

DAY 1 — free in the knowledge

"We are not animals, said the host who welcomed us. Formerly, Yugoslavia was a huge country, and then, the Ottoman Empire reigned for 600 years. My mother is Macedonian, my father Albanian. Politics ruined everything. Are you hungry?"

Here we are embarked on the streets of Pristina, we arrived in a small restaurant, a kind of kebab. He insisted that we took a borek, a salad, and especially yogurt, which he shook, and settled the bill for us. *"It's normal, he comments, here we don't say please, thank you, we do things, that's all".*

Let's eat, he said. Then: *"and you, you don't have too many problems with migrants at home? I saw it on TV".* Did the host suddenly become a political enemy? He continued: *"your president is too weak."* I asked : *"Do you have a lot of immigrants here?"* He laughed.

"I'm going to tell you a joke. There are migrants arriving in Kosovo. They come across a policeman who stops them and asks them: where are you going? The migrants answer: we don't want to stay here, we're going to Europe, in France, in Germany. The policeman is surprised. How much do you earn per month? the migrants ask him. 500 euros answers the policeman. So come with us! the migrants laugh."



Our host accompanied us. I think about BARBARE, that we left one evening after the performance, that is quietly waiting, and that is still emerging, here, in this country which the entire international community does not recognise, but which uses the euro; in this city where a giant portrait of Bill Clinton stands not far from the Mother Teresa cathedral; in these souks, similar to those crossed in the northern part of Nicosia, the one that does not appear on tourist maps.

So. ENEMY begins. It's the beginning of a summer of Canadairs (as Bertrand Belin sings), already covered by the ashes of Avignon.

The image is the university library.



DAY 2 — a conflict in reconciliation

I collect in my memory the reactions to the word Kosovo. We were in Avignon, a rain of ashes fell on the city, Canadair flights suspended the conversation every ten minutes, and we said: *Sunday, we will be in Kosovo.* We walked between the posters, cooled momentarily by the puffs of air conditioning that escaped from the shopping avenues. We were told: *what are you going to do in Kosovo?* with an exotic, curious, distanced gaze.

The National Theater is closed for renovation. We visited it today. In our eyes maybe the same exotic look. The national ballet rehearses on a white dance floor placed in a room in the basement decorated with posters of creations since 1970. In the background, the mirror is cracked, we saw ourselves deformed, doubled, magnified. Here, as later, elsewhere, we spoke without embellishment, cash, *"cool because outside the European Union"*, and about the cultural situation in Pristina, which, like in Bucharest, Sofia etc., is lively, demanding, engaged.

No military presence. A few French mobile gendarmes came here at the start of the conflict in Ukraine and then left. It's not a war situation, we don't do "dark tourism" like in Srebrenica. I was a very young child when the war in Yugoslavia broke out. Bosnians and Croats versus Serbs. Bosnians versus Croats. That doesn't mean it can't come back tomorrow, said the person who received us at the Embassy. But there, at the moment, we cannot compare to a situation of war.

In certain neighborhoods, I can no longer tell whether we are in certain neighborhoods of Berlin, or in the suburbs of Warsaw. I mean, areas that aren't quite defined. We feel that we are passing an edge, diggers are busy near old factory chimneys, concrete buildings (only the structure) climb, escape, like ruins, not of the war (no trace of bombardment), debris of the future, of a capitalism that will not succeed, to replace everything, too late.

One sentence in particular touched me. *"Let people be left alone with the idea of reconciliation. It will take generations. You can't ask people to make peace like that, overnight."*

I am thinking of what Elvira, a Ukrainian friend who has lived in Lille for 20 years, said. That her friends, over there, refuse to speak Russian (their language too), hate Russians, for the moment, at least, for the moment, arguing: *intellectually I understand that it is not necessary, but there, I can not do otherwise.* How do we do when we can't help but hate?



the green corridor



DAY 3 = the weapon of empathy

"When the war in Ukraine started, for us, immediately, it stirred deep-seated memories that we had put aside." The parallel between Pristina and Kyiv suddenly arises. "I read your file, and this idea of a conversation between a Ukrainian and a Russian, it immediately touched me."

The FemArt festival is 10 years old. It is led by the organisation Artpolis - Art and Community in Pristina. A resolutely feminist festival that does not hesitate to distribute analyses on sexual harassment or the #metoo movement in the arts in welcome totebags. I don't know if we realise, in France, what that means. Yes, the M/F collective publishes data every year. How many festivals, places, offer it as a welcome gift to professionals?

It seems that in Avignon, a director entered the dressing room of a naked actress, before expelling the entire team from the theatre. In the offices of Artpolis, they said: *living in Kosovo, for many young people, is like having been confined in a room since childhood. Almost impossible to get a visa. People resign themselves to living only within borders. Except, folks, it's 60% under 18.*

I admit that here, we take slaps. Not comparative misery, not sad exoticism, no. Something calm, upright, rigorously hospitable that breaks down barriers. They received us at our request, and they apologised for detaining us. We are offered documentation, we are already imagining what will happen next, we have no doubts about the relevance of the work.



The small restaurant of yesterday is now invaded by recognisable languages: English, French, German. Manifesta 14 starts tomorrow. It is as if a certain Europe had made an appointment to increase the contemporary vision of Kosovo. We take our badge in a dilapidated hotel. The city becomes a museum.

The image is the second floor of the National Museum of Kosovo. On the first floor there are potteries, ceramics, prehistoric statues. Infinite gratitude for Diellza and the entire Artpolis - Art and Community team who carry out incredible work, even changing the laws through wild performances in the public space.



DAY 4 — you have no idea

Selma Selman's repeated scream for fifteen minutes in front of the entrance to the Galeria Kombëtare e Kosovës / The National Gallery of Kosovo. You have to understand in french: tu n'as pas d'idée et tu n'as pas idée. Selma is a Roma artist from Bosnia and Herzegovina. This scream was first uttered in Washington D.C on Presidential Election Day 2020.

Screaming, in front of European curators, most of whom have come to Pristina for the first time, *you have no idea*, it has the merit of throwing a chill. In a video, titled Mercedes Matrix, we see her and her family destroying, piece by piece, a Mercedes car in Hamburg. She has plenty of ideas.

The main pavilion, you could say, here stands at the Grand Hotel. To imagine, take a nine-storey hotel that would have been completely emptied and abandoned, pure concrete, and still a few rooms available, old rugs, carpeting. Each floor is the subject of a theme: capital, love, ecology, migration, water, speculation (that's the English term, perhaps we should say: fiction).

It is as if we have lived enough days away from the European Union to find it strange to see it appear in concepts, faces, clothes.

There is a photograph of Ron Haviv in 1992 in Bosnia. A journalist in a video describes it, tells it. A soldier kicks a dead woman to the ground. *You have no idea*. I hear: you can't imagine. The words, rather than the image, make it possible to feel, not to see. We don't need to understand in order to repair, only to share an emotion to belong to the same humanity.



The image is the green corridor,
an unused railway line.

On the left, the city,
on the right, a ring road.

These two words together: green / corridor.



DAY 5 — dogs have no borders

stars flashing in the night on top of buildings; like the scattered circle of the flag; an invitation to paint the sky; the korso dotted with stalls; popcorn, grilled corn, cotton candies, pistol shooting, flashing plastic Kalashnikovs; between the ruins of communism and capitalism; on the esplanade of the Palace of Youth and Sports; the platform, the concert, the bar of a thirsty youth

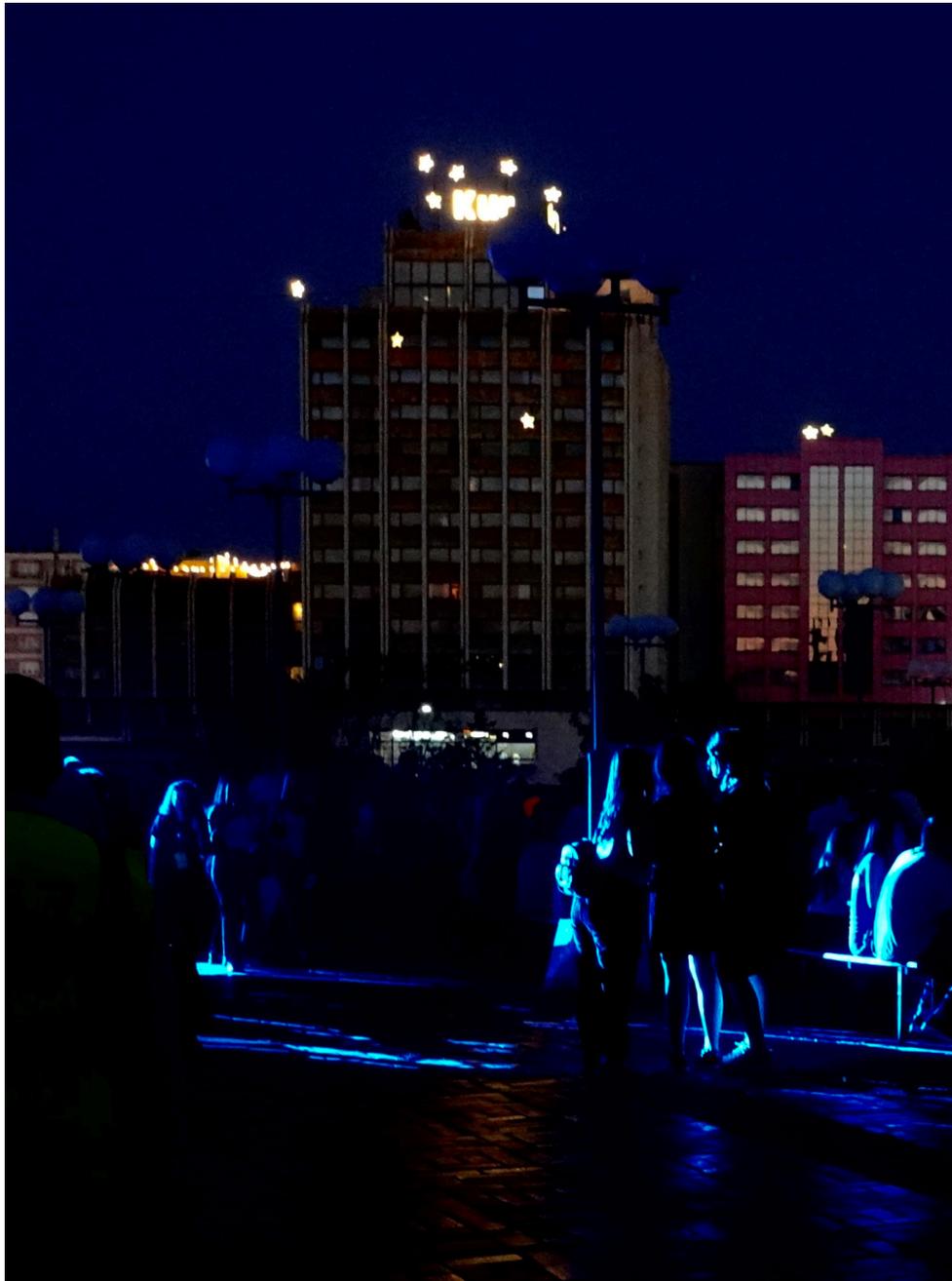
like dogs lying in the shade on the sidewalk; Manifesta 14 emblem; asked a person in the assembly to the mayor of Pristina; *do we take care of them, give them water, at least?*; answer: *the problem, if we take care of them, is that we then have to let them go, and then they become a danger for other dogs, and then, it's not just a problem here, dogs have no boundaries*

London syndrome: the middle classes can no longer find housing in the city

the Venice syndrome: the inhabitants no longer recognise themselves in what the city is becoming

explains the mayor of Amsterdam; *we are on the decline; you in Pristina are the future*





an artist in the room asks; *I work with young people who think that Amsterdam in 50 years will be under water; what are you going to do to compel the private sector to fight climate change in your city?*

Feldenkrais teacher explains, lying on the marble of the national library: *we treat suffering as a local problem, and not as a sign that this part of the body is working, but carries the weight of what is not working in the rest of the body system; thus the body, thus the library; thus Kosovo? thus Europe?*

after the speech of the President, the Prime Minister, the Mayor, comes a soprano who sings the Ukrainian anthem under blue and yellow LEDs; thus Ukraine?

twice the crowd applauded; when in the midst of political rhetoric comes the phrase "more visas"

The image is an automatic projector with blue LEDs which illuminates the forecourt of the Palace of Youth and Sport



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ZONE -poème-

Faris dad's pictures - Prishtinë on the 70s



