination, it has conversly been used as a tool for domination, particularly by Western powers since the colonial era. Malka's "fieldwork, to the unconsolidated" (2018) series is an excavation project uncovering archeological and ethnographic methodologies specifically since European imperialism that have been normalized by Western academia and museums, among other institutions. The project includes replicas, objects, readings and experiments that rethink acts of extraction of the non-West by the West.

The establishment and continued operation of ethnographic museums go hand in hand with the rise of the field of archeology. From cabinets of curiosities that occupied the European aristocrats in the 17th century and the early museums that arose out from these obsessive private collections, to the archeological raid expeditions sponsored by the European colonial monarchs, the

act of collecting was informed by the desire to assert glory and dominance over non-Western cultures. Such empire-building projects sustained by the pillaging and displaying of a variety of objects, artifacts and entire archeological sites further fueled Orientalists and their desire to objectify and study the Other.

Sifters (replica) (2018) is a sculpture of stacked *sifters* recreated to scale by Malka based off of archival images of British excavation-looting sites dating from the 18th century onwards. The replicas initially bring to mind yet another practice Europeans engaged in: the spectacle of representation and the effort to present supposedly accurate models of neighborhoods belonging to cultures from around the globe in world fairs from the 19th century. Malka's work challenges the supposed objectivity presented both in ethnographic museums; instead of reproducing an object one would find in an institution, she identifies the practice of looting by replicating and displaying sifters, an essential tool through which archeologists continue till this day to excavate artifacts with. Four sifters are stacked on top of one another and placed on wheels, emphasizing the importance of shifting practices which, to the artist, also references the movement to return looted objects and human remains to their rightful owners. In yet another reversal, Malka refuses the anonymity of the archeologist with regards to the archiving and display of looted objects. Not only are there imprints of the artist's hand in *Sifters (replica)*, but in another piece, *necklace for my grandmother malka* (2018), Malka directly inserts her ancestral history within the work. The shapes of the clay pieces were created by Malka's fingers and trace the use of the fingerprint pressed in ink as a form of signature; a practice her grandmother was compelled to use in 20th century Palestine.

The subject of museum restitution is also one that Malka addresses in her practice. There have been various recent calls for cultural restitution movements, including the 2018 Sarr-Savoy Report urging the swift return of ceremonial objects and other pillaged artifacts to Sub-saharan African states and the 2020 book, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*, that challenge ethnographic museums to confront the systematic violence and colonial subjugation forming the basis of their collections and identity. In *empty museum* (2019), Malka utilizes museum floor plans in an experiment to rethink the inhuman excess of the Museum's accumulation of looted objects. She outlines a room in the floorplan titled, "empty museum," as well as renames and modifies other elements.

Within the legacy of ethnographic museums and world fairs, Western and colonial organizers establish their authority and expertise through the use of pedagogical tools such as maps, catalogs, plans, and statistics, among others. *empty museum* conveys the museum

executives' greatest anxiety: the institution becoming empty as a result of the restitution processes and thus, irrelevant. By identifying methodologies of archeological practice such as the floor plan, Malka engages in a process of undoing by emptying. This artwork lingers on the value of emptiness as a pause and proposition to imagine the world in different terms. In her practice, Malka identifies and resists reproducing archeological methodologies that continue to sustain and inform colonial legacies within present-day institutions.

Antonaki's work also alludes to institutional practices, within the field of geology, that perpetuate structures of domination through extraction and dehumanization. Her work engages with the practice of geology as a science in the anthropocene era in which capitalist extractive policies have resulted in the historic and ongoing displacement and deaths of countless people from the global south majority. In the video *The dig is her. She is the dig* (2019), a female character in the form of a block of water narrates her experience in the world of the distant future. While the work is a window into an imagined fate for humanity, it is rooted in contemporary feminist, race and ecological discourses and engages in contemporary socio-political realities. Antonaki is interested in the act of excavation, in relation to geological resources, as a political one. She proposes the female as an archeological site with the agency to produce and maintain intergenerational histories.

Anthropocene marks the geological epoch of the environment as altered by human activity. While the term is often used within the context of the current ecological crisis, blame for the situation is likely to be placed on overall human destructive nature as opposed to perpetrators who pursue activities that heavily contribute to ecological degradation and that work within the structures of capitalism. In her book *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, which has informed Antonaki's video, Kathryn Yusoff explains, "The birth of racial subject is tied to colonialism and the conquest of space and the codification of geology as property and properties. Thereby geologic *resources* and bodily resources (or racialized slavery) share a natal moment."⁶ In Antonaki's work, we are introduced to how colonial and extractive legacies extend beyond the present and into the future, vacillating between realities and possibilities.

The narrator in Antonaki's video arrives at a subjectivity that reflects the intersection of these colonial and geological realities. "1" "1,329,784 mil," and "My Mother's Daughter," are the names that the narrator will respond to. Referring to herself and her kind as "numerics," she admits that they were originally a subdivision of humans, subjected to moving across bodies of water.

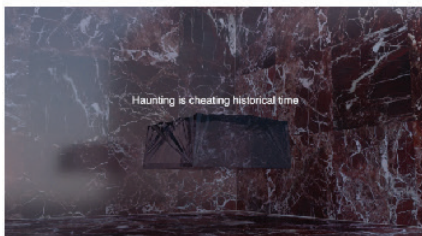
Many of her ancestors perished in the water but ultimately as a species they “developed significantly since then, (their) collective experience at sea helped (them) transform into water; mostly to adapt to (their) conditions and to be more resilient when crossing the sea.”⁷ Although 1 mil simply explains that her ancestors moved constantly due to their status as “subspecies,” we can also infer from history that mass migrations have occurred because of the enslavement of peoples (as labor for the extraction of resources) and the loss of land (where resources likely lie). The intersection of geology and control of valuable resources continues to plague communities around the world and lays the foundation for the violence of biopolitics (think the Dakota Access Pipeline or the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar). Her narrative also recalls the ongoing migrant crisis, which has all but departed from the daily headlines since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, yet is still a very real and urgent phenomenon.

For 1 mil and her kind, the end of the world as we know it had to happen in order for them to imagine and establish a new one in which to thrive. Their species is a hybrid merger of cyber human, mineral and liquid. Despite the dehumanization that occurs under exploitative colonial legacies, 1 mil is herself an assertive and charming character, and she alludes to her kind as being freethinking and as having individual personalities. Water takes the form of intergenerational consciousness as an accumulation of collective experiences within matrilineal chains of transmission. Within the final scenes of the video, 1 mil describes regularly returning to the quarry site that she was once excavated from in order to haunt them as “an act of love” and of “cheating historical time.” This emancipatory ritual is significant since the act of returning is one that many refugees and displaced individuals of today may never have the chance to experience.

In *Now That We Have Established a Common Ground*, artists Antonaki, Malka and Ouhammadou disrupt established frameworks within institutional practices and representations meant to maintain legacies of colonial and state domination. Within the scope of their works, they offer strategies in approaching history and debunking institutional practices in order to better understand the present and to be equipped in embarking upon the future. These more nuanced understandings are imbued with the artists’ individual traces and simultaneously challenge institutional history, knowledge production and its dissemination. At the intersection of ancient civilizations, archeology, geology and storytelling lies the potential to shed light on narratives and histories that have been overlooked, in an effort to forge empathy for historically persecuted and dehumanized communities of the global majority. If we are to generate rootedness and clarity for our futures, we must come to terms with our past and histories.

Notes

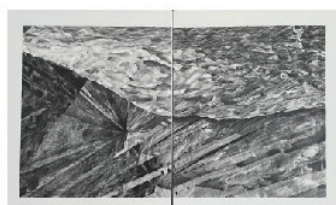
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<https://www.nature.com/articles/s2-01162-020-42003>, Last accessed 23 February 2022.
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<https://en.unesco.org/courier/numero-especial-octubre2009-/saga-ainu-language>, Last accessed 23 February 2022.
3. ‘‘Amazigh: Morocco Adopts Tamazight as Official Language Alongside Arabic,’’ *The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization* (UNPO), 4 October 2016. <https://unpo.org/article/19524>, Last accessed 23 February 2022.
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<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/25/10/2020/national/social-issues/ainu-language/>, Last accessed 23 February 2022.
5. Jozuka, Emiko, ‘‘Japan's 'vanishing' Ainu will finally be recognized as indigenous people,’’ *CNN*, 23 April 2019.
<https://edition.cnn.com/20/04/2019/asia/japan-ainu-indigenous-peoples-bill-intl/index.html>, Last accessed 23 February 2022.
6. Yusoff, Kathryn, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis, 2018, p. 65
7. Antonaki, Eleana, *The Dig is Her. She is the Dig.* ,2019 10:54-10:47.
8. Mousavi, Ali, ‘‘Persepolis in Retrospect: Histories of Discovery and Archaeological Exploration at the Ruins of Ancient Parseh,’’ *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 32, Medes and Persians: Reflections on Elusive Empires (2002), pp. 251-209. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4629597>, Last accessed 23 February 2022.



Eleana Antonaki
The Dig is Her, She is the Dig, 2019
 Single-channel HD Video
 13 minutes 54 seconds



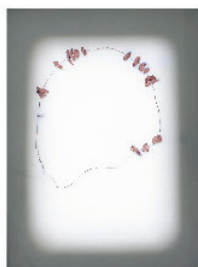
Eleana Antonaki
Surface I, 2020
 Graphite and gesso on a wood panel
 11 x 14 in / 28 x 35.5 cm



Eleana Antonaki
Surface II, 2022
 Graphite and gesso on wood panels
 11 x 14 in / 28 x 35.5 cm (each, diptych)



Orlee Malka
Sifters, (replica), 2018
 Reclaimed wood, metal mesh, four wheels
 31 x 37 x 16 in / 78.75 x 94 x 40.6 cm



Orlee Malka
necklace for my grandmother malka, 2018,
 Wood, clay, wire, wax, kodak slide
 projector, four wheels
 31 x 37 x 5 in / 78.75 x 94 x 12.7 cm

Orlee Malka
 empty museum, 2019
 installation including deeds on floor plans
 (2022), printed text, bench
 Dimensions variable



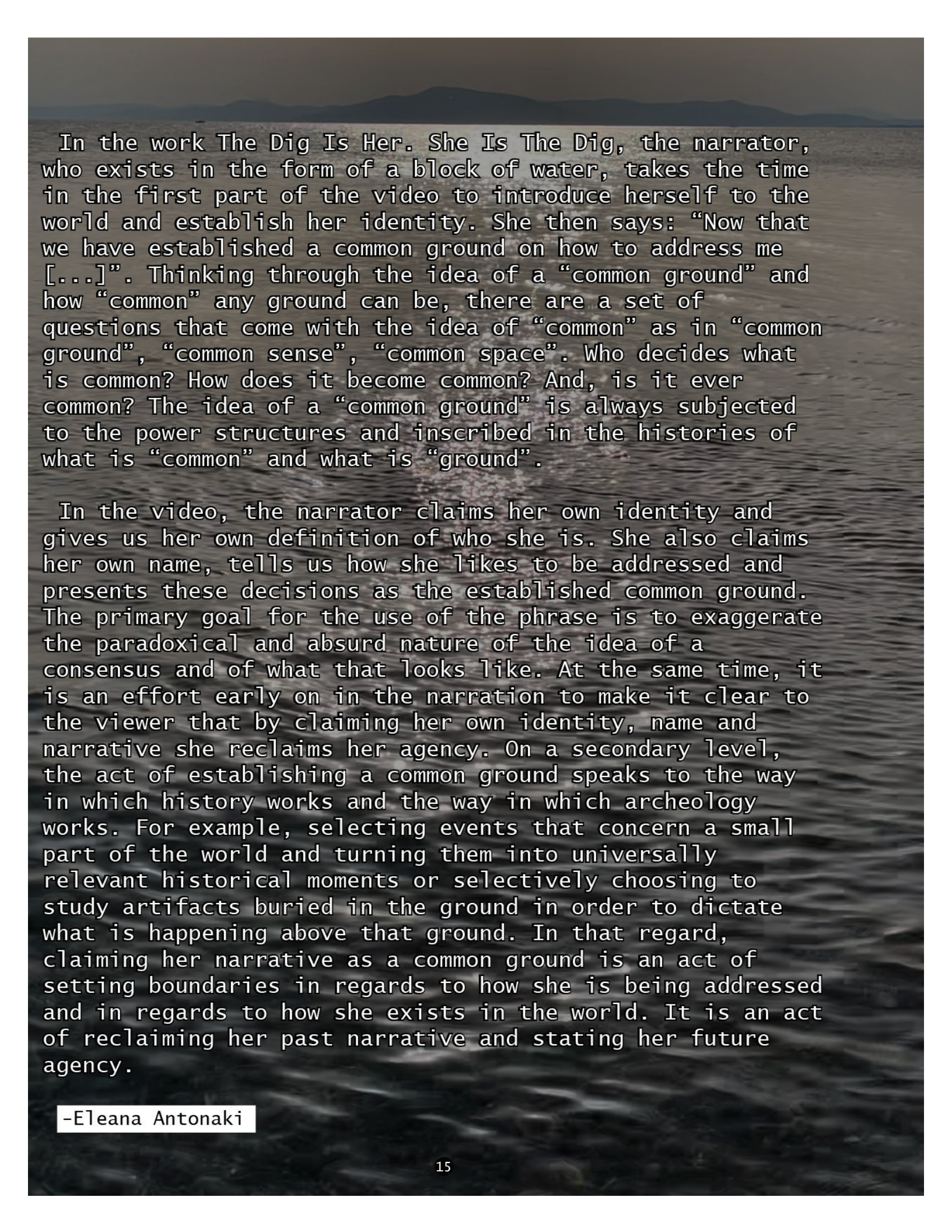
Sara Ouhaddou
Aomori (1) (cloud), 2019
 Japanese ceramic, 10 pieces
 3.4 x 2.5 in / 8.6 x 6.3 (each)

Sara Ouhaddou
Aomori (1) (sun), 2019
 Japanese ceramic, 11 pieces
 3.4 x 2.5 in / 8.6 x 6.3 (each)

Sara Ouhaddou
Aomori (1) (tree), 2019
 Japanese ceramic, 12 pieces
 3.4 x 2.5 in / 8.6 x 6.3 (each)



Sara Ouhaddou
Atlas (1), 2021
 Moroccan bookbinding technique,
 recycled paper and cade natural ink
 6 x 4.3 x 6.7 in / 15.25 x 11 x 17 cm
 ACAC, Aomori contemporary Art center



In the work *The Dig Is Her. She Is The Dig*, the narrator, who exists in the form of a block of water, takes the time in the first part of the video to introduce herself to the world and establish her identity. She then says: "Now that we have established a common ground on how to address me [...]" . Thinking through the idea of a "common ground" and how "common" any ground can be, there are a set of questions that come with the idea of "common" as in "common ground", "common sense", "common space". Who decides what is common? How does it become common? And, is it ever common? The idea of a "common ground" is always subjected to the power structures and inscribed in the histories of what is "common" and what is "ground".

In the video, the narrator claims her own identity and gives us her own definition of who she is. She also claims her own name, tells us how she likes to be addressed and presents these decisions as the established common ground. The primary goal for the use of the phrase is to exaggerate the paradoxical and absurd nature of the idea of a consensus and of what that looks like. At the same time, it is an effort early on in the narration to make it clear to the viewer that by claiming her own identity, name and narrative she reclaims her agency. On a secondary level, the act of establishing a common ground speaks to the way in which history works and the way in which archeology works. For example, selecting events that concern a small part of the world and turning them into universally relevant historical moments or selectively choosing to study artifacts buried in the ground in order to dictate what is happening above that ground. In that regard, claiming her narrative as a common ground is an act of setting boundaries in regards to how she is being addressed and in regards to how she exists in the world. It is an act of reclaiming her past narrative and stating her future agency.

-Eleana Antonaki



Eleana Antonaki, Research images

a page from the book Zong! by M. Nourbese Philip, with a sentence
by Paul Celan (1970-1920) No one bears witness for the witness.
published by Wesleyan University Press, and by The Mercury Press in Canada, 2011

No one bears witness for the witness.

PAUL CÉLAN

a ghost is haunting europe*. It is the ghost of the unconsolated. all the powers of old europe have entered into a holy alliance to exercise this ghost.

two things result from this fact:

- I. the unconsolated is already acknowledged by all european and u.s powers to be itself a power.
- II. it is high time that the unconsolated should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the ghost of unconsolatedness with a manifesto of the movement itself.

an unconsolated confession of faith: an excerpt

Question 1: Are you of the unconsolated?

Answer: Yes.

Question 2: What is the aim of the unconsolated?

Answer: Return of lands, objects, human remains and manuscripts. Undoing the ruin of poverty by wealth redistribution. Reparations, Restitution. Truth committees, dismantling of supremacist delusional constructs by education. Free education and free health care. Abolition of police and end to prisons. To organize society in such a way that its every member can develop and use all their capabilities and powers in complete freedom.

Question 3: What is the unconsolated?

Answer: The unconsolated are members of society who live exclusively by their historical indoctrination to labor and servitude and not of the profit from any kind of capital; the unconsolated have experienced or are descendents of historical and ongoing trauma. They are survivors of genocide, enslavement, racialization construct, trafficking, occupation, rape and abuse, displacement and forced or unforced migration, gender oppression in all its manifestations, queercide and abled supremacy, whose life and death, therefore, depend on the alternation of times of good and bad business; in a word, on the fluctuations of competition.

Question 4: How did the movement of the unconsolated arise?

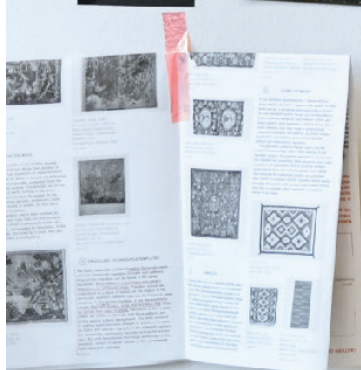
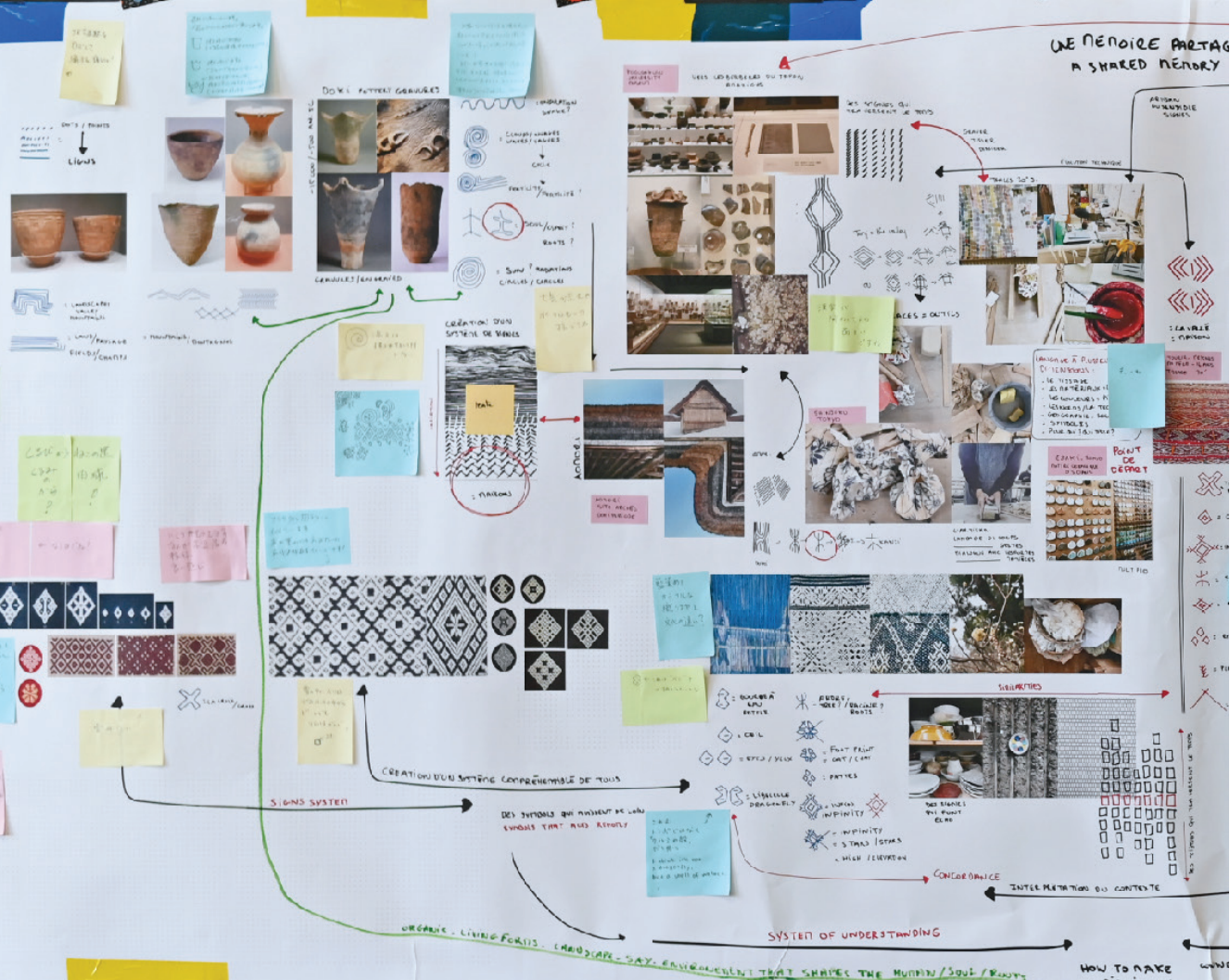
Answer: The unconsolated came into being at the meeting point of material and spiritual circumstances. The unconsolated remember the brilliance of previous movements of resistance and have studied their possibilities and the possibilities of imagining the world in different terms. The movement has ripened within the last few years

due to the circumstances of the global call for wealth redistribution, a call for the return of looted objects, human remains and manuscripts that have been displayed in museums. The crisis of the pandemic and the so-called pause (most communities of the unconsolated are front line workers who never paused), the indisputable reckoning of the crisis of the planet, technologies of communication via the internet and social media platforms as well as the ongoing process of opening of archives and making them accessible by digitizing them. The unconsolated are the global majority.

Written by a member of the unconsolated, O. Malka, in New York, Lenape land, in February 2022.

- * Referencing and borrowing from The Manifesto of the Communist Party by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Written Late 1847; First Published February 1848
- * I'm not sure the proletariat and the unconsolated exist in similar terms. Yes, I do think that the proletariat is always also the unconsolated, but the unconsolated is not solely the proletariat. If the proletariat is defined in relation to jobs, job loss or strikes, the unconsolated is not defined simply in relation to a job. The reasoning here for borrowing from Marx and Engels's Manifesto is that, I think, it holds a portal to imagine the possibilities of the movement of the unconsolated beyond nations and borders.
- * Marx was called the moor by his contemporaries. This was a racialized term which referred to his dark skin. I think of that from time to time.
- *In the english edition of the manifesto, it was written "A spectre is haunting Europe". I've shifted the word "spectre" to "ghost". I thought it was appropriate to think of the haunting entity as the ghosts of the unconsolated and also to reference a current term in english: ghosting.
- * I remember my sister walking me to the library after school on some days. I could only take two books at a time and I would struggle choosing them. My sister would be waiting outside with endless patience that could have only amounted to the fact that she possibly had acknowledged that my wandering about the shelves was an incurable state. Sometimes the librarian would let me have three books. It didn't help. My hell was elsewhere. I think I was planning.

WE NENOICE PARTAG A SHARED MEMORY



According to me, everything is born out of exchange; what we have in common is the exchange.
What I find very beautiful in the idea of the common ground is that there is none. The common space is a construct, where a common ground is a projected reality. However, when I further analyze this, I see that it is only the fruit of exchanges and the movement of ideas. What is common is what we share. The ground that is born from this sharing is only a result that we want to appropriate. It is reassuring to think of the common space as something that would be the same for everyone. But for me, it is more accurate to see it as a space of exchanges, because nothing can exist without exchange. There are only spaces in movement. This is how I perceive the reality of our world. A space where nothing is fixed, whose nature is in constant transformation. Identity and ground as fixed things is then obsolete. It is in the nature of the world to be in constant flux, but in the restricted space of our contemporary societies, we tend to forget this.

-Sara Ouhaddou

2018 - Exhibition AA, Atlas/Aomori,
L'appartement 22, Rabat Morocco / AIT Tokyo, Japan.
Process of creating the Atlas/Amori mind map after
travels through Morocco and Japan in 2018. Documents,
photographs, texts, drawings.

UNE MÉMOIRE PARTAGÉE A SHARED MEMORY

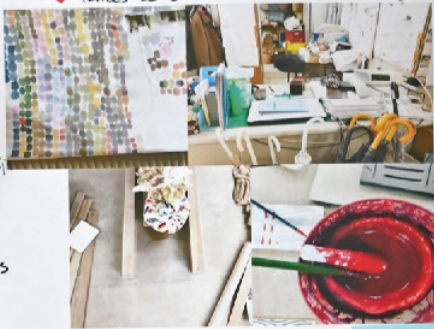
DES SIGNES QUI TRAVERSSENT LE TEMPS



GRAVER
TISSE
DRESSER

ÉVOLUTION TECHNIQUE

TRACES 20⁺3



ARTISAN
DU DERNIER
SIGNES

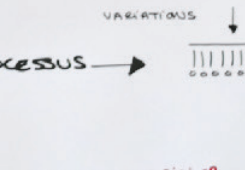
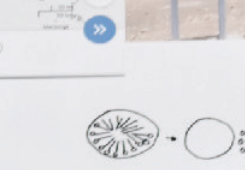
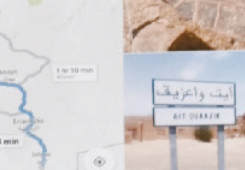
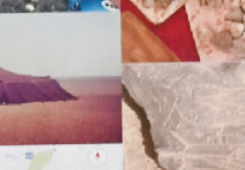


= LA VALLÉE
= MAISON

ATLAS



DE LA PIERRE AU TISSAGE
FROM THE STONE TO THE TEXTILE



LANGUE À PLUSIEURS
DIRECTIONS :

- LE TISSAGE
- LES MATÉRIAUX
- LES COULEURS
- LES SÉRIES / LA TECH
- GÉOGRAPHIE - SOUS
- SYMBOLES
- POUR QUI ? QUI TISSE ?

TOULOUA - DERNIERE
MAISON - 16 ANS
TISSEMENT 70'

EZAKI - TOKYO
NATURE CÉRAMIQUE
DE BOIS

POINT
DE DÉPART



MULTIPLIES

TATOUAGE
DE SA
MÈRE

= ŒIL

= SIN

= S

= GUIDE

= EMPREINTE / PATTES

= PLANTS

= TENTE

L'ARTISAN
LANGAGE DU CORPS
DIALOGUE AVEC
GESTES
USAGES
NATURELS



SIMILARITIES

DE LA
RACINE ?
ROOTS

FOOT PRINT
CAT / CHAT

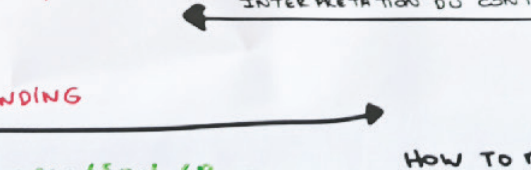
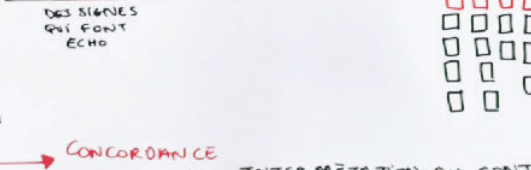
PATTES

INFINI
INFINITY

= INFINITY

= STARS / STARS

= HIGH / ELEVATION



CONCORDANCE

INTERPRÉTATION DU CONTEXTE

DES SIGNES QUI TRAVERSSENT LE TEMPS

OF UNDERSTANDING

IPES THE HUMAN / SOUL / ROOTS

HOW TO MAKE
A DISCUSSION

24

CONNECT / RECONNECT

- SINGULARITÉ
ET SIMILARITÉ - SINGULAR AND SIMILAR

INPRIMER LA CARTE

LA

Lila Nazemian (she/her) is an independent curator and the Special Projects Curator at ArteEast in New York. Recent curatorial projects include: A Few In Many Places in New York, Governors Island New York, (2021); I open my eyes and see myself under a tree laden with fruit that I cannot name, Center for Book Arts, New York (2020); On Echoes of Invisible Hearts: Image Making and Popular Archiving in Times of Unrest, Station Beirut, (2019); On Echoes of Invisible Hearts: Narratives of Yemeni Displacement, Poetry Project, Berlin (2018); and Spheres of Influence, Mohsen Gallery, Tehran (2016). She received a B.A. in History from Scripps College, California; and an M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from NYU, New York. She was a QAYYEM 2019 Curatorial Fellow, was among the inaugural participants of the 2019-2018 Interdisciplinary Art and Theory Program in New York, and participated in ICI's 2018 Curatorial Intensive in Bangkok.

Eleana Antonaki is a New York-based artist. She holds an MFA from Parsons, The New School, and has been a fellow at Ashkal Alwan HWP Program in Beirut and the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. She works with a variety of media such as drawing, sculpture, textile, and video. Her research revolves around matters of postcolonial and transnational feminism in relation to domestic cultural practices amongst women in the refugee communities in Greece. Recent exhibitions include We Are Happy To Serve You, Vera List Center, NY, HWP Open Studios, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, LB, Gardening, Mama Gallery, Toronto, CA, Agean, AAA3A Gallery, NY, Cultural Transplants, Shiva Gallery, NY, Lack of Location is My Location, Koenig and Clinton Gallery, NY, Whitney ISP Studio Exhibition, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, NY, I Can Because you Do, Participant Inc. She is the recipient of the BP Young Artist Award from the National Portrait Gallery of London and the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant for Painters.

Orlee Malka (she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist living in New York. Her conceptual and collaborative work considers the possibilities of art making within forms of collapse. In *fieldwork to the unconsolidated* (2018) Malka examines issues of the excavation practices and museum restitution. This ongoing project consists of objects, replicas, readings and experiments that are informed by practices of remembering and witnessing.

Recent projects include: *Legacy Trilogy: Future Edition*, ArteEast (2021); *At The Looting Hand of Imperialism - Still Lives and Museum Anxiety*, a lecture as part of a seminar at the Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability program at Columbia University (2019); and *no, not here*, Mom's gallery, New York (2019). Malka received her MFA from Columbia University in 2018, and was among the inaugural fellows of the 2019-2018 Interdisciplinary Art and Theory Program in New York. Malka is a professor at the School of the Arts, Columbia University.

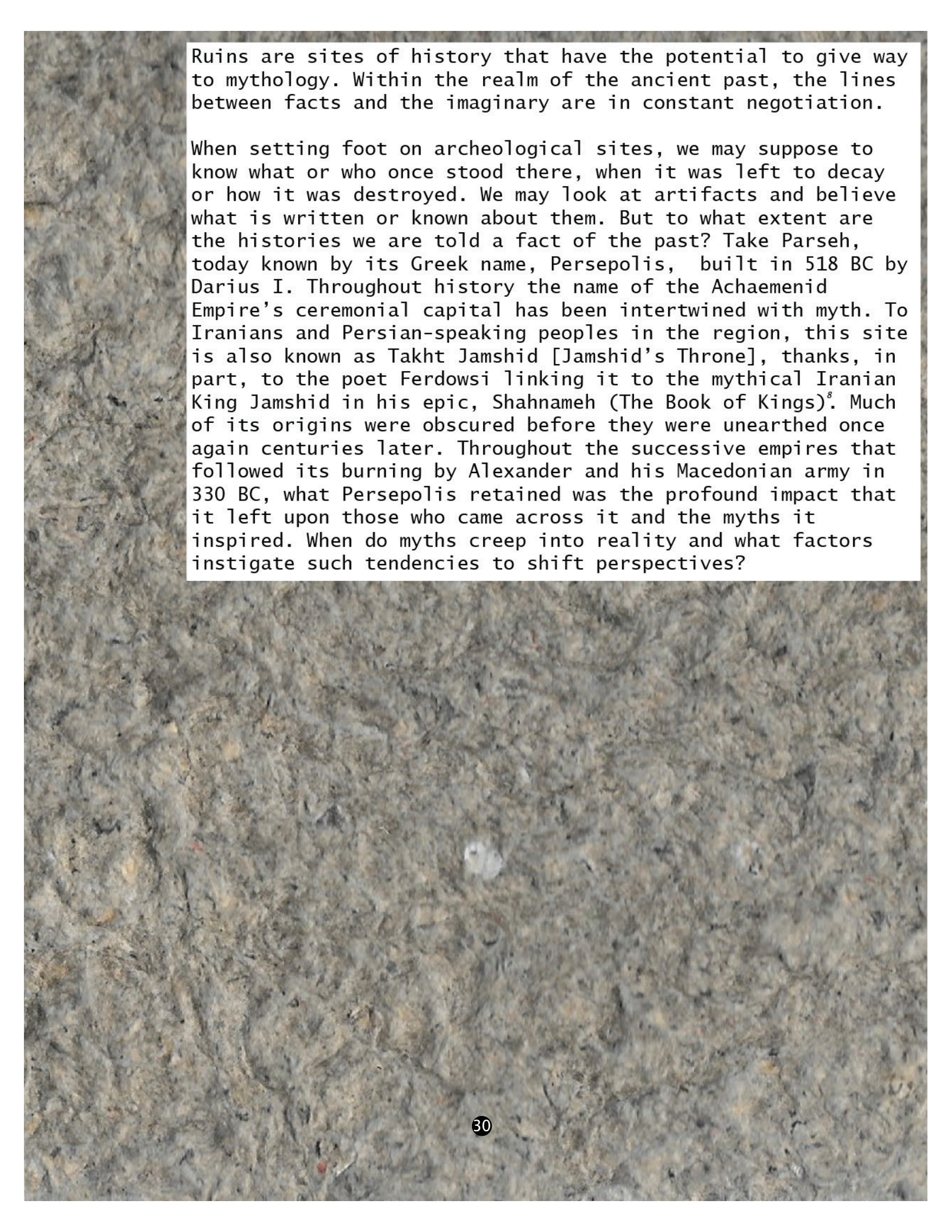
Sara Ouhaddou's practice is informed by the experience of growing up between different cultures. Her work addresses the various challenges facing artisan communities and investigates how art can be wielded as an instrument for economic, social, and cultural change. Ouhaddou often works together with craftsmen in Morocco, establishing a process of knowledge exchange. She confronts craftsmanship as well as her heritage with the codes of contemporary art in order to reveal the unknown and forgotten stories and realities of the communities she works with. The Arabic language is a significant theme in her work. She dissects the Arabic letters into abstract symbols, turning them into a language of its own, illegible to readers of Arabic but clearly reminiscent of Arabic. Just like the weavings in a Berber carpet can be deciphered, so do alphabets reveal the history of identities.



Lila Nazemian, Ruins from Alexandria Balcony, 2019 , 120 mm film







Ruins are sites of history that have the potential to give way to mythology. Within the realm of the ancient past, the lines between facts and the imaginary are in constant negotiation.

When setting foot on archeological sites, we may suppose to know what or who once stood there, when it was left to decay or how it was destroyed. We may look at artifacts and believe what is written or known about them. But to what extent are the histories we are told a fact of the past? Take Parseh, today known by its Greek name, Persepolis, built in 518 BC by Darius I. Throughout history the name of the Achaemenid Empire's ceremonial capital has been intertwined with myth. To Iranians and Persian-speaking peoples in the region, this site is also known as Takht Jamshid [Jamshid's Throne], thanks, in part, to the poet Ferdowsi linking it to the mythical Iranian King Jamshid in his epic, *Shahnameh* (The Book of Kings)⁸. Much of its origins were obscured before they were unearthed once again centuries later. Throughout the successive empires that followed its burning by Alexander and his Macedonian army in 330 BC, what Persepolis retained was the profound impact that it left upon those who came across it and the myths it inspired. When do myths creep into reality and what factors instigate such tendencies to shift perspectives?

