Daughter of the eARTh. Lucia Boaghe

It feels like she only moved to London a few days ago, overwhelmed by the excitement of a new beginning and, at the same time, the emptiness of existence. Every time she moves to another country her identity seems to be changing. Apparently, identity is being formed on the move. “Identity is formed at the unstable point where the unspeakable stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture“.[1] Even her name is now a different one, and she realises how lucky she is that Lucia has an equivalent in many languages. She will be Lucy from now on. As every time before, in Russia, Turkey, France and Italy, she is already missing her daughter. Being separated, she feels like being far from her own and most genuine creation, she feels like she is a bird flying with one wing only. Yes, it’s different this time: she’s not alone fighting for existence as before, she’s with her husband and he’s supporting her in everything. This time Lucy decided to chase the dream of her life - to be an artist. Here she is a student at Chelsea College of Art. After years of different experiences she is finally at the place that seemed unbelievable even in her wildest dreams. As Schopenhauer said ”to obtain something we have desired is to find out that it is worthless; we are always living in expectation of better things, while, at the same time, we often repent and long for things that belong to the past. We accept the present as something that is only temporary, and regard it only as a means to accomplish our aim.” [2]

Migration and individual changes have always been a fascinating subject for Lucy, as her life experience is a good example of metamorphosis. The first experience was like a joke: she was born in The USSR and aged 15 she found herself, De Facto, in the same place but, De Jure, in a different country and speaking a different language. When The USSR collapsed, The Republic of Moldova became a place very difficult to live in. Everyone was trying to find a better place, to get a job, to be better off. So was Lucy. That was the time when she started being an economic migrant, trying to build a better future for her daughter.

By living in different countries and learning new languages she absorbed new cultures, which mixed organically with her origins. “If we rethink culture.....in terms of travel, the organic, naturalising bias of the term *culture* - seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, etc. - is questioned. Constructed and disputed historicities, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view.” [3]
The attempt of translating into a visual language the identity’s transformation led her to an old passion - psychology, “which...consisted of certain basic elements: thoughts and feelings, a physical world which exists in time and space, and a way of knowing about these things.”[4] The work of psychologists helps us distinguish between inside information which is subjective, and objective facts: between our preconceptions and what is true in scientific terms. As she became an expression of six languages and cultures, her work became the result of her transformation in contact with the Art world. An artwork comes to life as a result of feelings, research, thoughts, and influences from other artists.

It’s very interesting how we react to a piece of art through our mind and preoccupation, thought Lucy when visiting the Antony Gormley exhibition at the Royal Academy. The Iron Baby, this small sculpture placed directly on the ground, inspired by the artist’s six days old daughter, immediately brought her to how she’s feeling about her daughter, even though she is 25 years old now, continued Lucy her thoughts while contemplating. The image of her little girl was the most powerful thing in her life, being the trigger of struggle and joy at the

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[1]Stuart Hall, “Minimal Selves “, in L. Appignanessi(ed), Identity. The real me. Post-modernism and the question of Identity, ICA documents 6, London, ICA, 1987,p.44

[2]A. Schopenhauer. The emptiness of existence https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/schopenhauer/arthur/essays/chapter4.html

[3]James Clifford, ‘Travelling Cultures’,in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (eds), Cultural Studies, London& New York, Routledge, 1992, p.101

[4]Gillian Butler & Freda McManus, Psychology a very short introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, 2014, p.1

same time; the engine that moved her through Europe and the anchor that pulled her back to Moldova. She has probably been the most important reason why Lucy decided to work on a project exploring migration.

The Clearing 7 or the drawing in space, as the artist calls it, is exactly the image of a new language for Lucy, including a new culture. She was afraid at the beginning - afraid of people, places and unknown situations. This drawing in space is the sum of all the fears a migrant is experiencing in a new environment. She can't forget the moment when she arrived in Istanbul, trying to understand at least some words, but Turkish was not similar to any other language she knew. The metal circles look like labyrinths of unknown places. Her understanding of this sculpture is completely alien from the artist's initial idea, where the wild orbits of the line evoke the sub-atomic paths of electrons.

The perception of the Iron figures [5] was completely different from Gormley's subject too. She saw them as people trying to be similar to others, in different spaces, positions, as a migrant does, becoming more rigid in time and stronger. That was a different approach to sculpture compared to her works, where the material speaks by itself, transparent porcelain, translating the fragility of the inner world of migrating people.

So, here is the beauty of contemporary art. As Julian Stallabrass said "there is a corresponding freedom in appreciating the purposeless play of ideas and forms, not in slavishly attempting to divine artist's intentions, but in allowing the work to elicit thoughts and sensations that connect with their own experiences." [6]
Contemporary art is so multi-layered that when absorbing it one indeed understands it touches upon various life complexities. "Artists cultivate for themselves images that range from traditional guru or shaman roles to beady-eyed, tongue-in-cheek chancer and careerist.... art's concerns are also various, touching upon feminism, identity, politics, mass culture, shopping and trauma. Perhaps art's fundamental condition is to be unknowable." [7]

The large scale sculpture of Kara Walker[8] at Tate Modern is very close to Lucy's work, partly, also as a subject. The white sculptures, in a fountain depicting black migrants trying to cross the borders, representing a history of violence and suffering but, at the same time, a possibility of liberation, is similar to what Lucy is trying to translate into her work, even if her experiences are less tragic compared to transatlantic migration. She chose white porcelain, as the finest material to represent the psychological fragility of migrants and picks up white, as a pure colour, the lightest one.

While reflecting about her migration she realised how lucky she was to reach what she wanted in a secure way. The 39 dead Vietnamese migrants found in a trailer in Essex in October 2019 is a completely different story[9]. Some people are loosing their lives, pushed by global injustice and inequalities, trying to find a better life, dying in

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[5]Antony Gormley exhibition https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/antony-gormley

[6]Julian Stallabras, Contemporary Art a Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, p.3

[7] Julian Stallabras, Contemporary Art a Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, p101

[8]Kara Walker exhibition https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/hyundai-commission-kara-walker

[9]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essex_lorry_deaths

trailers or drowning in the seas, as the migrants found at Island of Lampedusa at the same time - October 2019.[10].

The Golden dream[11] is a 2013 Mexican drama film directed by the Spanish-born Mexican director Diego Quemada Diez. Screened at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, where Quemada Diez won the *A Certain Talent* award. The film won the Golden Ástor for Best Film at the 2013 Mar del Plata International Film Festival. This film is the story of three teenagers from Guatemala and one from Mexico on the illegal way to United States. This very painful experience of the young people in fight for a better future is just one example of the immigrant's situation. It could be assumed that due to the industrialisation that triggered a sea change in population access to travel documents, transportation and technological progress during the last 100 years, migration grew more than ever before all around the world.

"An authentically migrant perspective would, perhaps, be based on an intuition that the opposition between here and there is itself a cultural construction, a consequence of thinking in terms of fixed entities and defining them oppositionally. It might begin by regarding movement, not as an awkward interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but as a mode of being in the world. The question would be, then, not how to arrive, but how to move, how to identify convergent and divergent movements; and the challenge would be how to notate such events, how to give them a historical and social value."[12] Similarly to what Paul Carter mentioned, Lucy found herself as a nomadic artist trying to give a historical and social value to her life. By exploring different cultures she has changed her own perception as an individual, while speaking different languages.

"The idea that knowledge is constructed, produced through the activity of language, that is constantly re-written, re-cited, re-sited, subverts all appeals to the idea of a " natural" truth and it's obvious factuality. It is the resistance to the "naturalness" of the tongue that releases the possibilities of language and the interminable activities of meaning."[13] Is that the natural way of re-making herself with every new language and place or is she another one in every new case?

"There is a third major grouping of strata, defined less by a human essence than, by a new distribution of content and expression. Form of content becomes "alloplastic" rather than "homoplastic"; in other words, it brings about modifications in the external world. Form of expression becomes linguistic rather than genetic; in other words, it operates with symbols that are comprehensible, transmittable, and modifiable from outside. What some call the properties of human beings—technology and language, tool and symbol, free hand and supple larynx, "gesture and speech"—are in fact properties of this new distribution. It would be difficult to maintain that the emergence of human beings marked the absolute origin of this distribution."[14] As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari declared in their book people are physically changing in different environments, by using different languages so "The temporal linearity of language expression relates not only to a succession but to a formal synthesis of succession in which time constitutes a process of linear overcoding and engenders a phenomenon unknown on the other strata: translation, translatability, as opposed to the previous inductions and transductions. Translation should not be understood simply as the ability of one language to "represent" in some way the givens of another language, but beyond that as the ability of language, with its own givens on its own stratum, to represent all the other strata and thus achieve a scientific conception of the

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[10]https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/16/bodies-of-migrants-who-died-at-sea-located-by-italian-authorities

[11]https://youtu.be/bgp9g9NF_x0

[12]Paul Carter, Living in a new country. History. Travelling and language, London, Faber & Faber, 1992, p. 101

[13]Iain Chambers, Migrancy Culture Identity, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 33

[14] Gilles Deleuze Félix Guattari, A thousand plateaus Capitalism and Shizophrenia, University of Minnesota Press, London, 1987, p. 24

world."[15] As an artist with six non-identical personalities Lucy wants to show in her works the positive aspect of migration, the transformation through experience of life and pain leading to prosperity. As Brâncuși, Brodsky or Élif Şafak left their countries of origin in order to transform and grow as artists, everyone is free to develop themselves and to find a place in this world. And this Art World is now the space where Lucy intends to spend the rest of her life and hopefully, her works will still be there much later, beyond her own time framework, beyond her temporal linearity, beyond the comprehensible and transmittable, beyond eARTh.

[15]Gilles Deleuze Félix Guattari, A thousand plateaus Capitalism and Shizophrenia, University of Minnesota Press, London, 1987, p.26

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Exhibitions

1. Anselm Kiefer, White Cube https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2019
2. Antony Gormley, The Royal Academy https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/antony-gormley
3. Damien Hirst, White Cube https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/damien_hirst_masons_yard_2019
4. Kara Walker, Tate Modern https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/hyundai-commission-kara-walker
5. Paul Gauguin, The National Gallery https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions/the-credit-suisse-exhibition-gauguin-portraits?utm_source=google&utm_medium=ppcpaid&utm_campaign=gauguin2019&gclid=CjwKCAiA6bvwBRBbEiwAUER6JU7tgh5y70zIXwXsbtid-LkUdbfIgkg5qKKRexDouck7UWkxwfVDKhoC75AQAvD_BwE

Movies

1. The golden dream (2013) , directed by Diego Quemada-Diez