

Fugitive

Σαλικόρνια του Δέλτα Έβρου



(*Salicornia europaea*)

2016

June Papineau

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Seven small “icons” of salicornia
as seen in the Delta Evros in June 2015.

Oil on plywood, 134 mm x 230 mm; these icons are flanked by two test tubes holding a saline solution crystallising around green WLS fibres (optical fibres) and copper wire.

Salicornia is an edible plant that survives in the harshest conditions. In a dwarfed condition it's recognised as a fugitive plant to be found growing sparsely in hypersaline bare patches of salt marshes — such as I came across it in the Delta Evros early last summer. Attracted by their twisted shapes, I paused there long enough to sketch and photograph these “fugitives”:

Its fleshy, green or rose, translucent stalks that light up in the sun seem to allude to it's other name — glasswort, which denotes the use of its ashes in glassmaking.

The Evros River divides Greek Thrace from northwestern Turkey as it flows into the Mediterranean creating a vast delta, 188 square kilometres of mostly salt marshes and lagoons. Along a militarized border, rather than as an Edenic haven for innumerable birds of passage, most in Greece know of it as a common, tedious, and at times dramatic, destination for military service. Under the pressure of being on a hostile border, and what is more, at an important crossing point for refugees, movements of troupes, exercises, and having to implement repressive measures are the unenviable daily lot of Greek soldiers serving there.

Refugees have tragically lost their lives, many very recently, in trying to cross the Evros. As a twist of fate, in a Pseudo-Plutarch text that has come down to us, we read that the Evros River and its delta take their name from Evros, the son of a King of Thrace, who drowned in its waters.

These fugitive salicornia found their way here with all this in mind. I close with a poem by Yiannis Ritsos written in exile on Makronisos in 1950 for causes that are lost and in radically different circumstances. For his words echo in the distance still.



ΚΑΘΕ ΒΡΑΔΙ

Το χώμα είναι σκληρό.
Κατα το βράδι, σαν καταλαιάζει ο αγέρας,
μένουνε κάτι λιγοστές σπασμένες βέργες
και μιά σκισμένη φανέλα στα βράχια.

Δω πέρα ό θάνατος πολλές φορές περπάτησε.
Τούτες οί τρύπες στην πέτρα
είναι από τα καρφιά τω παπουτσιών του,
τούτες οί άλλες τρύπες στην καρδιά
άπ' το ίδιο είναι.

Κάθε βράδι τ' αστέρια σα να γίνονται πιότερα.
Κάτι χρονολογίες, κάτι υπογραφές, κάτι μισόλογα, σύντομα
μηνύματα,
τούτα τ' αστέρια στον ουρανό — τα διαβάζουμε κάθε βραδάκι
όπως διαβάζουμε τα ονόματα των αγωνιστών σ' ένα ντουβάρι
φυλακής.

Τα μάτια αύτουηου του συντρόφου είναι δυό καπνισμένες πέτρες
σαν εκείνες τις μαύρες πέτρες στην ερημιά του δειλινού
όπου μια φαμίλια πρόσφυγες έβρασε τα ραδίκια της.

Και του άλλουνου συντρόφου τα μάτια
είναι μιά φωτιά ανάμεσα στις δυό μαυρισμένες πέτρες.
Και του άλλουνου το ίδιο είναι.
Κάτι μεγάλο μαγερεύει ο κόσμος μέσα σε τούτα τα μάτια.

- Γιάννης Ρίτσος, Μακρόνισος 1950.

EACH EVENING

The earth is hard.
Toward evening, as the wind subsides,
a few paltry sticks remain on the rocks
and a torn undershirt.

Over here death has walked many times.
These holes in the stone
are from the nails of his shoe soles,
these other holes, in our hearts,
are from them as well.

Each evening the stars appear to grow more plentiful.
Some dates, some signatures, some cryptic fragments,
these stars in the sky — we study them each evening
like the names of rebels we study on the prison walls.

The eyes of this comrade are two smoke-blackened stones
like those black stones in the solitude of evening
where a refugee family boiled dandelion greens.

And the eyes of this other comrade
contain the fire between the blackened stones.
And this other as well.
The world is cooking something immense among these eyes.

Yiannis Ritsos, 1950. Translated by Martin McKinsey & Scott King.
Petrified Time, poems from Makronisos, Red Dragonfly Press, 2014.

June Papineau

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Swiss-American, born 1958 in Manchester, Connecticut, USA.

Solo shows

- 2014 « The Great Goyesque » Galerie D'(A), Lausanne, CH.
- 2013 « Le Bois de Marsyas » l'Angle, La R che-sur-Foron, France.
- 2011 « transEplant » Galerie D'(A), Lausanne, CH.
- 2011 « Springshoots » Le Futur ant rieur, HUG, Geneva, CH.
- 2010 « Ineinander - Etournel und ich » R tthubelbad, Bern, CH.
- 2008 « En Aval » Galerie Andata/Ritorno, Geneva, CH.
- 2002 « Limitrophismes » Galerie Andata/Ritorno, Geneva, CH.
- 2001 « Pr t- -porter » Galer a Buades, Madrid, Spain.
- 1997 Espai Vau, Centre d'Art Santa M nica, Barcelona, Spain.
- 1997 Galer a Buades, Madrid, Spain.
- 1996 « Passatges I » Cultural Center « Sa Nostra », Menorca, Spain.
- 1996 « Passatges II » Cultural Center « Sa Nostra », Palma de Majorca.
- 1993 « La nit en blanc de fulles » Saint-L ger 28, Geneva, CH.
- 1992 Galer a Columela, Madrid, Spain.
- 1991 L nea-C rculo de Grabado, Madrid, Spain.
- 1991 Galerie Seltzer Lejeune, Paris, France.
- 1991 Galer a L piz L zuli, Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain.
- 1990 Galer a Columela, Madrid, Spain.

Separate space / installation in group shows (selection)

- 2010 Naional Gallery of Bangkok, Thailand. Pro Helvetia.
- 2009 « Chassez le naturel... », Villa Bernasconi, Grand-Lancy, CH.
- 2004 Mus e d'histoire des sciences, Geneva, CH
- 2001 Galer a Buades, ARCO'01, Madrid, Spain.
- 2001 « Miniatures et utopies » Galerie Andata/Ritorno, Geneva, CH.

Published writings (selection)

- 2016 « Goyesques & others et autres » Editions Artmorphos.
160pp. Images 86 color, 9 b/w. Hardcover.
- 2006 « In Search Of Meaning : the Body, the Psyche and the Object of Art »
Revista de Humanidades, vol.13, Universidad Andr s Bello, Chili.
- 2001 « External Appearances and Intimate Scenes » Ed. Abril y Buades.
- 1997 « Ofrena » Ed. Generalitat de Catalunya.
With 6 poems by Margarita Ballester. 80pp.