

Artist: Collectiva Inanna

Post 1

7 September 2020

Taking Back the Booty is the inaugural production of the newly established Collectiva Inanna, a community of curious creatives who seek to collaboratively explore the world through a feminine lens.

This creative collective was born in the hot summer of 2020 out of a collaboration between four women from the Eastern Mediterranean. We came together to explore our experiences of womanhood, displacement and identity having been invited by Home4Cooperation to produce a performance to be staged during their Buffer Fringe Festival in Nicosia in December 2020. We found the process of working together, and with the festival team, so enriching, enlightening and enlivening that we want to encourage other women to work together, and with us, to continue our collective exploration of the roles, responsibilities and being of women beyond this initiative and year. This is the impetus behind the formation of Collectiva Inanna, which takes its name from the Sumerian goddess who was the foundation and inspiration behind future female deities Ishtar, Astarte, Venus and Aphrodite.

Inanna is associated with beauty, sex, war, justice and political power. Her legacy ran for centuries and expanded to regions far beyond her origins in Mesopotamia. She wasn't relegated to the sidelines, as women have since been, but was admired, feared and worshipped for her strength and power. Through collective action with women globally, we want to celebrate and bring back that power to women and societies across the Eastern Mediterranean, where patriarchy and other destructive ideologies continue to loom unashamedly like low clouds. Hence the title of our first production: Bringing Back

the Booty. Through it we seek to decolonize our psyches and reclaim that which has been looted from us as women.

We look forward to engaging with you in this virtual space in the coming weeks and presenting the fruits of our first creative collective collaboration this December.

Collectiva Inanna founders: Reem Maghribi, Manuella Mavromichalis, Maria Kouvarou, Bahriye Kemal

Post 2

Date: September 17, 2020

Title: **From song to script, myth to movement**



Image caption: "You go from island to island in search for clarity..." *

*Musicologist, poet and founding member of Collectiva Inanna
Maria Kouvarou shares the creative team's journey from song to
script. ***

First there was an image that created a punch that brought a
bitter smile and got stored into a shadowy corner of memory.

Then there was a voluntary dislocation born out of involuntary
circumstances that called for a return home - the same home that
before was for a person who was the same no more.

And a return there was.

Then there was a void. Silence. Confusion. A struggle to belong,
before long, as days were moving on and on and on and on... but
all there was, was a self *displaced* - spatially, mentally,
socially, and emotionally - and a silence that kept getting
louder, as every attempt at expression became a skein
unravelling in knots.

Then there was insomnia. Long hours of pedantic efforts at
untangling those knots. But the knots were leading to more and
more knots, and the more the hands were working with the thread,
the more they got burned by friction.

Then, the suspicion arose.

What if the knots are not to be unmade? What if the skein is not to be unraveled? What if there was no skein at all? What if one's inner Ariadne wanted her to figure this out on her own? What if all the demons one had created in her head were fictional? What if the Minotaur was not the threat? What if the thread was not required at all?

Gradually, silence began subsiding, opening space for a hum. And the image - that first image that created a punch - which got stored into a shadowy corner of memory and had remained unvisited since, resurfaced. And the image was this: Brown leaves filling a discarded suitcase resting open under a tree. A baggage. Full of leaves - dead leaves - that signified rebirth. A human baggage - full of leaves. The human baggage is full of leaves. A human leaves. That's what one does. She leaves. Even when static. She flees from what one had been a moment before. She moves on, regardless.

So did the image - that first image - moved on, transformed. Got dislocated from the visual and relocated as melody and words. And then the melody developed, and so did the words.

And knot by knot the tangle unraveled into a song. A litany to dislocation and an ode to the forever pursuit of a home. It's title: "Labyrinth". "Labyrinth" wandered for a while, got played, and played with, but was never finished and polished and stored. It was left as a drafty, raw, and unpolished piano version, in a folder on Dropbox, along with some of its companions. And was almost abandoned at a shadowy corner of memory. Almost forgotten, as it was not yet ready to find a home.



Image caption: Unraveling emotions, weaving songs. **

Five years later, an ideas board was created online for the four founding members of Collectiva Inanna along with the purpose to host their earlier work that had to do with displacement, through it navigate their creative journey into creating the script for "Taking Back the Booty". And, through digging folders of previous poems, texts and songs, "Labyrinth" was rediscovered. Lying, awaiting. Raw and unpolished as it was - itself still in the process of being in progress. After moments of hesitation, it got copied and pasted onto the ideas board and, travelling through the soundwaves, it met with all the members of Collectiva Inanna and spoke to them - and resonated with them.

It became a stepping stone through which to explore creative connections. It sparked in-depth conversations about archetypes, the mind, the psyche, the demons, the self and its foes. It provided an explosion of ideas and thoughts and led to discussions on how to bring those ideas and thoughts back "home"; how to connect all the dots and find the way to a possible plot.

In the process, "Labyrinth" became dormant again. It remained there, latently awaiting to see if it was going to be called. If it was going to be needed. If, this time, it will be recorded and stored. If it will find a new - albeit temporary - home.

But maybe it won't be necessary. Maybe it will remain forever in progress, in the process of becoming. Maybe it will never be settled, it will never belong. Maybe, merely by getting unburied and communicated, it has completed its ultimate purpose: to become the thread that connected the multiple creative fluidities of four East Mediterranean women who have each experienced in their own particular ways processes of displacement that have resulted from dynamics similar to all.

In the end, maybe "Labyrinth" *is* the Minotaur - or, maybe, "Labyrinth" is us and we are the Minotaur - and maybe we have managed to make peace with it - the labyrinth, the Minotaur, the song - by dislocating it once more, unstitching its parts, deconstructing it, and incorporating its threads into this creative journey. And, maybe, through making peace with it, we have found a vehicle for claiming our right to "take back the booty".

*lyrics from the song "Labyrinth" [© Maria Kouvarou (M.ouv),
2015]

**photos by Maria Kouvarou

Post 3

Date: October 08, 2020

Title: **Seeing Red**

We are four women working together to produce a performance piece that explores physical, mental and social displacement. We are focusing on what we know: womanhood. We are borrowing from what we are: writers. We are utilizing what we have: poems and stories. Time and space won't permit us to share on stage the thousands of pages we have collectively written and published about identity, migration, love, family and the myriad other things that shape us... And so we will begin to share some of them here.

This is a recording of Collectiva Innana co-founder Manuella Mavromichalis performing her poem "Red," which explores why she doesn't want to cross her legs anymore.

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spr6XajksZA&feature=emb_title

Video Caption: "Red", by Manuella Mavromichalis
