

OUROBOROS





Images and texts | Joshua J. Araujo, Mariangela Ciccarello, Ayesha Kamal Khan  
Curator | Catalina Tuca  
Cover image | Joshua J. Araujo

Jeannine Bardo | Founder, Director

Stand4 Gallery and Community Art Center  
414 78th Street Brooklyn, NY, 11209  
[stand4gallery.org](http://stand4gallery.org)

Catalogue © 2022 Stand4 Gallery







Ayesha Kamal Khan

Joshua J. Araujo

Mariangela Ciccarello

Curated by Catalina Tuca

April 15. May 15. 2022





O U R O B O R O S





The room keeps eating itself up  
and puking out some art.

Every corner peeked out.  
The insides decided<sup>1</sup> to take over.

<sup>1</sup>Some decisions are taken by the place they take place in.

The corners<sup>2</sup> are where all the materials<sup>3</sup> go to hide.

<sup>2</sup>Punishment: “Go stand in the corner!”

<sup>3</sup> tangible/ intangible <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> history of forgetting.

How can you fold<sup>5</sup> something up that is already hiding?

<sup>5</sup> You can't fold a piece of paper more than 7 times.

When corners have nowhere to hide  
they implode and make way  
for little parts to take charge.



No parts can explain<sup>6</sup> themselves independently.

<sup>6</sup> A case for unnamings.



Hold fast to the notion  
that we have the  
potential to remain  
rooted in love. Cherish  
the memory of resisting  
hatred.

You see, it isn't for your  
parables, or the colorful  
conversations  
with your new friends.  
There is a ground  
not made with you in mind.

Beware of those who make  
you audition for their love,  
though on the other side,  
who here knows of a love  
not attached to  
some conditionality?







A confection pile on, a foot. The trill of an eyelid.

Seraph neighborhood, sunken text, hidden order

flashy subjects

Sorry, I cannot speak right now. I have something transformational happening















FULL OF PROMISE FULL OF DINNER FULL OF SHIT  
T D R O P T H E H A M M E R T A K E Y O U R S H O T D O N T F O R  
G E T W H A T Y O U A R E F I G H T I N G F O R T H E Y T H I N K W  
E C A N T E V E N P U T O N O U R P A N T S W I T H O U T B E I N  
G T O L D H O W F U L L M O N T Y A R E L I G I O N A B O U T T H  
E B O O T Y B O O T Y I S M R O U N D I S C R O W N F R U I T Y T O  
O T Y C O M E O N R U D Y T A K E A N O T H E R H I T F R O M U N  
K N O W N H O O K A N U I H F U L L B E A V E R M O O N F U L L H  
A R V E S T M O O N F O O L I S H E N O U G H T O O U T L A S T Y O  
U P U L L T H E E - B R E A K O N Y O U R H E G E M O N I C W A Y S



## Translators' Note

Translation is like walking on a common ground, bridging two extremities, filling an empty space between two sensibilities, two cultures, or two different ways of experiencing the world. A translation is a negotiation, an interpretation and ultimately a re-interpretation.

In the case of the work that follows, the ground we are walking on is not really a common one but, rather, one that is unfamiliar and mysterious. The texts appearing in the pages below have in fact been translated from a language which belongs not just to a different culture but to another species.

Since the nineteenth century, ethology has made surprising discoveries related to animal behavior. With the work included herein we are achieving a further, marvelous step: the first translation in history from a form of written communication composed by non-humans.

This work has taken place during several decades and involved the participation of professionals operating in different fields, including marine biology, philology, archeology, literature and art. Everything began in 2003 when several stones were discovered in a cove in Amoros, a tiny island between the Cyclades and the Dodecanese islands in southern Greece.



The stones first intrigued the archeologists who found them because of the strange little holes present on their surface which made them think of a pattern or illustration. They decided to transport the stones to the Institute of Biological Science and Philology in Athens. After a few months of studies, the research team developed a first hypothesis according to which the engraving on the stones were prehistorical representations similar to the ones found in Lascaux, with the difference that in this case the images were not painted but carved.

However, the fact that the engravings were abstract undermined this theory. After a year scientists arrived at the conclusion that the signs were not illustrations but rather ideograms, closer to a hieroglyphical alphabet. Because the signs were carved on small, lightweight stones, scientists thought that they could serve as exchangeable documents or messages, the equivalent of a letter or its more contemporary form, an email. However, another element continued to intrigue the scientists: the images were engraved with a *minutia* which would be difficult to attribute to a prehistoric civilization.

A new and bizarre theory was developed: the engravings on the stones were not the product of the human hand but of another species. Despite the absurdity of the argument, the Institute of Biological Science and Philology decided to invest in an exploration of this path.



A refined observation system was installed in the water where the stones were discovered. After three years of observation, the discovery left the scientists perplexed. The recordings showed that the engravings were created by fish through a process of sucking algae and plankton present on the stones. Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed. However, there were no traces of intention in the behavior of the animals. They were simply responding to a primal need.

With their alphabet theory unproven, the archeologists felt that they had been too romantic in their speculations and the Institute of BSP regretted the amount of money invested in what appeared to be a naïve dream.

When all seems lost, it is often in transformation. The situation took a new turn in 2015 when a manuscript was discovered in the library of Syros, the capital of the Cyclades. The means which brought the text to the island remained mysterious. Its physical condition was poor, the ink was faded and the paper significantly damaged. Written in Ancient Greek and difficult to date, it contained a previously unknown Greek myth, a heartbreaking story between a god and a mortal, which appears in this publication as well. There was nothing particularly original or visionary in the myth, which resembled the thousands of myths and legends already known.

What intrigued the scholars were a series of symbols and drawings present alongside the Greek text. At a first glance they thought about the map of the cave mentioned in the text but when the manuscript was transferred to the Institute of BSP the similarity between the illustrations of the myth and the engravings of the Amoros stones became clear to all. A process of deciphering - still in progress- began, which has now allowed us to arrive at a first version of some of the inscriptions on the stones, present in this publication.

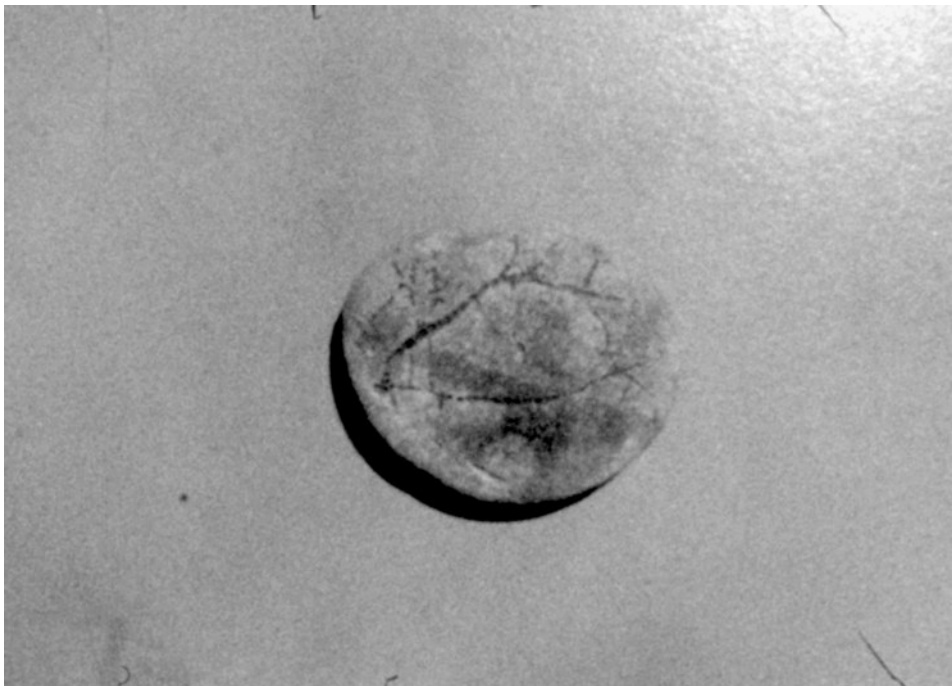
Similar to the process which led to the interpretation of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics through the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, the first translation from the Amoros stones into a human language has been done in Ancient Greek. Below is a translation from Ancient Greek to English which a group of translators from different nationalities has been working on for the last several months.

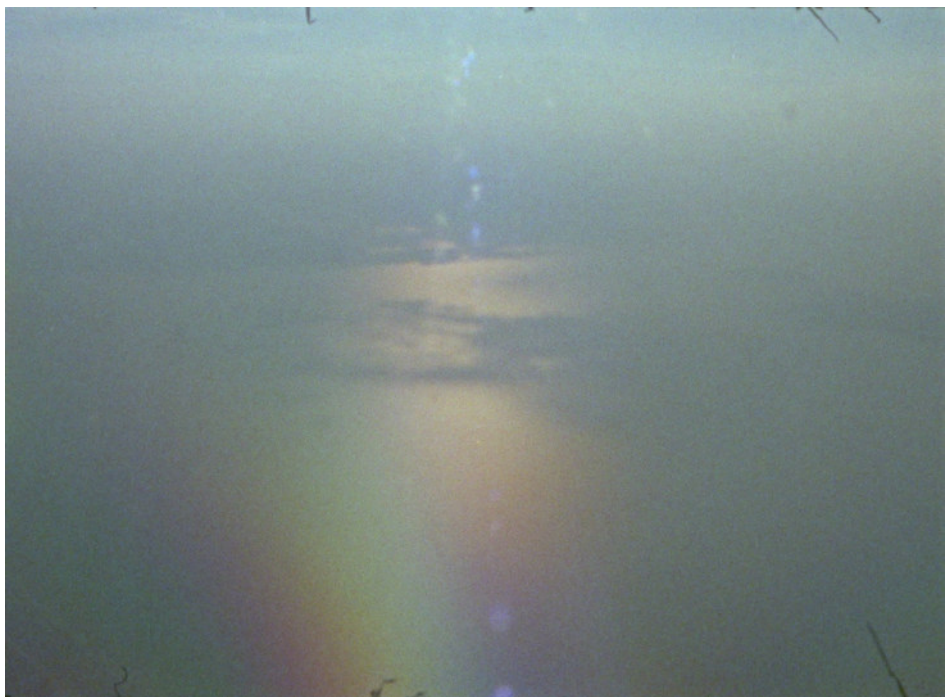
Before allowing you to navigate the text on your own, we would like to remind the reader that every translation is also and always an invention.

With our sincere wishes for a fluid experience,

The translators







#21

Another five minutes,  
another line of clouds  
before I dissolve.

The numb mollusk  
is capable of disintegrating  
the inner layers of the shell,  
in gold and earth, it wraps.

I don't notice the emptiness  
when I want to be a simple fish  
smooth.

I changed all the rules  
and only in the water can I breathe.

In the underground iris  
the dappled liquid  
resounds infinitely.

It is home not hush.

#13

You are my Muse  
a black bush  
with two sparks in the center  
unseen,  
glaring.

We caress our eyelashes.  
Never a Muse like that  
has been seen,  
without even the mouth.

#33

Boneless I dream to be

Shapeless as the Aegean

Colorless we are  
two drops touching each other

Endless your eyes in a sip of tsipouro  
frozen in the hand of time.

How many summers do we have left *arapemou*?

You said:  
“mortals can’t contemplate life behind the glass”

and if a sailor faces death  
the sea sets on fire for a second.

None have ever taught me how to love, or to live.



#24

I've been better since you disappeared  
I dream better and drink a lot of water,  
hydration is important  
almost as much as self-certification.

The plaster in the void left by the body  
devours negative space,  
the wisdom of the walls  
consumes my ears.

That blue to taste  
not color but texture,  
the distance and the horizon  
they kiss like in Casablanca,  
to pretend.

The dog has passionate eyes  
to drive crazy the hesitant cactus,  
it looks like me.

I'll write to you tomorrow  
I want to caress you with caution.

#25

Pelagic fish from surface waters  
but not coastal,  
I catch them at noon  
I caress them  
on swollen legs  
of salt and fatty acids,  
the angry feet  
the teeming sex  
looking into the abyss.

Stretched out  
I watch God appear on the horizon  
all gold and drapes of light  
“What a drama queen, mammamia”  
I think without doing it on purpose  
“they must be a Virgo,  
they come at the same time every day.”

It is a system interference,  
a déjà-vu,  
the unfinished copy of a Renaissance painting.

I'll be back tomorrow,  
my appetite is returning  
I'm going to play.







## Marlea and Apollo

Marlea was a beautiful girl from Athens. She had a very sweet voice but above all she enjoyed composing verses and singing them, accompanied by the delicate sound of her lyre. One day, while she was bathing, singing carefree in a cove along the sea, she was overheard by the god Apollo who, intrigued by her sublime verses, drew nearer. When he saw her, he was struck by her grace and so dazzled by the sweetness of her features that her verses seemed even more beautiful to him. The god, possessed by love, approached the young woman. When he was very close and Marlea was about to see him, he became invisible except for his eyes, which he transformed into two shining sparks. Marlea saw them and fell in love immediately, spending hours and hours contemplating them.

The next day, the girl, who had not slept thinking about what had happened, returned to the cove in search of the two sparks and found them exactly where she had left them. From then on, Marlea began to go to the cove every day, contemplating the sparks and composing sublime verses for them. The god Apollo contemplated her in return, invisible and inebriated by her poetry. For months, this secret routine was a source of immense joy for both. This lasted until the god felt that he wanted more, that he could no longer live without touching her silken skin or kissing her honey lips.





One afternoon, he manifested himself to the girl, took on the features that were his own, and made her his. However, even after having possessed her, Apollo was still in love, perhaps even more than before and could not accept to allow Marlea to return to her mortal life. He thus decided to transform her into a pristine marble statue which he took to the highest point of Olympus so that all could admire it. Marlea, sublimely beautiful in her motionless features, had however lost her gift, and could no longer compose her verses. On full moon nights, her tears - and sometimes her sad poetry - could be heard at the cove where everything began.

One of those nights, that of the spring equinox, when the day and the night are exactly the same length, and during which gods and mortals join in Bacchic rituals, the Muses, who were near the cove, inebriated by wine and celebrations, heard Marlea's moans, recognized the sweetness of her voice, the skill and depth of her verses and decided to help her. That same night, they dissolved the spell made by Apollo and transformed Marlea from a statue into the sound of the sea.

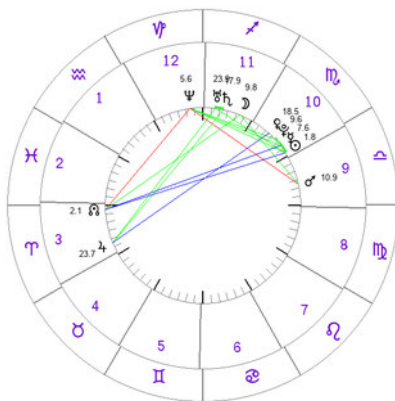
Epilogue: Apollo was devastated when Marlea disappeared and missed her greatly. Since then, every night he sits on a rock near the sea to hear her sublime voice. During full moon nights, he takes his lyre out and recites her verses of desperate love.



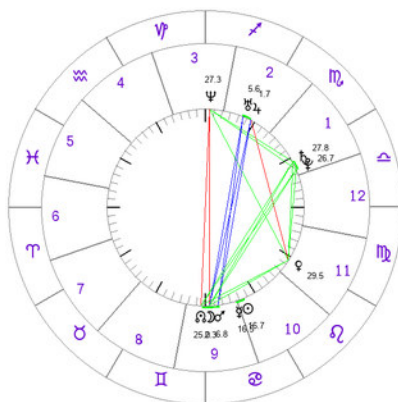




Ayesha Kamal Khan

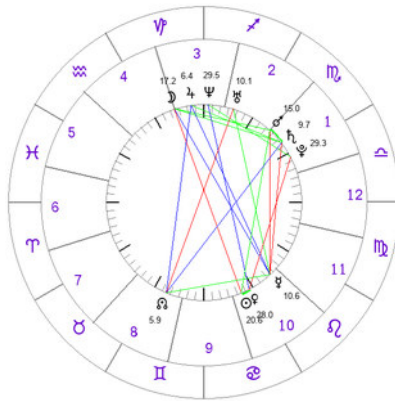


Mariangela Ciccarello





Joshua J. Araujo



Catalina Tuca

