

UNFRIENDLY TAKEOVER

**Katrin Deufert + Thomas Plischke / Frankfurter Küche (Leipzig):
Directory 2 - Songs of love and war
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Despite the fact that the experienced is noted down after it has been experienced, now and then even quite some time after, it is often described as if it would happen right now, sometimes so dramatic, as if it appeared right in front of our eyes.

In the beginning of chaos Gaia brings forth Ouranos as her companion. He should be equal to her and cover her on every side. Out of this timeless touch Gaia gives birth first to the titans, then to the kyklopes. All her children are terribly wild and the father hides them from their mother.

This is why Kronos the youngest of the titans hates his father, and conspires with his mother to punish him for the withdrawal of the children. She shapes a sickle and Kronos, the only one who is bold enough, cuts off his father's genitals with the mother's sickle.

The genitals fall into the ocean. White foam spreads around them and out of the sparkling water steps Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The seasons welcome her and dress her in heavenly garments.

Hermes falls in love with Aphrodite but she is not willing to give her love away to anyone. Zeus pities desperate Hermes, the personal herald and messenger of the gods. Hermes, the one who brought languages and national borders to the humans after they had been living so long without towns and laws all speaking the same tongue. He, who is responsible for misunderstanding, and thus for humor and of course poetry, should be assisted. But how to bring them both together?

Songs of love and war.

Zeus sends an eagle who steals Aphrodite's sandal while she bathes. Desperately looking for the sandal she eventually finds Hermes.

But for one moment let us go back in time.

After Kronos cut the genitals from his father the running blood gave force to earth, who gave birth to the Erinyes, the Gigantes, the Nymphs. Time becomes the king of gods. Because of a prophecy that he will be overthrown by one of his sons he swallows all his children. But Rhea, one of the Titans, sister of Kronos, saves the youngest of them, Zeus. He grows up and leads a war against Kronos and the titans for 10 years, then throws all them into the pit of Tartaros.

Songs of love and war. Let us get back to love, now that the nymphs are there to seduce us.

A child is born of Hermes and Aphrodite. A son whose name is a combination of his parents' names, because his face equally shows his father and his mother. Hermaphrodite. What a soft word this is, like anatomy or like melancholy.

At the age of 15 he, for there could be no doubt about his sex, goes to the spring of Salmakis. The naias nymph Salmakis desperately falls in love with Hermaphrodite and she prays to the gods to be with him, forever. The gods take her prayer literally and thus both are merged into one body.

Songs of love and war.

Some say that these creatures of both sexes are monstrosities but others think they can predict the future. Sometimes for evil and sometimes for good.

Diane, looking at your pictures and writings I always think about our grandmothers who put up preserves for the winter. I never liked those marinated vegetables, because they didn't taste like the original anymore, they only produced a sour memory of what they once were.

I love your photograph of the identical twins from 1967.

Two girls are standing in front of a white wall maybe in the courtyard of their parents' house. They wear identical clothes: white knitted tights, black dresses with white collars and cuffs, white headbands on their dark hair. We can't see the girls' feet, the print's focus is on their faces and black dresses. The clothes give us a feeling of how it is to be identical but then in the expression of their faces a difference appears. One girl smiles with wide open eyes, the other hesitates, her eyes wait. Symmetrically in the picture their faces show the same asymmetry so the image becomes like a short film sequence with two single frames. A short film on basic emotions: happiness and unhappiness. Being loved or not being loved. Feeling pain or not. Being hungry or not. Being a girl or not. Either ... or A short film on binaries? No Diane, you make appear the difference of the smallest detail and thus you show us how afraid we are that it might disappear, that it might vanish in the identical.

Identical twins.

No difference at all, just another sex.

It has already been some time now that we share a life in work to become twins in our fiction. Instead of sharing the same DNA our plan was and still is to share the same protocol, to share a work in life. We wanted to bring all our memories and knit one fictional twin body to work and live in, simultaneously. How would you photograph us Diane?

We stood in front of our memories like they were glasses of our grandmothers' preserves. An enormous number of glasses, waiting to be opened during a long and harsh winter. When we opened them we discovered that some of them had gone bad: memories of hurt, desire, pardon, despair, promise, self conflict without solution. There is a sense of beauty in the disorder of what has gone mouldy. The mess of the mould resembles the chaos of melancholy. In our fiction it can even turn into a planet, a body, a plant. What was in the glasses are reminders of stories that make up our lives. They become dead objects in our private museum: show and tell our life as a genealogy of the dead.

"What's left after what one isn't is taken away is what one is."

You wrote these words Diane

12 years before I was born.

24 years before I was raped.

45 years before Marianne died.

42 years before I met Thomas.

14 years before I was born.

11 years before you committed suicide.

42 years before I met Katrin.

43 years before Klaus died.

51 years after my grandmother was born.

8 years before you photographed the identical twins.

46 years before we started this journey.

149 years after the invention of photography.

Where did our biographies go?

We had to let go, empty the glasses, like freeing ghosts or clouds. One can embrace neither ghosts nor clouds nor can one consume memories, but ...

Theatre may start at any moment! A lost place is filled with words like an urn is filled with ash. Is it the end of the world? A mistake? Wherever I am something is happening.

Could I knit better I'd knit myself my own place!

How identical can we allow ourselves to be with the places and characters of our past? I tell you memories and I receive yours. And how these memories have been placed in sequence will be made clear in remembering them, together.

The more you tell me the less I know.

Tell me, what do you know? Are we sitting in the same place together here in a situation that is limited in time and space? But what kind of place are we sharing? Is it possible to share places of memory? Is it possible to share places of fiction? Is it possible to share places of distant terror and thrill?

Place, where do you take place?

How could you escape the loss of identity that is added to all other sorts of terror in space and time. Nothing and no one can escape trial by space. Here we are, dear Place! Please, take me somewhere else. Show me something else.

When I look at something, what do I see? What do I think I see? I take a breath. Do I see myself or is it a memory, a fiction, a terror, a thrill? Do I have to see myself in what I think I saw. I am still breathing. I remember how to breath, I am alive and maybe out of breath.

What happened? Did something happen? Did I miss it? Do I have a memory of what I think it was? Is it physical, does it have a smell, can I touch it, is it talking to me? What is this sour taste? I remember it. Does it contain me? How can I tie it up and make it my own personal memory that belongs to myself and to nobody else? Once I have it, how can I get rid of it? I remember to remember to remember...

Memories contain a stutter to make appear what is hidden behind them.

Like here there is a different scene behind the scene. Something that is veiled and seemingly quite far away. How identical can movement seem to be without being identical? You see, being identical is not being the same. A discontinuity might appear, like a stutter of the view. Is it a break, a pause, an empty space? Listen to your memories. Do you hear them? Well, they certainly can't hear you. Holes that are held by other holes, never one down.

The image of knitting starts with something simple, a thread, and via movement it becomes something quite complicated. It loses its beginning and in the end it has no end.

How to knit, how to speak?

Write on our skin.

After being raped at the age of 12 my speaking was seriously disturbed. Maybe I should speak in this order of words: stutter and lisp when I tell you the story. I write it on our skin and I write it on your skin. So the words become tattoos that you take home, still going on.

I am speaking to you, alter ego. We get dressed and photograph ourselves. We share doing things, undoing things, not doing things and doing nothing.

The ivory needle sinks into the yarn.
I crochet things ... I digress ... nothing.

Could I knit better I'd knit myself my own biographical clothes!

I wear clothes and I know they are there to get me started. When they are worn out I have to go on living naked or I have to get myself new clothes. When they are too big I have to think of growing up or to try to get smaller ones or stay naked, needless to say. When they become too small, I have to get bigger ones or get used to the size I am wearing. When I am old I wear clothes and I know they will survive me. In my grave they stay on my skin, probably survive my skin so I won't be naked after death.

Could I knit better I'd knit my own death

Is this a suicide?
Are we in the picture? Do we disturb the image?

The image of knitting: it starts with something so simple, a thread, and via movement it becomes something quite complicated. It loses its beginning and in the end it has no end. Could I knit better, I'd make cloth myself. Not readymades that we simply sew together, I'd let the ivory needle sink into the yarn, disappear, stay for a moment then reappear. No time for the sublime, but holes, holes and still more holes. All holes down, never one up, each hole held by another hole. Go on, keep still, keep going, keep on going. Could I knit better, I'd knit myself a pair of white tights with no beginning and no end. I would never undress until my skin and the stitches would grow into each other. Hermaphrodite, what a soft word this is, like melancholy. I could never undress what I made for myself, because if we take off what we wear, we leave what we were.

What do you look at?

Look back. Stay still and go on. Go on looking back. So where are we now?

Are we in the picture? Do we disturb the image?

Thinking of my own biography I grasp it like a bunch of clothes.

Nobody without memories escapes into migration.

Nobody without clothes escapes into migration.

Nobody without stories escapes into migration.

No-body.

How can I knit myself my own private political body?

The body is a dangerous place. It is easy to think of it as something we have in common with others. And the utopia of common places can create a strong idea of what is uncommon. Dear Body, I tell you this, because I think of you as a cluster of stories. You are in movement, like the story lines cross, mix, appear and disappear. Anatomy is a story we invented, a story of fixed body parts, a picture of a body. We like to tell it as if it were a transporter of morals, truth, form, content and so on and so on. The picture of anatomy replaces a life lived in movement. And although differences might seem quite small: the mainstream stories that degrade any man and woman to standardized anatomy and standardized behavior are the stories we tell to our children. This is when we start to fear difference as something unusual. No-body consists of the same stories and this is why no-body walks the same way although we share the same fiction of anatomy every day.

So what should we call it? Maybe we don't want to call it at all. Anatomy what a soft word this is. It slips through my lips while I am writing it. An-a-to-my like mel-an-cho-ly. The syllables slide over my tongue. I am afraid to lose them while writing the words down. But let us think of something we share, of something we are able to communicate: confession - loss - small details.

What I am afraid to lose is what belongs to you.

Tell me, Place, what do you know? Are we sitting in the same place together here in a situation that is limited in time and space? But what kind of place are we sharing? Is it possible to share places of memories, of fictions, of distanced terrors and thrills? Place, where do you take place?

Is it the end of the world? A mistake? Over the centuries the spaces adapted to the desires of at least one of the spectators. Can you imagine what kind of desires these might have been?

Small details - confession - loss.

I remember my grandfathers hands being like paper as if he wore paper gloves. The fragile hands of an old body coming alive in talk of dance. My grandfather never saw me dancing. When we were in Venice to film for our performance "Inexhaustible" in 2003 I got news of my Grandfather's death. He died shortly after his 87th birthday just at the turn of the new year. We arrived from Venice for his funeral a few days later. He had already been cremated and the urn was standing on a pillar in front of a small chapel with some black ribbons. My

parents were there, my uncle, my sister and my niece, who at that time was about 5 years old. She looked at the urn and asked my parents where her great grand dad was, now that he was dead. My father pointed to the urn. She answered that his body couldn't fit into this urn. My parents told her she wouldn't understand. She started to cry, because she thought that from now on, her great granddad had to be at a very, very uncomfortable place, forever. I wanted to tell her that in this urn are all his stories, all those memories he liked to tell or keep to himself. These stories could easily fit in this urn, as if my granddad had whispered them into this vessel.

How to knit myself a difference?

Dear Body, you are in movement, like the story lines cross, mix, appear and disappear. Anatomy is a story we invented, a story of fixed body parts, a picture of a body. We like to tell it as a transporter of morals, truth, form, content. The picture of anatomy replaces a life lived in movement. No-body consists of the same stories and this is why no-body walks the same way although we share the same fiction of anatomy.

Small details - confession - loss.

When I was about five years old you sometimes went with me at a riverbank in the afternoon. There were many ducks and dogs and the dogs were hunting the ducks. I wanted to play with the ducks, but found out rather quickly that ducks don't like to play with kids. So I picked up some stones to be my ducks and carried them around. I made small caves for them and gave them grass to eat. I even took them home and made them a place to sleep. In my phantasy it wasn't that the animals turned into stone, but rather that the stones were the animals. They were my mute immobile playfellows. Almost always I played alone, because this game could only be shared with the stones. You were watching me quietly and after some hours we went home together. Through you spending time with me I got to know how to play in mute company, how to be for myself even if someone is watching and silently present for me. Even if I lost you once to suicide I will never miss this utopia of a presence that is not meaningful, that is simply there without a need of justification. I also remember sitting with you in our orange volks wagen bus together on the back seat. I asked you to tell me the story I wanted to hear over and over again. I called it the story of the rabbit. It was always the same story of a grey rabbit I would get as a birthday present. I never got the rabbit but the endless repetition of the story was calming.

There are situations in life where you sense a need for useless action. I had one of those with you, but we were not sharing the place. No more time sitting on the back seat, no more time going to the riverbank, together.

Can we knit our protocol in time?

When I was you, who were you then?

We have lain on your grounds many times, making pictures of ourselves, over and over again. We hoped to meet you, catch you at the edges of our pictures.

Are you still wearing the bridle dress you found at the seaside? Are you still planning to change your sex in your phantasy? Are you still singing sad songs on the borders of the motorway? Maybe one of these days someone will ask you to give the dress back to Europe, it was hers, you know the story. But she got lost. People search for her in vain. There are search messages on the radio all day. You are beautiful - he said. After all they forgot how she looked. But maybe she is with you and you've finally found your twin. You guard such a promise. You are the place that can keep a secret for time. We will never find Europe again. Maybe we are able to reknit her bridle dress.

Nobody without clothes escapes into migration.

Nobody without memories escapes into migration.

I knit myself a moment of change.

My memory of you is all about a very short moment. An instant that changed the passage of my life. In this memory you are seven years old and in the dressing room of our school. It's winter. You sit next to me. You undress and you are wearing a pair of white woolen tights. You did something uncommon by wearing tights and I felt a thrill, a desire maybe to do the same. I wanted to be like you at that moment and I wanted to dress you. Was it a mistake? This moment stayed in my mind. It kept coming back again and again like a ghost or a cloud. Now I am sitting at the end of the world thinking about this moment. Is it a mistake? What I felt in that room was my inability to be like you, was loss.

I never had the chance to tell you, because that winter we moved to another town.

You have stayed in my thoughts all these years. You were always sitting next to me wearing white tights. Rosemary Trockel said that living means knitting tights. I think this is what I have been doing ever since that winter. But I knitted a mess, every time.

Words are hollowed out stones and letters, empty catacombs. Strung together in an abecedarian way they form the history of our times. I am talking to you, I write to you. You are my other me that attracts my words even before they are thought. The myths have long since slept within the words. Caves are the shelters of their dreams. We are two: two faces within a body or two bodies within a face. The caves are expressions of our times, they shelve under our path. With every step a little story groans under our feet. If we fall we become part of their dreams, we hear their cries and whispers. We can listen to them. To hear something, even a softly whispered word is to know they are asleep, not suffocating within the stony walls.

In our memory a scene becomes alive. It is casual, seems rather a movement than an image. The scene is a picture of a scene. We are able to listen to it, to touch it, to smell it. The scene

is alive, a life that perceives movement without any promise of endurance or continuity. A casual scene, a movement, a life's inert disorder.

Me, am I the reversal of another space, another place, simply by not being placed in yet another image. We, this is me, and I invent myself because age is of no importance. The scene is casual, seems more a movement than a memory.

All our Fictions are secrets on secrets. The more they tell us the less we know.

All our fictions seem to be haunted by an inescapable boomerang. We are haunted by the ghosts or even by the dead. Listen to our archives that are covered by the dead. Do you hear them? They talk. They talk to us and we try to see them, their dead bodies. Dead like a stone. We can hear them making jokes like they used to do when we were still around. How different was live when the dead were still alive?