

October 7, 2019
Oslo

Dear you (OCA team),

A few days have passed since last time we saw each other; dear Nik, thank you for synchronizing your well-formed vertical laying for hours, so I could surf a tsunami of knowledge from the comfiness of my seat. Dear Katya, thank you, your heated words dried the coldness of the morning rainy-sheet that cuddled itself around my body that day. That coldness one feels when your hero becomes super and invades the other world, that filled with immutable silence. Dear Drew, thank you for walking the streets of Madrid with me. Man, I miss that! Perhaps we could go back someday to revisit the boisterous midnight sweat that inhabits the city—a roofless aroma when dawn arrives. Dear Liv, thanks for pausing your dual-steps -those of yours and your partner- for leaving a joke and a smile as a footprint of your fleeting trajectory.

I'd like to borrow Liv Bugge's meditative moment, I'd like to appeal now to your imagination. Close your eyes if it helps you imagine. We are standing in the heart of the Central Jungle of Peru (here the Asháninka people, Peruvian natives, lived undisturbed for over 3000 years until the first Spanish settlers arrived in the 19th century). We are on high and somehow sacred ground now, let's do a 360-degree turn, what we encounter next is nothing more than the greenest and primeval rainforest you've ever seen, and the most beautiful curvilinear watercourses. Remember Ayat's reference to a European Romantic painting (*Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*) from the 19th century that he used to talk about the aesthetic of the Sublime in the *Horizon*? Well, here I want to give/gift you a second one yet native to the other hemisphere, the southern one.

Four years ago, I was here by myself, on the summit of the mountain. Feeling tiny -like really tiny- thinking about a conversation I had with Atilio in this very same place years before, just about life. Atilio is a native Peruvian artist -he would feel uncomfortable if I were to call him an artist, he would refer to himself as an artisan, - and one of the best coffee pickers in the region. He then remembers the 80s, Atilio recalls "Sendero Luminoso (a terrorist organization) kidnapped, murdered, and recruited native people from the inner-jungle communities during a two-decade conflict against Peruvian armed forces that killed 69,000 Peruvians".

Thus, he tells me, coffee cultivation rates dropped drastically in the region, and he was left with no job. But things changed a few years ago for him. He became friend with a very peculiar little animal from the jungle, the coatí or "mishasho", a diurnal raccoon-like mammal native to South America. Curious enough, the coatí eats the coffee beans and expels them as excrement. Though the coatí can't digest the beans and expels them whole, their passage through the animal's digestive system creates a mellower, fruitier bean. Atilio's new friend produces, through a natural process, the world's most expensive organic coffee, it can sell for as much as US\$1,400 a kilo. Atilio then tells me "With this global crisis, the rich have become richer, millionaires. They don't know what to spend so much money on, so they have this coffee". He is aware, he knows that just because wealthy foreigners will pay good money to have a cup of this coffee over a *sobremesa* (an after-food time, a tradition in many countries, over the dinner table; time dedicated to chatting, socializing a bit more, digesting our food, nourishing our souls) does not make it a special coffee from a sensory perspective.

And while remembering this I can't help but think, perhaps we need to find our own coatí, a queer one—Miguel and Giuseppe would probably endorse, to eat and shit our pseudo-intellectualism, our fear of failure, forms of colonial exoticism, our bogus Modernistic claim, our capitalistic fetishes, and our commodified emotional self and attention. Helping us to decanonized the field of arts and beyond. A queer one, yes, as a radical-critical and uncensored representation of a version of our true self? Being yourself no matter what, a space where your feelings and thoughts are welcome, when being that

'odd' *You* makes the systems of power -always homogeneous and authoritative- crumble in the failure to exercise more of their social control over you. Perhaps the result of this is the unconditional giving of self, to yourself and to the Other, to the collective.

Instead of the coatí's organic coffee sold to the highest elitist bidder, let's then use the 'decanonized/decolonized coatí' and its naturally processed coffee beans as a metaphor: to rather produce the richest organic situations for people, to be harvest in community and the fruit enjoyed by everyone and anyone—situations and 'small gestures' (to break the scale down as farid would probably say) toward the cultivation of the self while spending more time having *sobremesas*. As the world revolves around us, having the Eurocenter aesthetics and hegemony narratives at its core, constantly performing a rigorous control over our senses and perception, notions aligned with Rolando's views should be highlighted more than ever. There is an almost untameable urgency 'out there'.

Thus, I ask you: Is this the time, is it here—when we need to start shifting the focus from aesthetics to esthesis? To work on the displacement of social conventions to open a space of possibility, more importantly, to create *Time* as a time to spend together, as an agonistic dispositive to counter the canon. But also, *Time* as on active care and re-actualizing efforts to infiltrate active and creative spaces for non-hierarchical relations and new alternative realities offered for collective inhabit?

Sending warm hugs,

Rodrigo

**Letter in response to OCA's (Office for Contemporary Art Norway) Imaginary Leaps into a Decanonized Future public programme.*