



# Parallel Reality

A Freaky Freaky Broadcast

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Independent Project (Degree Project), 60 higher education credits

Master of Fine Arts in Contemporary Performative Arts

Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg

Fourth Semester 2022

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## **Abstract**

My research was on how news is being presented to the public and the means of manipulation that are being used to patronise the public in the intended direction. The product was a performance based on a fictional news bulletin. Fake news but also true facts behind the words. Exaggeration was my main tool to convince. I had to present a distorted reality.

In this paper there's a summary of the research that I have developed during my master studies. An extended description of my work as an artist and how I used my practical experiences in order to construct an artistic performance that will awaken people's consciousness. Satire was my main tool for my research.

Key words:

Performance, shared opinion, theatre, news bulletin, reporters, dark clowns, satire, current affairs, grotesque, opposition, fake news, acting, humour.

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*"WHEN ONE IS WISE IT IS WISER TO LOOK FOOLISH" AESCHYLUS*

# Background

My main expectation from this master program was to try and produce something on my own with the guidance of people who are more experienced than me and most importantly were used to a different kind of society than mine. Gaining knowledge from other countries and especially from a country like Sweden, which is much different from my homeland Greece, is priceless and helped me a lot to open my mind and horizon. I also wanted to do this specific program because I was very curious about the meaning of the word "performance" and how much it differs from theatre. As an actress I always believed that all of the actions that happen on stage can be considered performative actions, but after taking the program I realised that the meaning of this word is wider. After all this knowledge that I gained I realised that a performative action could also take place everywhere. Like in a garden or even on the street in public as long as there's a statement and a need to communicate a topic, a story worth telling, an idea worth mentioning.

## My artistic practice

My bachelor studies were in acting at "Archi, Nelly Karra" drama school. There I was taught how to create a whole new character out of nothing receiving inspiration from nature. I was also trained in using poetic speech as a means to communicate my deeper thoughts and feelings without exposing myself. By this I mean I learned how to use poetic speech as a mask to communicate something personal without saying it straight. In this specific school the training is also focused in movement and physical theatre. I was trained a lot in contact improvisation, and that fact helped me improve my physicality as a performer.

Before Drama school I also used to work as a musician in several bands. I am a vocalist and a guitarist. My first steps in music were in alternative rock bands and there I used to play the electric guitar and sing. Lately in Athens I used to work in the field of folk-music and I am a member of a polyphonic band named "Terra Voce" which means the voice of the earth in Italian language. With this group we perform on various stages of Athens and also in festivals around the country during summers. Mainly we cover folk songs from all over the world.

In addition to my work as an actress at various theatres in Athens, I also work with my own company. The name of the company is Betelgeuse and this is a company established by three actors/directors. We are collaborating with a large group of artists but the main core is us three people. We started this group because we wanted to create productions in order to develop our own language, without being employees of someone. We wanted to be just ourselves and independent. We named the company Betelgeuse by the the tenth-brightest star in the night sky and, after Rigel, the second-brightest in the constellation of Orion. Betelgeuse is one of the largest stars visible to the naked eye.

In all of our works the main goal is to shake the public in a political way. For me art is a kind of social work, and sometimes it can become a weapon or a tool to resist and arrogate our rights. Art can also become an important means of raising our voice against grave injustice, human rights violation and the destruction of the environment. When the whole world is threatened by a virus and it is more of a political issue, I felt a need to speak through my art. When a black man is killed by a police officer I have a need to protest racism through my art. When thousands of people are being executed by society because of their sexuality I feel obligated to speak through a performance. And there are, of course, many other topics like the

disaster of the environment, immigration and impending wars and there will always be topics that will never cease to exist.

In my artistic practice with my company so far I have mostly worked on issues that have to do with injustice against human rights. We mostly work in the field of documentary theatre, the documentary theatre is mostly about observing society.

*“Documentary theatre is theatre that uses pre-existing documentary material (such as newspapers, government reports, interviews, journals, and correspondences) as source material for stories about real events and people, frequently without altering the text in performance. The genre typically includes or is referred to as verbatim theatre, investigative theatre, theatre of fact, theatre of witness, autobiographical theatre, and ethnodrama” Martin, Carol. Theatre of the Real. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013,*

Every time we have decided to work on a specific subject, we begin with a research and we care to be always respectful to other peoples stories and make them clear to the audience in an objective form. We interview people, it can be refugees, women that had been victims of domestic violence, homeless people and in general stories from people that have to be heard. Out there, there are stories from people that need to be heard and become highlighted in order to help injustice and violence become extinct.

# Introduction

I am using an **auto-ethnographic** first-person perspective to show clearly that this is not objective research. I developed the methodology by being present and performing the work crafted. I did the research on myself and combined it with a systematic reading and listening of news.

The underlying questions that led me to this project were mostly the following: "How much is each society manipulated by media?", "What means does media and journalists use to provoke what they want to provoke?", "How can these tools be used onstage, to reach the same result in a more aware way for the audience, using satire and humour of this very sad situation?"

The highlighted events that led me to this project was probably the Covid19 era that we live in. It was a really good occasion to observe the situation with journalism and society, because this is about a worldwide event that shocked the planet.

## The main topic the project

In this project I chose to collaborate with a colleague of mine with whom I work with from my first steps in the theatre field. During this research we tried to define the manipulation of journalism and take advantage of it, to use it as a tool to express our own concern about society, politics, and the way the public receives information from the media. The research that we followed had to do especially with current affairs in Greece, at first place, but then we felt the need to confirm that this situation is worldwide. We read news and watched shows from all over the world.



We downloaded applications on our phones from foreign newspapers in order to get informed about what is happening in the world. We searched online for related tv bulletins to observe the energy and the way it was presented. The conclusion shocked us. What we could read in 1 min and 43 sec in a simple article, was presented in a news bulletin for at least 4 minutes with lots of emotional pressure from the presenter. The journalist reminded us more of an actor than a reporter. After collecting all this information we were shocked about our own feelings, we were now the audience/ the one who receives information, and we observed the feeling that we got after this conclusion, we made ourselves part of the investigation. We got mad and angry and in the end depressed. So we ended up with a huge question in our minds that we had to answer after the performance "Is this feeling the reason why nobody tries to heal this world anymore?" And then another question popped out "Are we all in deep depression and we choose to believe anything we are being served in order to survive?". And then we had the idea of our main **sharp and ironic** question "Are we idiots?".

That's when we came up with the idea of working with a sharp satire. Every time we used to ask ourselves again and again the last question in order to get somewhere. Every time the answer was different and so was the explanation. We decided to include the question combined with our weird satire in the performance as an investigation. More specifically as a question to the public of course combining it with our opinion on how society votes. Who rules this world and how superficial we are.

## Different sides of the same coin

Another very strong element that we had to face on how the news is being presented was the opposition. By this we mean the different sides of the same topic. Most of the time it has to do with more of a political issue. We saw that the way each presenter chooses to spread information seems to have to do with the political beliefs that they carry or they benefit from.

In order to take advantage of this fact and use it in our work also to raise our beliefs we decided to make fun of the situation and create two new figures (characters) that approach things from opposite perspectives. These figures are coming from another fiction reality and they are symbolic. The first presenter has a dirty black mouth and represents the disaster of capitalism in our damaged world in a very cynical way. We named him *Dirtmouth*. According to *Dirtmouth* presenter everything works perfectly, the system is ideal, governments are like gods, it's all about money and so on. Of course in a very provocative and exaggerated way. The other presenter has black circles around his eyes and he is like a contemporary Tiresias\*, the ancient Greek fortune teller who was blind and double gendered. His name is *Panda* presenter, his appearance reminds us of a panda, and just like Tiresias and also all the people who try to be honest he talks only when it is necessary. Both of them are trying to gain the **TRUST** of the audience.

*\*"In Greek mythology, Tiresias (/taɪˈrɪːsiəs/; Ancient Greek: Τειρεσίας, romanized: Teiresías) was a blind prophet of Apollo in Thebes, famous for clairvoyance and for being transformed into a woman for seven years. He was the son of the shepherd Everes and the nymph Chariclo. Tiresias participated fully in seven*

*generations in Thebes, beginning as advisor to Cadmus himself. " Source*  
*Wikipedia*

Considering our origins and roots with a huge history in drama and ancient tragedies (origin country Greece), all that is given as a starting point in this research is that **we are all guilty and both innocent at the same time**. There is no right or wrong, and actually the darkness has its own rights, or just to be clear there might be reasons. In Greek dramas all of the characters are representing an "issue", that is the reason why we cannot consider any of these heroes as good or bad. Each hero has its own choices that lead the plot somewhere. It also depends on the writer how he will use each one of them and how he will excuse their existence. Everyone has a value, everyone is there to serve the plot. Also with the opposite dimensions, ancient writers use opposition to make things clearer and point out that every time we make a choice, there are effects in our future life. For example in Antigone, Sophocles uses Creon against Antigone to point out the revolution against the power of Authorities. These kinds of oppositions inspired me in my work. I wanted to work with opposite dimensions and so I did.

The perspectives and methods that we decided to work with had to do especially with the model of narration combined with satire. I was curious about working with the "parallel text". I might narrate a story but I mean something different, or I use one specific text to express a parallel story that I am not allowed to say. It is like dressing up a story with a costume in order to present it and pass my own message to the audience. That also common in Greek drama. Reading the story of an ancient tragedy like a superficial story and you will end up with a soap opera scenario. But ancient tragedies are not only stories, there is poetic and political speech inside their texts. The story-line exists only to serve a specific treaty every time. The

method of **the mask** is also something that is coming from Greek drama. We used masks for the presenters (symbolic make up) and also masks for the text. So nothing was straight but the energy and the way we decided to use while doing all the action was straight and heavy.

## My project

This project is important to me because that was the first time that I decided to focus on a worldwide level, presenting of course the situation in my country but now in relation to the rest of the world. There was a deep need in doing this because nowadays the world is going through a lot, and I feel obligated to act through my work. Also this project is important because it helped me a lot to combine all of my knowledge that has to do with ancient drama with my own creativity. Using my work to try to awake and shake people is one of the things that I can achieve through my practice as an artist. Protesting is not only getting out there raising your voice, it is also something that we have to see as a way of life and I love to include it in my work every time I feel it is needed according to the circumstances.

### *The following text is part of the performance*

*"A manifesto for survival"*

*We have to invent a new virus to survive*

*We have to be stupid in order to look clever*

*We have to invent a new death to live*

*We have to cause damage in order to create nonsense*

*We have to have a new haircut to let our hair grow again*

*We have to dance till faint to wake up healthy*

*We have to destroy our old house to build a new one*

*We have to prepare a new era where the people will live in freedom*

*We have to prepare new shoes that stands to run marathons*

*We have to make the impossible possible because it is urgent*

*NOW BECAUSE IT'S (more) URGENT (than ever)*

*we have to prepare a new ship that will be waterproof*

*We have to prepare a new floor where people will be able to fly, slip, walk, run*

*without injuries*

*We have to prepare a new building where the residents will live in solidarity*

*We have to prepare a new stage where harassment is not the only way to succeed*

*We have to prepare a new plane with mechanisms that is resistant to falling*

*It is our responsibility to future's generations to leave a fertile ground*

*It's our obligation to protect the innocence of every child and help them preserve it*

*till the end of his/her life*

*It's our obligation to embrace our own innocence and try to earn it back*

*We have to preserve our dignity if there's any of this left*

*We must fight against some people's sick minds, people that have power and money*

*and rules this world and they have provoked a mess*

*It is our duty to fight against pedophilia*

*It is our duty to fight against racism*

*It is our duty to damage all kinds of human exploitation*

*It is our duty to fight against homophobia and it's racism*

*We must fight against all that is unfair in this world*

*It's our obligation to heal this world*

*It's our responsibility to fix this damaged vehicle that has led society to the brink of*

*a bottomless pit*

*If we don't we better go to sleep until eternity*

*If we don't it is like we accept the loss of humanity*

*The loss of our identities as humans*  
*Do not believe everything you are being served*  
*Filter information*  
*Trust your instincts*  
*Make small unions*  
*Raise your voices*  
*Fight against what bothers you*  
*React*  
*React*  
*Eact*  
*Act*  
*Act"*

## Two artists that inspired me

I got the inspiration to work on this specific topic from a performance of my favourite Greek performer Lena Kitsopoulou. During this one performance, "**Tyrannosaurus Rex**", she used a lot of satire to convey her beliefs about the political situation in Greece and especially the way people here are interested in Theatre. Symbolism was the main mechanism that she used in this performance. She worked a lot with satire on how people are getting impressed by people who consider themselves as artists but they remain superficial. That is a common issue in Greece that concerns the artistic community. She made a point out of this that the audience tend to be more superficial in the way they admire art and performances. Her huge comment was the lack of education and how society is fed with nonsense. In this specific performance she used a huge dinner on stage where the dessert was

small plates filled with faeces (of course these weren't real faeces it was chocolate cake that they made it look like faeces). She also included a very small part of a news bulletin which was the point that made me focus on bulletins and the way the news are being presented. Lena Kitsopoulou also uses the element of blood in many of her performances.



Lena Kitsopoulou at the Performance Tyrannosaurus rex at National Theatre of Greece/ experimental stage  
Photo by © Carol Jaret

Lena Kitsopoulou is also an Artist here in Greece that people either love or hate. This opposition also made me very curious about her "haters". In drama school I learned that **"when you are strongly bothered by a piece of art then something in this work has elements of yourself that you haven't recognised yet as your own weaknesses"** (\*Dimitris Imellos, actor/teacher) . I can understand why people hate Kitsopoulou's work sometimes. She is exaggerating situations in order to point out her statements. Some people find her way violent, but that's exactly what this world is, violent and problematic.

I used some elements of her work, especially the symbolic way she has in her performances. And I tried to become as sarcastic and revolutionary as she is. I have to state that she is my main influence. The way she writes her texts about her performances and the way she expresses her beliefs. Actions on stage that are based in the art of symbolism are included in her work.

Another artist that influenced me throughout my process is my main acting teacher from the acting education, \*Dimitris Imellos. He is one of the most honoured Greek actors in my country and also a very experienced teacher. He taught us in school that when we go onstage we have to have a personal reason to perform. Something that deeply moves us to go onstage. He also gave me a lot of knowledge about ancient tragedies and working with parallel texts. His background is based in Russian culture and theatre so I have to admit that lots of our references in the way we approach the actual performance had to do with his previous guidance. Dimitris also is a teacher who gets inspired from his students and let them create on their own personal artistic identity. He also taught us a lot of morals on how to approach theatre and life at the same time.

***"In the theater there is not a spectator but an eyewitness" Dimitris Imellos.***

***"The unaccountable we must have it on stage, not in life. Do not confuse them, because then we will go up on stage and cut off our hands, we will commit suicide. Theatre is the art of imitation, not an act. Our work is directed to the imagination and the imagination has no limits - life has limits." Dimitris Imellos***



## Trust in the era of fake news

As I already mentioned this is about a master research based on news bulletins and the way journalists and several presenters choose to spread information to the audience. In several countries fear is the most useful weapon of broadcasters in order to manipulate their audience. That fact makes sense. It is so common to use these kinds of means of manipulation in order to lead society to a specific point.

Another factor that causes trust rarely can be humour. The more pleasant people start to feel the more reliable they are on what they receive. We just had to investigate how far we can get in that direction, and what kind of humour we are able to use. What we tried to investigate here is the results of being evocative. When we exaggerate things using symbols sometimes people may be offended but all we will try to do is to avoid this situation and try to be more revolutionary according to our beliefs. Also we tried hard to avoid didacticism.

### PANDA'S PRESENTER THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ON "TRUST"- Panda's interview

*Although the majority of the population in the world is being informed via reporters and Media (especially television news bulletins and internet sources) there's a huge difference on how people trust over the countries. That has to do with the way news is being conveyed. How clear is the information and not confusing, how close to the truth, and how fair it seems to be.*

*There are several ways to present a fact. In many countries reporters (mostly tv reporters) use the means of fear in order to manipulate the crowd. On one hand that has to do with the culture and the philosophy of each nation. For example in Greece people are suspicious and in their majority they worry all the time about not being deceived. Most of the time they don't even know from whom. This fact is not only inherent , it has to do mainly with the fact that this is a nation that suffered a lot from wars the last few years and the evolution of education and economy was disrupted. When a nation is under pressure and urgent needs it does make sense to be suspicious and that's also a product of lack of education. However sometimes the lack of trust in Greece is a paradoxically positive sign since people still resist and raise their voices when they feel threatened. But as I mentioned "sometimes" because mostly due to this lack this is about a country which is completely chaotic and unorganised and that mess also leads people to think and make decisions with the only criteria themselves and not the society as a whole. Sadly, in this direction they also vote. In the same logic they behaved also through the pandemic era. Tv and the media played a horrible role. Half channels accepted amounts of money from the government to go with their side and the other half took money from the oppositions of the government to convey information in a completely different way. Then chaos came and blew through Greece as it always happens. The results are very disappointing. People do not even trust science anymore, they remain unvaccinated and the percentage of 80% of unvaccinated citizens resulted in 8.000 a day cases of COVID 19 through November. However that does make sense, because*

*when vaccinations started in this country, reporters started conveying news from people who got vaccinated and then passed away or had some health issues and so on. They even started to evaluate the different types of vaccines like AstraZeneca's vaccine is dangerous and Pfizer's is reliable etc. When an uneducated nation receives all that information they get confused, angry, suspicious, they even become fanatic against the government and the fact that they try to force them "because maybe they want to reduce the population". So people in Greece trust the media unilaterally and they filter in a very suspicious way the information that they receive.*

*On the other hand, there are countries in Scandinavia that have faith in their media and their government too. They rely on what they are being served, which is sometimes great "sometimes" again. When there is blind trust everything seems to be completely safe and normal and the system of a society works like a well-tuned clock. But there's a huge BUT. Blind trust is also dangerous. When all information received is believed unfiltered then we tend to lose our critical sense. As mentioned before we live in a capitalistic world where the main principles are common to all of us. So in Sweden for example people trust the media so much that they just "go with the flow", however the welfare system is reducing its quality day by day and everything is directed to the private sector and people have no time to realise. It's becoming somehow "in secret" but in the end this is about an obvious secret.*

*Well the truth is always somewhere in the middle but sadly there is no country in this world where this "middle" becomes reality. More or less the same situation rules everywhere and it has to do with the political direction. Even if it is called more "socialistic" or "progressive" direction or even tends to the "conservative" and "right" side the main the basic mantle is Capitalism. All the referred directions (socialistic, progressive, conservative, right, left and so on) are just costumes that have to be worn in the system to fit Capitalism in each country according to the current needs, the philosophy, the culture and of course the level of education of each nation.*

*The theory above is something that I as a presenter cannot prove at the moment.*

*That has to do with my personal experience and opinion and beliefs and it also comes from my experience and observation through the procedure of my work as a journalist. I won't write more about the political situation because Dirtmouth will interrupt and that fact will drive me crazy. Thank you for reading.*

## Trust

"Trust" is a key word in this investigation. What is the meaning of this word and where can trust lead a whole nation according to its existence or its absence. What happens if there's a complete lack of trust in a specific society? What if all we have is lies? Even though this fake news is based on reality, it's quite scary when you have a distorted picture of current affairs.

What is investigated here is trust between oppositions. Obviously, in panda's analysis trust is a very complicated and sensitive issue that even when it exists we don't know which is the best way to handle it. So here all we had to do during constructing the performance was to make satire out of this issue. In that way it would be easier to realise, how paradoxical this existence of trust is or not and how it affects our minds even in a kind of funny way. Also all these facts mentioned above are so strong and serious and depressive as well that all we can do is to approach them in a silly and sarcastic way. "Trust my folly then since it is best for a man truly wise to be thought a fool" Prometheus Bound Aeschylus 479-424 BC.

The two presenters are a representation of completely different sides of the same coin but their goal is to gain trust. At the end of the day maybe the audience won't trust anybody or will like one of them or both of them.. who knows? This is also an experiment for us. It's a game, the game of trust.

However, our intention here is not to gain the trust of the audience on a realistic level. That would be unfeasible in any case when using exaggeration. The goal is to gain politically the trust of the audience no matter who is watching. The main focus of this work is to try to awaken consciousness and give some food for thought avoiding didacticism.

**The following text is part of the performance**

Blaming Manifesto

Hi there.

There is no need to worry

Everything is under control

The earth belongs to humans

We rule this world

There is no need to worry

Everything is under control

We work hard for this planet

We work hard to help the planet escape from the misery

There is no need to worry

Everything is going to be alright

Don't let bad thoughts consume your energy

There is no need to worry.

Oh have I told you?

There is a plan.

The plan is here

The plan is huge

The plan is major

The plan is intelligent

We must be prepared for the better days that are coming

The best is yet to come

The planet is ours

The sky is ours

The ground is ours

Open your eyes

We are everywhere

*And we need to continue exist  
Yes we need to feed ourselves  
Feed ourselves with plastic food  
Until we become plastic  
And fake  
And superficial  
There is a plan  
The plan is major  
We must exist only to post photos  
And inform the others about our perfect life  
We have to sacrifice ourselves  
We don't deserve love  
Love is for idiots  
Love is weakness  
Hate  
There is plan  
The plan is major  
Don't accept other citizens to your country  
Your country is only yours  
Hate and violence  
There is a plan*

*The plan is intelligent  
So lets pollute the seas with human skin  
Never show mercy, mercy is for the weak.  
Be careless about your neighbour  
They don't deserve your precious help.*



*"The plan is intelligent, Are  
We Idiots?"* 23 (49)

*There is a plan  
The plan is awesome  
Careless. Just scroll down your own screen.  
Social media is today's truth  
Hate and violence*

*There is a plan  
The plan works perfect  
There is no other way to survive  
We must exist only look beautiful and become more plastic every F\*\*\* day  
We must use plastic in our life as a way of life  
As a lifestyle  
And then through plastic at the sea  
Yes at the sea, even literally through plastic waste at the sea  
And smoke, smoke, smoke  
Smoking also it makes you even smarter  
Smoking take all the thoughts away, you don't have to raise your voice there is no injustice*

*There is a plan  
The plan is here to stay  
Smoking is effective for the atmosphere  
Smoking helps children to grow up faster*

*Lets build Giants  
Lets built Factories everywhere*

*Do cocaine  
Cocaine keeps you in shape  
And its good for the economy*

*There is a plan  
The plan is intelligent*



*And always remember YOU DON'T NEED MONEY*

*SPEND YOUR MONEY AWAY*

*You won't take it with you at your grave either way.. haha*

*Lets through our waste on the ground and build a huge bridge out of them that will allow us  
move*

*from one planet to the other*

*We own all the planets of the universe*

*Human is the best existence*

*Human is the champion*

*Human is oh is the top of the top*

*Human created a plan*

*Human's plan is brilliant*

*Victory is a humanistic invention*

*We are born to win*

*The plan leads to the win.*

## **My Practice and the Performance**

This is a performance based on a fictional news bulletin. Fake news was the main topic, but each one of them has their roots in reality. The right way to present the situation that is going to happen, using a phrase is "distorted reality". Manifesto texts linked to chorus words of ancient tragedies that are of great concern to the current world situation will also be included. The presenters of this strange reality will be two symbols-characters. These two creatures have two special features: "different point of view to the same topics". They are like different sides of the same coin.

So these two symbols/performers will be in constant conflict or what? The truth is that we can never know how things will evolve as these two creatures happen to stand next to each other and share the same stage. Each one of them has its own truth, rights, beliefs and of course who are we to judge or blame them.

This is a 45' performance that is the dialogue between two diametrically opposed forces. Between two worlds two people symbolically confront their views on life, defending their beliefs or at least what they think they believe according to their interests. On this journey they are accompanied by texts of messengers of Antigone by Sophocles. Texts that are more relevant than ever that could well be used even in the news bulletins of a perverted reality.

“Man invented speech and logic  
By making laws he is creating rage  
Rage, law, society  
Society, law, rage  
Humans can avoid frost and storms  
Humans are always prepared for danger  
Man can cure diseases  
But is never prepared for death”  
Many causes create awe but human's awe is death  
Man is wise  
Sometimes tends to be good sometimes tends to be bad  
Humans just have a tendency” **Sophocles, Antigone 1st Stasimo**

"I gave them hope and so they turned away their eyes from death" **Aeschylus  
Prometheus Bound**

"Trust my folly then since it is best for a man truly wise to be thought a  
fool" **Aeschylus Prometheus Bound**

"When one is wise, it is wiser to look foolish." **Aeschylus Prometheus Bound**

These two figures unravel the thread of current affairs. They refer to the present using texts from the past, touching on sensitive issues, such as the issue of the pandemic and the marks it leaves on human lives. Issues such as "black lives matter", racial racism, gender-based violence, domestic violence, environmental destruction and so on.

The texts are fake news based on real current affairs. But distorted and pulled to the edge. Just to investigate what humour and surrealism could bring to the surface. Also, when it comes to current affairs the main topics that will be presented will be specific real and dark (covid 19, migration related to racism, gender violation also related to racism and violence against women, environmental issues) so they have to be distorted when presented because the goal of this research is not to cause depression to the receiver but awareness (without didacticism). Humor is a tool in this situation and maybe sometimes it could also be cheap humour as long as it's not offensive to the audience.

One character is trying to advocate things and the other the sewers. They make their arguments, however, as long as they take care to make their intentions clear.

Why did I choose this side? Why am I narrating from this side? Who do I serve? Everything I do I do it for myself or what. Manipulation is also of course the goal. Who will attract more people? Which of the two will gain the trust of the public.

A stage, two chairs and maybe general lighting. A video projection will likely display more characters (the same symbol for everyone). There will nevertheless be a differentiation in the characters. Those who pursue political interests will have their mouths painted black. Those who defend (according to their opinion) justice will have big dark circles around their eyes.

All these figures compose a large dark figure, the figure of today's reality. A reality that sails in time and who knows where it will end up and if its victims are at the same time perpetrators.

### ***The following text is part of the performance***

#### *"The liars Manifesto"*

*I lie when I say that the world is in peace and safety*

*I lie when I look into this camera and I'm forced to smile*

*I lie when I'm obligated to transmit hope, perverted facts*

*I lie but i do that for you*

*I lie but you love me*

*You have to*

*You must love me*

*Your master loves me*

*I lie because i have to survive*

*I lie because I need to be loved*

*I lie because I'm a professional liar*

*I'm a liar who's favorite action is to transmit true facts*

*Truth is not something that we recognize as a good thing from our nature*

*Truth is what has made people come to wars and wars through the ages*

*Do you really want me to be objective?*

*Come on. Sophocles in Antigone once wrote "nobody loves a messenger of bad news"*

*I lie BECAUSE I NEED TO FEEL LOVED*

*I need to fill my pockets*

*To fill my mouth*

*To fill My stomach*

*To fill the blank page*

*To fill the blank mind*

*To fill the blank heart*

*To fill the loneliness*

*To fill the empty space around you and your own misery*

*Imagine a world without me and people like me*

*Now can you really see the picture?*

*WHAT DO YOU SEE*

*AREN'T YOU BORRED ENOUGH*

*Isn't your world empty?*

*Please be polite*

*Please be nice*

*You do not have any idea where I come from*

*Under what conditions I have been raised in*

*People's favorite game and main occupation is ACTUALLY to judge*

*WELL that's why i lie*

*I lie because I do not want to be judged by you*

*I lie because you have to hear what you want hear*

*I lie because you have to hear what they want you to hear*

*And what they want you to hear is what you want to you hear*

*BECAUSE YOU VOTED FOR THEM*

*So shut up and hear my lies*

*AND always remember*

*"Truth is always written by the winners"*

*"History is always written by the winners"*

*THEN..How can truth or history be objective??*

*I advise you to LIE.-"*

## **My Research Method**

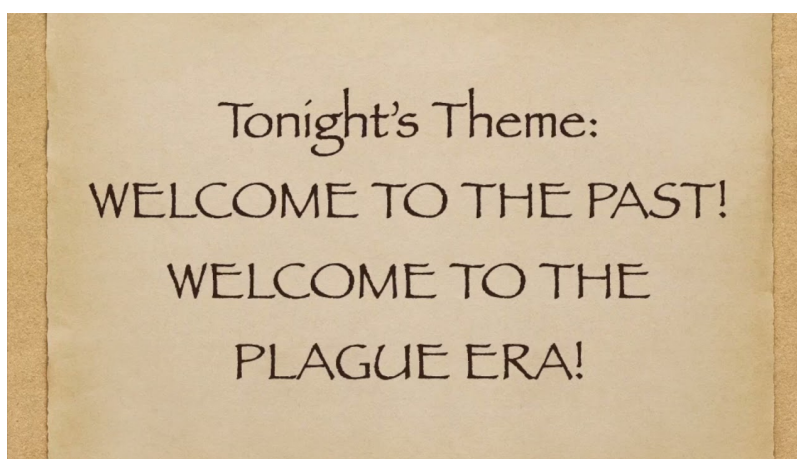
### Step1 Observation

Firstly I had to face reality a bit , without letting social media and internet sources interfere at my work. So I did an experiment, I got disconnected from social media. I deactivated Facebook and Instagram for 6 months just to not get influenced by other People political opinions. I just wanted to avoid any kind of propaganda in order to be able to create mine later on. And I did what we used to do back in the 90's. I was getting informed from the national television, and from newspapers that made me realise a lot about news bulletins, since till then I hadn't watched news on tv since I finished high school. Later on I felt somehow disconnected from my generation. So I decided to download broadcast applications on my phone to read articles. The applications were from different countries of the world. I got the BBC's app and the FRANCE24 news and the NEW YORK TIMES app. I also got a Greek app called NAFTEMPORIKI. And after a while I also downloaded twitter and got a profile there to investigate how people react to news , what the majority of the population tends to believe and how they judge current affairs. The most interesting part to me was the opposite beliefs and the fanaticism.

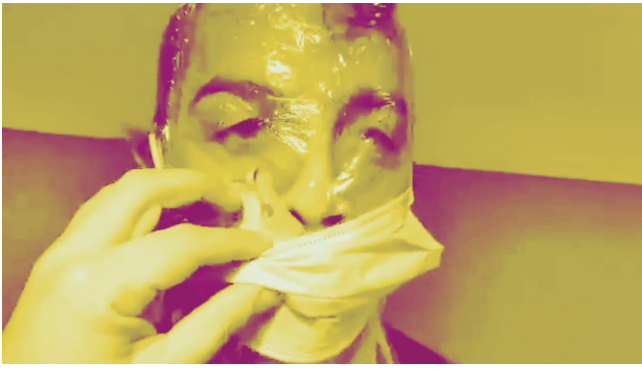
## Step 2 VideoSummaries

Through the first years of my studies I could barely have a physical presence in the studying procedure, because of the situation with the pandemic. And so the school adapted to the new circumstances. Everything became digital. Our meetings with supervisors, the workshops, the exams we had to take. This was tough enough but it opened a new window to our lives. The field of the digital world and how we can combine it and include it into performing arts. So I worked a lot with my abilities of composing music and making videos. The product of this work was two videos that worked like a guide for the rest of the project. These videos were the material of the first's and the second's semester's examinations (December 2020 and May 2021). The videos led me to understand that my own direction of working is moving from ridiculous to strictly serious situations in an activistic way.

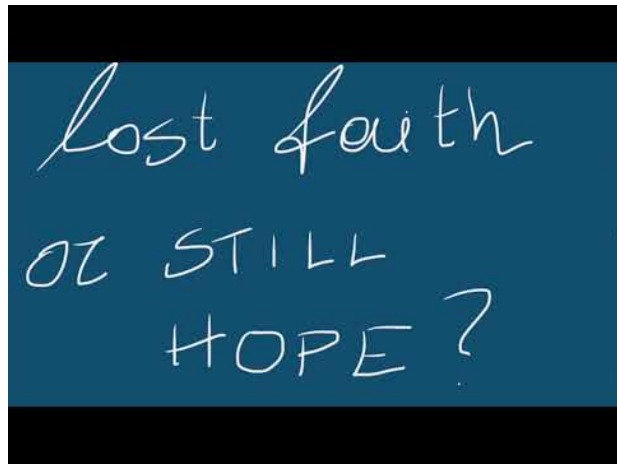
At this point I decided to work a lot with a sound environment and I used a childish element. I strongly believe that only children are pure and unaffected from the wretchedness that is surrounding this world. So I used a lot of children's voices in most of my videos. This also somehow creates an evoking emotion.



[Youtube link: The unfortunately too late show/ Covid interview](#)



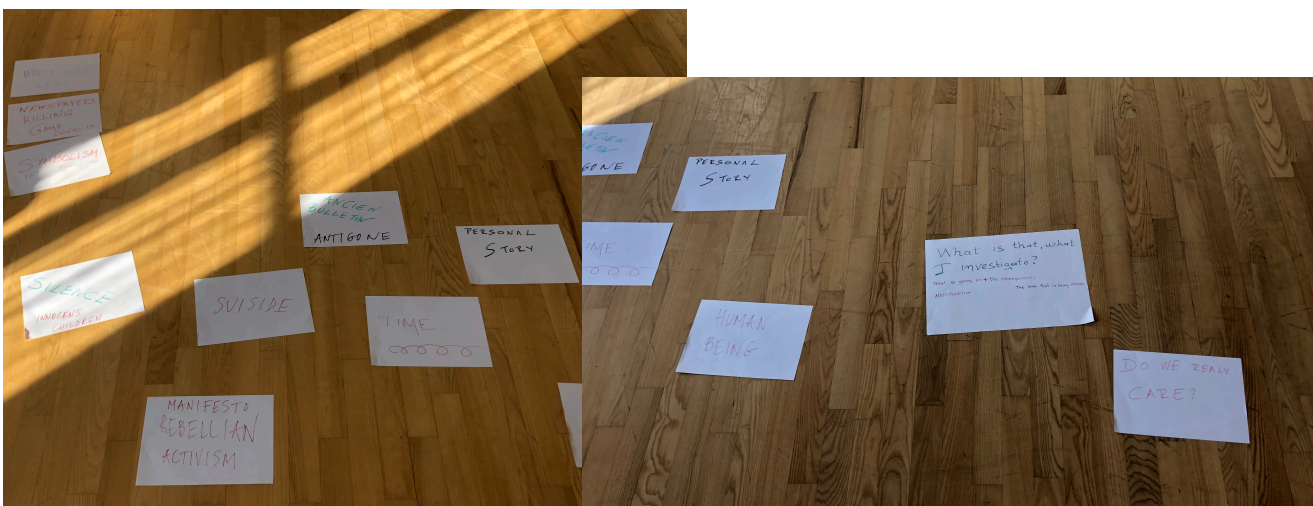
1st semester tryout December 2020



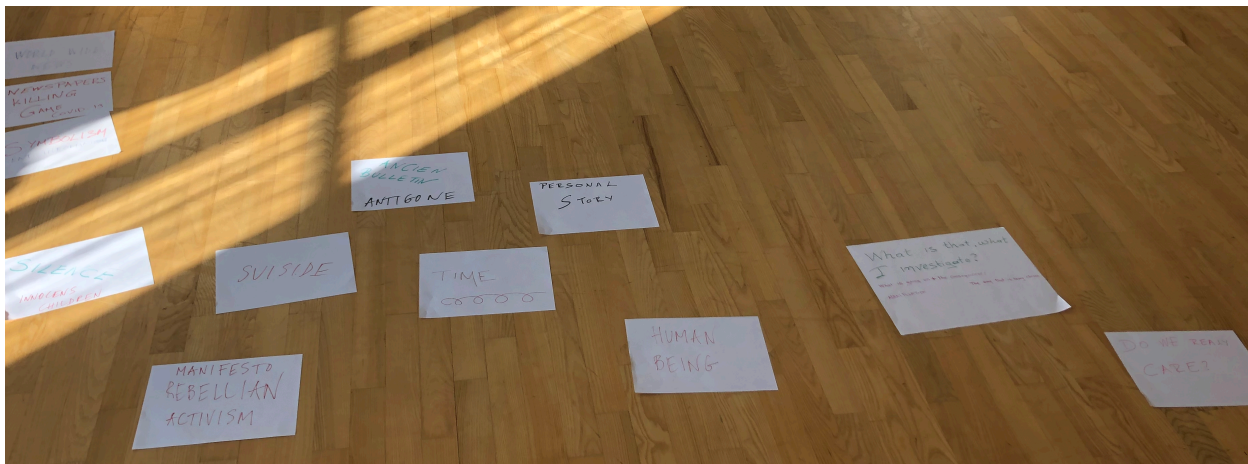
Youtube link: [sound environment, manifesto for survival/ Eirini Konstantinou](#)

### Step 3 Mapping

During this work I had to discuss a lot with my supervisor about my thoughts. This process was very fruitful because I had to analyse my thoughts and me and my supervisor, Anne Södergren, made a map with all the facts that I wanted to include. At this point it is very important to highlight that of course we had some very creative conversations via zoom meeting as I was in Athens, but the main work and analysis became clear when we started working in a real room at the school in Gothenburg. Then we had to decide **a way** a starting point and an ending point, keeping in mind the route in the meanwhile. After the mapping, I had a lot of new thoughts in my mind. There was a question about my personal story that stressed me and I realised that it stresses me because I have to explain to myself why I want to proceed with this topic and where I am in this performance.







The mapping during the procedure/ MAY 2021

Working with my Co-Supervisor, Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, was also very fruitful as Ami gave me important feedback in my videos and her suggestions and ideas led me to discover how to combine art and activism. She also opened a whole new world to me when she talked about **\*\*\*"Artivism"** and she sent me some priceless documentation to investigate.

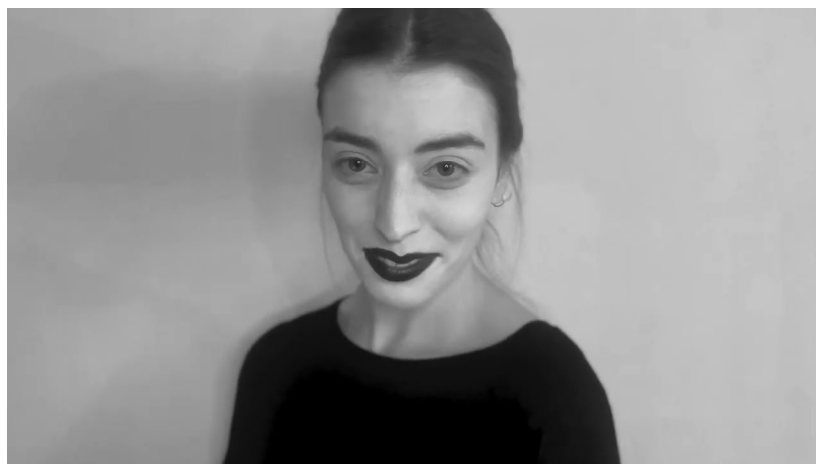
**\*\*\*"Artivism is a word combining art and activism.**

**Artivism takes roots, or branches, off of a 1997 gathering between Chicano artists from East Los Angeles and the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico. The words "Artist" and "Artivism" were popularised through a variety of events, actions and artworks via artists and musicians such as Quetzal, Ozomatli, and Mujeres de Maiz, among other East Los Angeles artists, and at spaces such as Self Help Graphics & Art." Jeanmarie Simpson -- Artist in the Modern Landscape (Part 1), Dylan Brody, The Huffington Post, 2011.10.03**

**\*\*\*"Artivism developed in recent years as antiwar and anti-globalization protests emerged and proliferated. In many cases activists attempt to push political agendas by the means of art, but a focus on raising social, environmental, and technical awareness is also common. Besides using traditional mediums like film and music to raise awareness or push for change, an artist can also be involved in culture jamming, subvertising, street art, spoken word, protesting, and activism." Politics, Power and Passion, The New York Times, December 2, 2011. Please see the fifth segment by Eve Ensler.**

#### Step 4 Improvising

The final step of my work was the creative part. After a lot of workshops that I had experienced during these two years I made it to compose material that had to do almost with the technical part of the performance (sound environment, video projections, manifesto texts and so on). This material was the source of inspiration for organising the scenes with my partner Ioli Charalampopoulou. Also this material was a product of consistent subtle improvisation. I tried different things when composing sound, children's voices in Greek language and then in English, I also improvised with my speech and voice and I also included some instruments. Then I tried various things with videos. Things that me and Ioli had to discuss a lot, why are we doing this now? What do we want to say?, is this reality or we want to make it look like a fictional reality? We decided to include some video shortage in the performance as small reportages as it happens in real news bulletins. Of course the way we shot these videos was also paradoxical but based somehow in reality.



"Liar's Manifesto/ DirtMouth and Panda presenter" Video of the performance

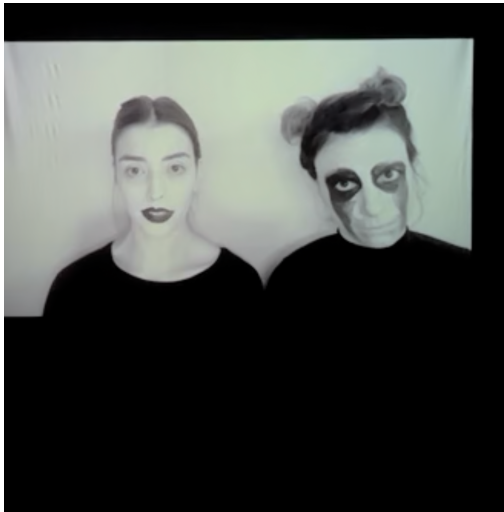
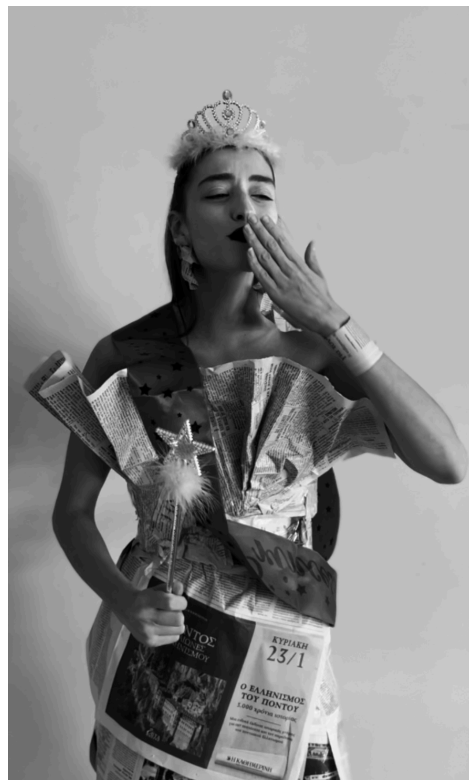


Image from the performance/  
projector's screen.



"Are we Idiots?" Video shortage of the performance (political  
statement)



"Misinformation getting rewarded"  
beginning of the performance

When we stabilised the technical part, we decided on the bulletins. We chose some news that we were willing to communicate with the audience and we decided to work with parallel texts. The criteria that we used while choosing the news were mostly the present situation and actually the topics that affect most of the world in a social, political and humanistic background. These topics were mostly the frustration that journalism causes over health issues (e.g. vaccination against COVID 19), domestic violence and harassment against women, the disaster of environment and immigration. We chose some true facts and we transmitted them a bit to fake news which weren't that fake finally, but we presented them with different costumes in order to approach the situation with humour while raising our voices against the unfair and the paradoxical way on how news is being presented.

## Performance

The result of this investigation, observing, collecting, composing, video shooting was the performance "Parallel Reality". Below you will find a clear description of the performance with all the video links.

A table/desk, two chairs. In the back a projection screen.

The two performers, Panda and Dirtmouth enter the stage and sit.

**Opening track : repeatedly chorus lines from Aeschylus/ sound environment**

The performers paint their faces on stage, they finish by the end of the opening track.

Panda and Dirtmouth (together): "When one is wise it is wiser to look foolish. When one is

wise it is wiser to look foolish. It is wiser to look foolish. It is wiser to look foolish." (Aeschylus)

- Misinformation [video](#)

## YESTERDAY NEWS FIRST BULLETIN

Dirtmouth: Good evening everyone!

Panda: Welcome to yesterday's news.

D: A new product has become a huge success. The scientific community swears by it and

strongly believes it is miraculous. Of course we are talking about the latest shampoo by the

well trusted company AbraKadabra.

P: It is worth mentioning that there have been a few cases that cause for concern.

D: This has to do with rare individual cases. In general and according to the World Health

Organisation this shampoo strengthens the immune system in these dark times we live in.

P: Yes, but the cases that concern the scientific community seem to be connected to people

under the age of forty and especially young women who might present fertility issues.

D: This specific product of AbraKadabra is not designed for this age group. For this age

group the best product is the new extra progressive recipe of the Fighter shampoo. For the

development of their shampoo, Fighter has used the MRna technic, which enhances the

immune system just 15 days after the first wash.

P: Of course there have been several side effects, also in Fighter's shampoo, which is undoubtedly progressive. We have to share this information with the public before consumers start to use the product.

D: The lice pandemic of our time is not related to those products, if this is what you are talking about. It is purely a coincidence.

P: Anyways, the use of these shampoos and several other related products tend to become obligatory for everyone, while all citizens over the age of 60 are obligated to use the AbraKadabra shampoo. The shampooation certificate will be a pair of fluffy ears.

D: Those who won't comply and won't have fluffy ears will pay a fine of 1000\$ and the only thing they will be allowed to do is go to work.

P: In order to pay their fine.

D: Whoever does not use the shampoos will be considered repulsive, dangerous and will be excluded from any activity. So get yours as soon as possible! Those were yesterday's news.

Next on, "The late late unfortunately too late show", of course presented by me.

P: Tonight, a special guest!

D: Don't miss it!

- [Video](#) – "The late late late unfortunately too late show"

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS SECOND BULLETIN

P: Welcome to another totally accurate and honest news broadcast, presented by Panda...

D: And your favourite, Dirtmouth!

P: Today we start our broadcast with quite shocking news that have shaken the public.

D: The prime minister's wife went to her regular appointment at the hairdressers', but at the end of the day the color was not the right one. ("Really awful") Burned hair everywhere, scattered around the salon. The hairdresser was screaming, the assistant was screaming, the first lady was in shock. The second assistant hairdresser passed out. Unfortunately, the only solution to this tragedy is a conservative buzz cut.

(Panda interrupts)

P: Of course we have to inform you with this tragic hair incident. But firstly, we must share something even more tragic. Yestreday night...

D: The prime minister while exiting the parliament stepped on a massive poo. The unknown producer of the feces is wanted, and they might face a sentence of up to 5 years in prison

without parole. The main suspect is said to be a black cat, that she was seen from the security cameras, passing by a few minutes

earlier. The prime minister tried to fight the poo off his shoe but he didn't make it.

After

that, he had to throw the shoe away. [The picture of the cat goes away and we go back to

"yesterday's news" logo on the projection screen.]

P: Last night, at a high-class Italian restaurant...

D: The world's largest calzone was made and it is fairly claiming a Guinness world record. But

why is this a tragic event?

P: Last night, at another high-class Italian restaurant a man made a young woman eat a

pepperone pizza against her will. The attacker, an offspring of a wealthy and famous family,

firstly gave her a soft drink, which he brought with him..

D: What a gentleman...

P: After, he fed the woman, who couldn't understand if she was having any food.

D: What was she doing in an Italian restaurant since she didn't want to have pizza?

P: Later, when she gave her testimony to the police, she said that she had informed the

attacker that she did not want to have pepperone pizza and she was at the place just to

hang out.

D: But, did she look hungry? Because some women are a bit provocative you know.

P: When someone says no, then it's a no. She said that she didn't want to eat and he forced

her.



D: It is clearly seen on the security camera footage that the woman is looking at the menu,  
at the pizza section of the menu... So, it is a common misunderstanding. Moving on to the first lady's final decision for her haircut. Yes, we have information that she did get the buzz cut. Remember you first watched it on our broadcast. This was "yestreday's news". Have a lovely evening.

P: Breaking news! We asked the public a very important question!

D: AREN'T YOU DEAD ENOUGH?

- [Video](#) important question to the public "Are we idiots?"

### **YESTERDAY'S NEWS THIRD BULLETIN**

Panda: The whole universe experiences devastating moments. Severe good weather wave has struck our planet causing panic and paralyzing the state mechanism. The national roads are blocked, drivers are out of control, they are blaming the government.

The sun is shining so hard that is melting the asphalt, the cars are sinking into the ground like they are on quicksand. People hypnotised by the extremely hot atmosphere are running around the streets, diving in the fountains. They are buying each other ice-creams.

The picture at the beaches is reminding us of a sold out Baby Haha concert. People are

getting stomped on while claiming a spot in the sea.

The prime minister terrified is apologising for not being effective enough. He offers every

citizen, victim of the heat, a compensation of 1\$. The fire department is throwing water to

citizens in order to make them stay away from the sea. The sea is starting to boil.

Downtown, the police shot to death a 15 year old boy because he was eating banana ice

cream. All I am asking you, where is the government now? He was only 15.

Dirtmouth: So sad.[ D claps hands and a picture with Pandas family appears on the projection screen.] Here is a picture of Panda's family.



Panda: But what can the government do? Congratulations to the police, they might have

thought the boy was a dangerous T-Rex threatening pedestrians.

Dirtmouth: Panda and his siblings are an endangered species which might become extinct.

Ohh the climate change, so sad. [The picture of Panda's family goes away.]

Panda: So sad. Our society is going through a tragic time. While [Refugees picture]many

foreigners are trying to cross our borders carrying the hope that they will experience the

greatest hot weather of all times on this holy ground. The citizens at the coasts are kicking

them out and shout to them inappropriate words...(goes on improvise)

.[ D claps hands and a picture with Pandas family appears again on the projection screen.]

Dirtmouth: I think that they are doing that to save them. Not everyone can bare the extremely good weather. Imagine if they got lost or burned in the sea? So sad.

Panda: So sad. Refugees are enjoying a swim in our lovely sea. I have information that the

minister of environment is going to speak to the public.

Minister of environment:

### **BLAMING MANIFESTO**

- [Video](#) " I lie" ( When the video is finished, in the screen appearing words from chorus of Antigone Sophocles about human.)

- ["Manifesto"](#) track

They start eating RED spaghetti out of bowls that are shaped in human heads (like eating brains) and when the track finishes the lights go off (black-out).

END OF THE PERFORMANCE

# Conclusion

After all this procedure and considering that this performance was a product of two years of studying the conclusion is still under analysis. As mentioned at the performance's statement it's still a work in progress. So far, I have to mention that through this procedure I had to take in consideration a lot of things.

Firstly I realised that working in the field of Artivism, as Ami taught me this designation, is not an easy thing to do. Especially when you work in collaboration with other people you have to take in consideration also their beliefs and opinions. When it comes to teamwork people have to discuss a lot in order to end up with a common belief. We cannot force ourselves or other people to work against our beliefs or if we have concerns about something we always have to solve them and then proceed. We had that kind of disagreement with my colleague at some very small points, but thankfully we resolved them immediately.

Secondly and surprisingly I realised that the strongest element in the performance was the use of a sound environment. As I have already mentioned before I realised that using children's voices to express and communicate political statements, like the manifesto or singing and blaming the reporters, creates a strong emotional manipulation. I was very surprised when I realised how I was manipulated by my own creation.

## Future Ambitions

Being at this point presenting part of my project I want to develop methods and skills furthermore. The first thing that I wish to develop is reducing the technical part

(especially videos) and trying to become more physical. I want to use videos and sounds only where it is necessary and only where things are not feasible to be done in a physical way. Also maybe try to make the bulletins even wider in duration and more clear at some points. But I have to admit that the sound environment inspired me a lot through the whole procedure and it adds a different layer which enhances emotional feelings and creates a strong atmosphere.

The new knowledge that this project might offer to my field is the use of a chorus of ancient tragedies in commenting on current affairs and the political situation of the world at the moment. How we can produce theatre and performance serving an activist purpose. The use of masks in all levels. Speech level, appearance level, even in a manipulative level.

# Special Thanks to

<b>Anne</b>	<b>Södergren</b>
<b>Ami</b>	<b>Skånberg Dahlstedt</b>
<b>Ioli</b>	<b>Charalampopoulou</b>
<b>Ann-Marie</b>	<b>Tung Hermelin</b>
Magda	Pistioli
Orestis	Pantelakis
Kostantis	Pistiolis
Kalliopi	Panagiotidou
Christos	Konstogeorgis
Mikael	Vrettos
Elena	Gerodimou
Giannis	Pliakis
Vicky	Manouka
Nadia	Samara
Konstantinos	Krikelis
Anthony	Jonshon
Efi	Manouka
Terry	Karampini
Nikos	Kapitsinis
Nikos	Charalampopoulos
Nikos	Rousakis
Nikolas	Bartsiokas
Ilektra	Paschou
Babis	the white cat
Pupa	the noisy dog

# Appendix

## Sources

- **"Autoethnography** is a form of qualitative research in which an author uses self-reflection and writing to explore anecdotal and personal experience and connect this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings." Ellis, Carolyn. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press
- *"Documentary theatre is theatre that uses pre-existing documentary material (such as newspapers, government reports, interviews, journals, and correspondences) as source material for stories about real events and people, frequently without altering the text in performance. The genre typically includes or is referred to as verbatim theatre, investigative theatre, theatre of fact, theatre of witness, autobiographical theatre, and ethnodrama"* Martin, Carol. *Theatre of the Real*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013
- *"In Greek mythology, Tiresias (/taɪˈriːsiəs/; Ancient Greek: Τειρεσίας, romanized: Teiresías) was a blind prophet of Apollo in Thebes, famous for clairvoyance and for being transformed into a woman for seven years. He was the son of the shepherd Everes and the nymph Chariclo. Tiresias participated fully in seven generations in Thebes, beginning as advisor to Cadmus himself. "*  
Source Wikipedia
- Artivism is a word combining art and activism.

Artivism takes roots, or branches, off of a 1997 gathering between Chicano artists from East Los Angeles and the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico. The words "Artist" and "Artivism" were popularised through a variety of events, actions and artworks via artists and musicians such as Quetzal, Ozomatli, and Mujeres de Maiz, among other East Los Angeles artists, and at spaces such as Self Help Graphics & Art." Jeanmarie Simpson -- Artist in the Modern Landscape (Part 1), Dylan Brody, The Huffington Post, 2011.10.03

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## Quotes

- *"In the theater there is not a spectator but an eyewitness" Dimitris Imellos.*
- *"The unaccountable we must have it on stage, not in life. Do not confuse them, because then we will go up on stage and cut off our hands, we will commit suicide. Theatre is the art of imitation, not an act. Our work is directed to the imagination and the imagination has no limits - life has limits. Dimitris Imellos*



- “When you are strongly bothered by a piece of art then something in this work has elements of yourself that you haven’t recognised yet as your own weaknesses” Dimitris Imellos

**Photos**

- Lena Kitsopoulou at the Performance Tyrannosaurus rex at National Theatre of Greece/ experimental stage Photo by © Carol Jaret