

In Athens we found mixed feelings about Europe. There are some people who continue to believe in Europe. Then there are those who never believed in it and lastly those who have been traumatized by the crisis.

For the second part of our journey through Europe, we chose Germany who is very often seen as the nation that wants to dictate the conditions to the entire European Union. We will be in Berlin at an important time in many respects. We will be there during the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the wall, with the economy slowing down and the far right on the rise; and just a few weeks after the 80th anniversary of the start of World War II. Here, too, we will try to understand the Germans' feelings towards Europe and also how Germans react to the accusations that are often levelled at their country.

Lisa Borgiani Marta Ottaviani

What is Europe to you?

Greece 2019

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What is

EUROPE to you

?

Greece
2019

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What is

EUROPE to you ?

Greece
2019

τὸ εὐδαιμον τὸ ἐλεύθερον, τὸ δ' ἐλεύθερον τὸ εὐψυχον

The Secret of Happiness is Freedom. The Secret of Freedom is Courage.

Thucydides, II, 43, 4.

Lisa Borgiani, Marta Ottaviani

What is Europe to you?

Athens, Greece, 2019

Texts and interviews by Marta Ottaviani

Photographs by Lisa Borgiani

Graphic design by Alessandro Colombo

What is Europe to you?

We are used to seeing politicians answer this question. In the last European elections and in the months leading up to them, the debate on the European Union was more heated than ever. We can say that different, often incompatible, models of Europe have clashed.

This contrast has been exacerbated by the difficulties associated with the eurozone's economic crisis, by the management of mass migration and, lastly, by the affirmation of nationalist and populist movements. With their demands and often incendiary messages, they have contributed deeply to exacerbate the debate around the meaning of Europe today.

The two of us are part of a generation that, during our youth, has experienced some of the most exciting moments since the birth of the European Union: the advent of the euro, the fall of borders and a general climate of optimism about the future, despite the political difficulties and differences.

It's been a little over 20 years, and feelings have radically changed. We felt compelled, as Europeans, to depict the situation, albeit in our own way. And the only approach that felt really useful to us was to go and talk to people. We took a map of our beloved Europe and began to outline the stages of our journey.

Our long reportage into the European soul started with two trips, to Athens and Berlin, because of the Greek general elections and the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Wall. But then we continued with a more thematic thread.

We decided to go to Brussels, the political heart of Europe; to London, the Europe that no longer wants to be Europe; to Paris, the Europe

Lisa Borgiani
Marta Ottaviani

devastated by terrorist attacks; to Warsaw and Budapest, the Europe of the Visegrad Pact; to Vienna, the Europe threatening to close its border with Italy; and to the Baltics, the Europe where you can still smell the Cold War.

We've talked to hundreds of people of different ethnicities, social backgrounds, cultures and religions. It was important for us to look for women, men, entrepreneurs, refugees, and volunteers to use different approaches and to ask everyone the same question:
What is Europe to you?

For everyone, there is a portrait, their idea of Europe and a key word, because it is through key words that concepts are synthesized.

The result is a mosaic of feelings. The tiles all have a different nuance and make up Europe as it is today.

Athens, where the roots of Europe lie.

Athens is a city full of contrasts, where the signs of the crisis give way to a vibrant energy, which can be felt on the streets. A messy and frantic city on the one hand, but surprising and full of life on the other, too often a victim of stereotypes that want to define it only by the crisis.

Athens shows all its scars of the crisis to those who walk through its neighborhoods. What one never notices enough, is how this city is trying to react with optimism and confidence to something far bigger than her, and how, in some ways, it can even be an example for the other countries of the European Union.

Our journey began in the center of the city, where tourists are challenged and charmed by archaeological testimonies with their beauty, from the restaurants with their scents and with the refined architecture of their interiors and from the shops with their colors and the captivating merchandise they offer.

Walking around the hill of the Acropolis, you will meet a city with a great desire to live and that loves to reflect on itself. The complex that houses the Parthenon, visible from all parts of the city, stands majestically, ready to remind everyone where the European roots lie. The Acropolis Museum is an architectural masterpiece embedded in the landscape. The area of the former Gazometer, today is a center of exhibitions, concerts and workshops. Symbols of a metropolis reflecting on itself.

Leaving the immediate center, we immersed ourselves in the different souls that pervade the city. In the area near Victory Square, we experienced first-hand the tragedy of migrants, forced to live in precarious conditions. In Kipseli, once an area of the well-to-do bourgeoisie, between the tree-lined boulevards and cafes that recall the vibrancy

Marta Ottaviani

of happy days of the near past; we talked to its inhabitants about the daily difficulties of those who have been facing the economic crisis and the sacrifices imposed by austerity for years to save the national economy.

In Nea Smirna, where, from the beginning of the 19th century, the Greeks who came from Turkey began to settle and which today is a residential area we visited one of the many social pharmacies that arise in the city. Here they showed us how, with a little organization, but above all a lot of generosity and availability of time, you can run a clinic for the less fortunate, with a dental practice derived from a kitchen.

In Exarchia, we breathed the air of a neighborhood that lives halfway between gentrification and social tensions, made even more palpable by the intense activity of anarchist groups, that on more than one occasion collided with the fringes of the extreme right. One more demonstration of how much energy flows into the Greek capital and how it finds different ways to emerge on the surface.

Our journey to the districts of Athens ended at Piraeus, the ancient port of the polis in the classical age and today almost a city in the city, with its sea houses and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, with its roof designed by Renzo Piano, which represents a city that looks to the future, despite everything.

What we have found in its neighbourhoods is a great desire to reflect on Europe, sometimes in a positive spirit, sometimes in critical positions. But never with indifference.

Franz

spice vendor



Europe is

Opportunity

Name

Franz

Place

Athens Central Market

Profession

Spice vendor

Andreas

biochemist



Europe is

Hell

Name

Demetrios

Place

Panestimiou Square

Profession

Taxi driver

*Europe is the Hell to me.
Crisis left me without a job for
three years. It was very hard
to be back on track. I knew
what misery is. And the fault
is of Europe.*



Angeliki

retired



Europe is

Victim

Name

Angeliki

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Retired

I know that Greece is only a victim of Europe. What Greece has been through is hard to explain. They literally reduced us to misery.



Dimitra

retired



Europe is
Slavery

Name

Dimitra

Place

Kipseli

Profession

retired

*We became slaves of Europe.
We did our mistake, we have
our fault, of course, but you
cannot kill people when they
are already close to death. I
receive 300 euros as pension
and I spend 350 euros for my
bills.*



Yorgos

retired



Europe is

Democracy

Name

Yorgos

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Retired

*Europe gave us a lot of pain.
But, nevertheless, I love Europe and when I think about Europe the first word I recall is democracy.*



Mariana

supermarket employee

Europe is

Help



Name

Nikolas

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Journalist

I do think that Europe is something good, that helped us when we needed it. We must never forget that we made huge mistakes. I am sure that now everything will be better.



Stafis

mechanic



Europe is
Money

Name

Stafis

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Mechanic

Europe means to have the same currency, the same program. It is the money that arrived in Greece in these years. It is a good thing, that's why other countries would like to join.



Eleonora

stationer



Europe is

Guarantee

Name

Eleonora

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Stationer

Greece would be nothing without Europe. Europe is everything to Greece, it is our guarantee. I am a migrant from Albania, I came here several years ago. I found a better future here.



Dimitri

cake designer

Europe is

Opportunity



Name

Dimitri

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Cake designer

I think that Europe is a great opportunity and I am sure that in Athens most of the people think like me. But Europe must not forget that we pay a high price for this opportunity.



Kostas&Yannis

butchers

Europe is
Help



Name

Kostas&Yannis

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Butchers

*Europe has been such
a help for us.
We did the right
choice to stay in it.*



Roland

hairdresser



Europe is

*United State
of
Europe*

Name

Roland

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Hairdresser

I think that Europe should become like the United States of America. If we are able to make the EU work in the same way, then everything will be perfect.



Angeliki

photographer



Europe is

Optimism

Name

Angeliki

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Photographer

It is problematic to me to reply to this question. Bruxelles imposed on us a lot of sacrifices, it helped us so much. I want to be optimist and look only at the bright side.



Panos, Prokopis, Panos



Europe is

Hipocrisy

Name

Panos

Place

Kipseli

Profession

Footballer

Europe it is something that pretends to take care of us, but in fact it does not.



Mario

pet shop owner



Europe is
Nothing

Name

Mario

Place

Nea Smyrna

Profession

Pet shop owner

*Europe is something that
does not really mean anything
to me.*



Sophia volunteer in a social pharmacy



Europe is

Disappointment

Name

Sophia

Place

Nea Smyrna

Profession

Volunteer in a social pharmacy

*I think that Europe
abandoned us
when we needed most help.*



Vassilis

singer



Europe is
Change

Name

Vassilis

Place

Exarchia

Profession

Singer

*Europe should change.
We need a Union that cares
more about humans and less
about the numbers.*



Dimitri

student

Europe is
Effort



Name

Dimitri

Place

Exarchia

Profession

Student

Europe is a great project but we should make more effort to be united.



Fanasis

bookseller



Europe is

Cooperation

Name

Fanasis

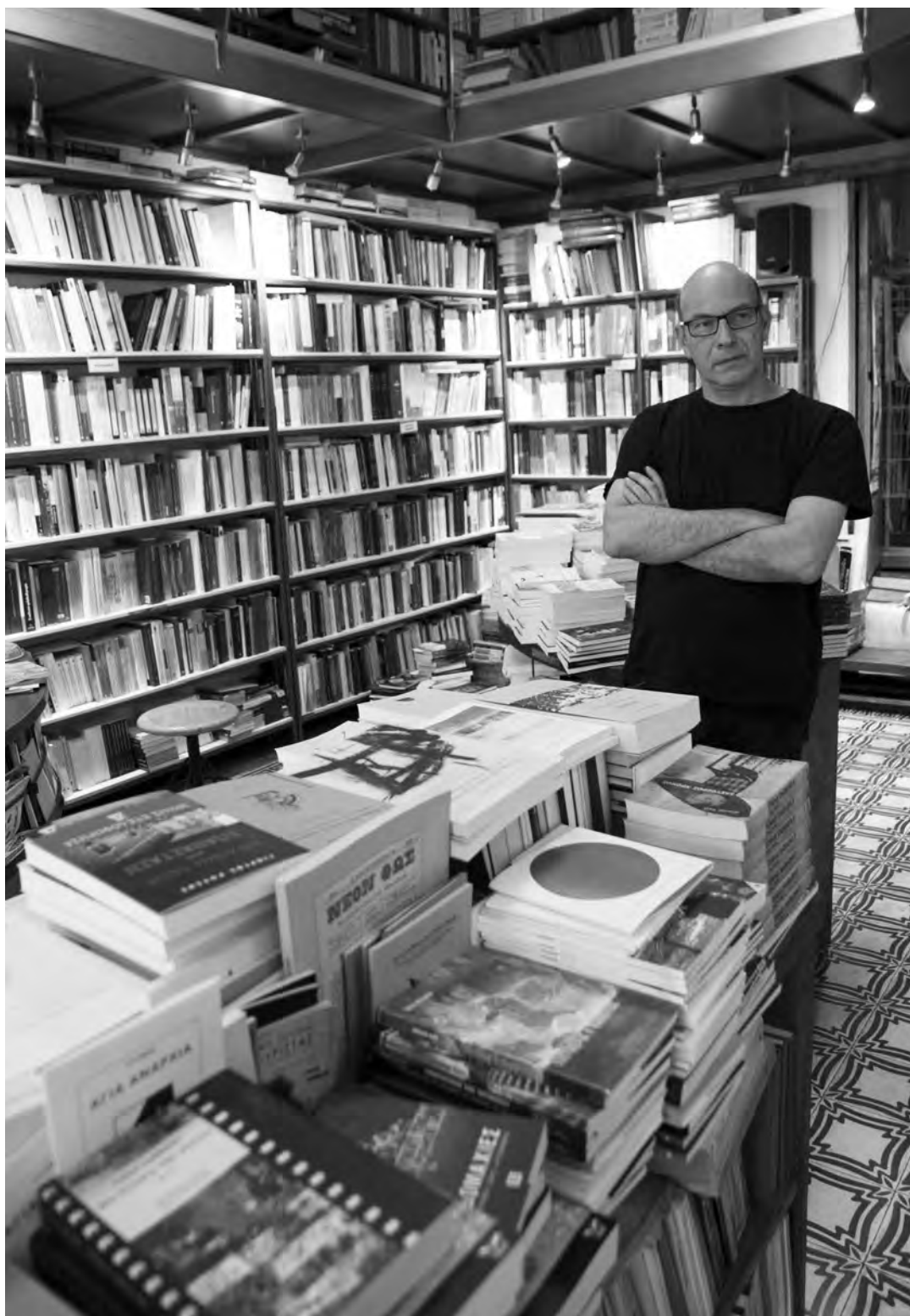
Place

Exarchia

Profession

Bookseller

I think that Europe should be a cooperation among people, but it is not something that can be managed throughout their governments. Maybe it is not possible at all. Personally, I have never believed in Europe.



Efthimia

retired

Europe is
Beauty



Name

Efthimia

Place

Exarchia

Profession

Retired previously employed at the Athens
National Museum

*I will say it very simply:
Europe is beauty for me.
Like the one you can find
in our museums.*



Kostantina

student



Europe is

Capitalism

Name

Kostantina

Place

Exarchia

Profession

Student

*I think that Europe
is essentially capitalism.
It is demonstrated by how
they treated Greece. It has
been something inhuman.*



Vasilis

journalist

Europe is

Idea



Name

Vasilis

Place

Psirri

Profession

Journalist

Europe for me is peace and I do think that it is the best idea that one has never had. Of course, there are also a lot of problems still to be solved. We have a common currency, but not a common identity.



Maria

businesswoman



Europe is

Something inside

Name

Maria

Place

Aiolu Street

Profession

Businesswoman

*I think that Europe has still to
find a clear path.
Europe means peace,
opportunity, cooperation.
It is something you have
inside you and that pushes
you ahead. Unfortunately,
nowadays, we compete a lot,
but we do not discuss enough.*





Europe is
Nothing

Name

Mizah

Place

Omonia Square

Profession

Refugee

*Europe is nothing to me,
maybe because I am in
Europe now, but I do not have
nothing. I live in the streets
and from my perspective
I cannot really understand
what Europe is.*



Mohammad

refugee



Europe is

Opportunity

Name

Mohammad

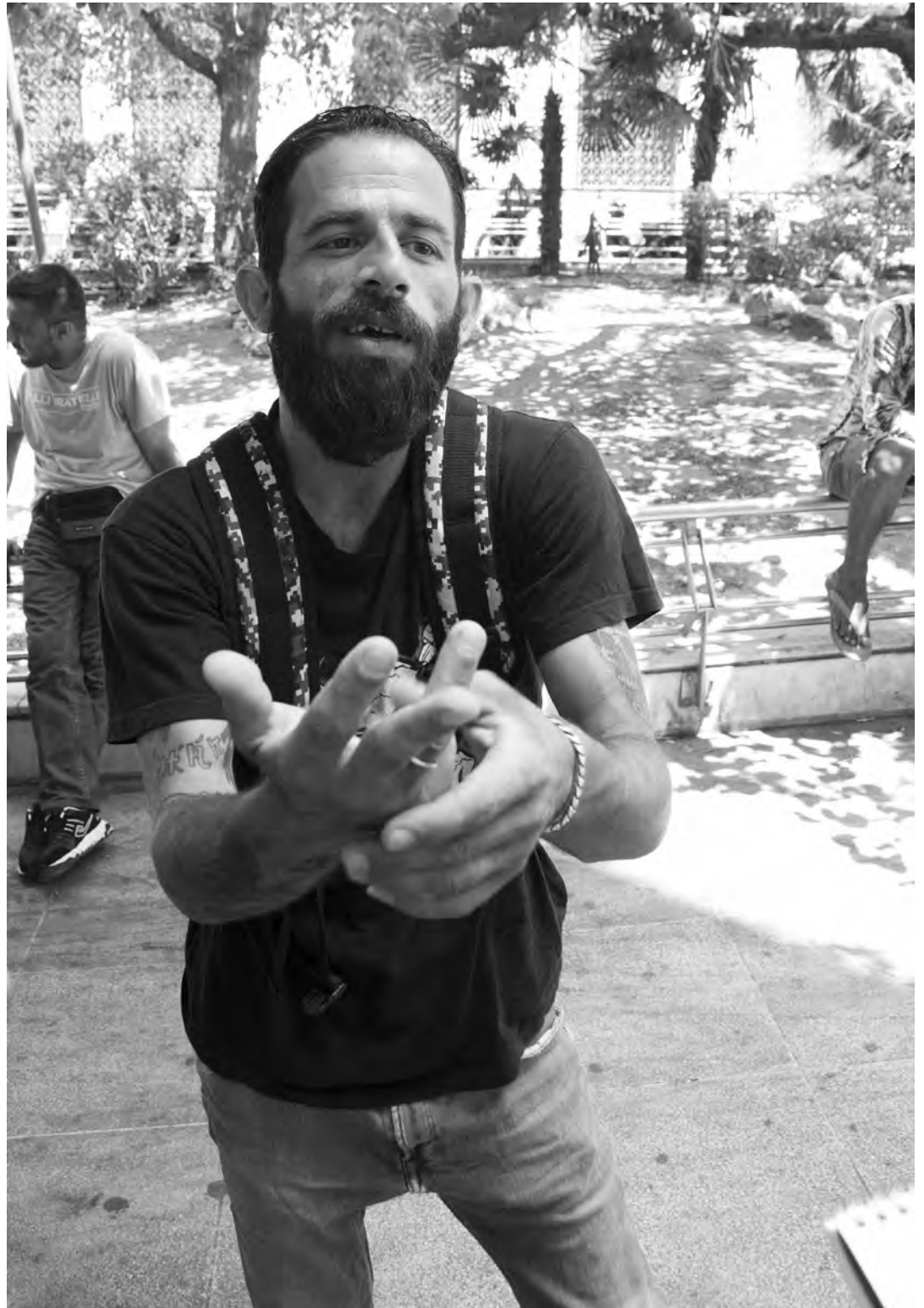
Place

Omonia Square

Profession

Refugee

*Europe means security to me.
I cannot say that I have a
good life. But I feel safe here,
and it is so meaningful to me.*



Yannis

fish seller



Europe is
Shelter

Name

Yannis

Place

Athens Central Market

Profession

Fish seller

*I think that Europe means
security by all means.
Being a member of a great
organization keeps one under
a shelter, nothing can harm
him.*



Sofia

public employee



Europe is

Family

Name

Sofia

Place

Syntagma Square during Syriza
Party electoral meeting

Profession

Public employee

Europe is a big family, providing that there are the same opportunities for everyone.



Matina

teacher



Europe is

Heritage

Name

Matina

Place

Syntagma Square during Syriza
Party electoral meeting

Profession

Teacher

Europe is something important. It is a heritage, something that must be protected.



Giorgina

unenmployed



Europe is

People

Name

Giorgina

Place

Syntagma Square during Syriza
Party electoral meeting

Profession

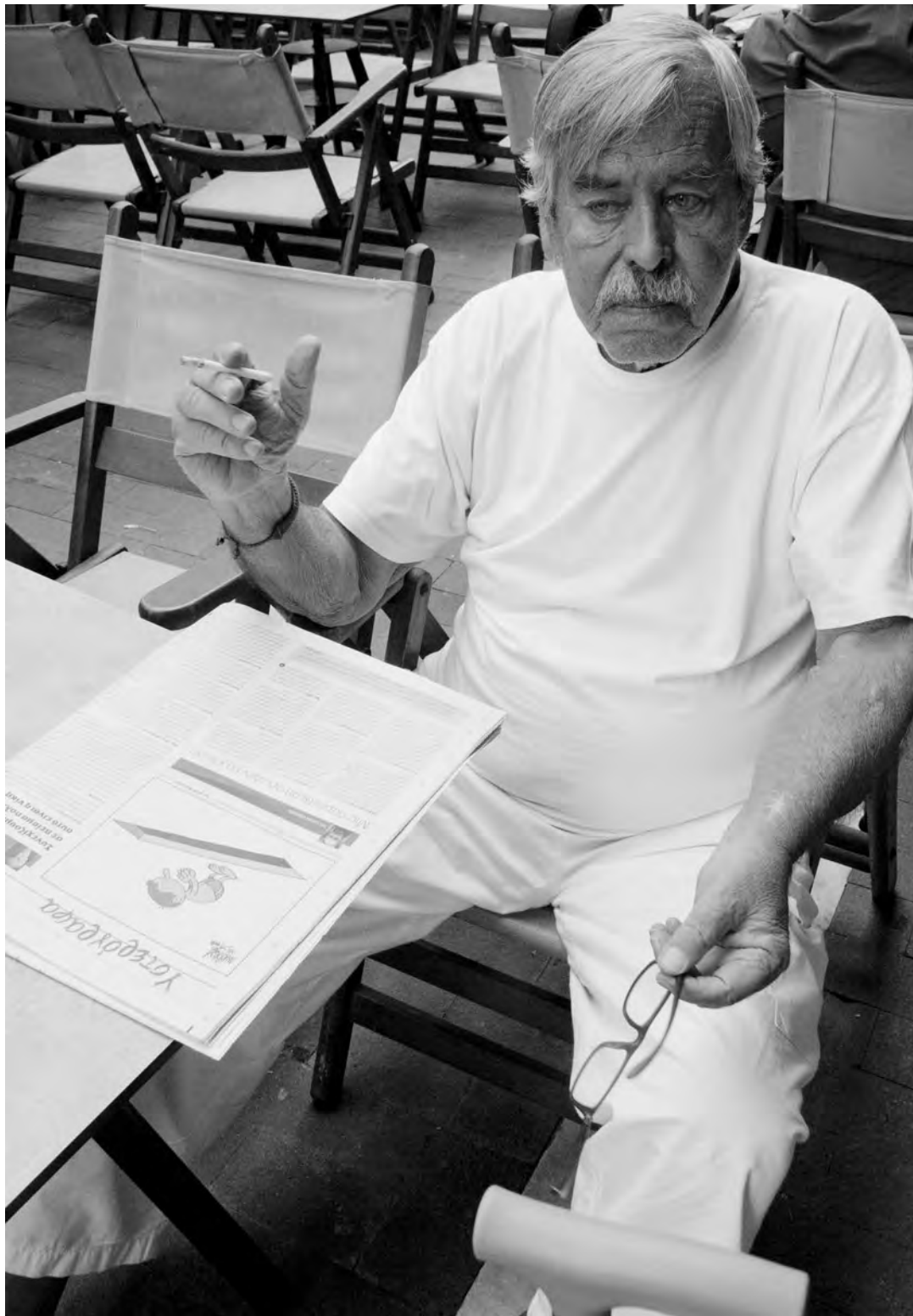
Unemployed

I think Europe is made up of people, not politicians. If we could talk to each other more as peoples, we could work on common problems. Finding solutions together. This would make Europe truly united.



Napoleone

retired



Europe is
Brothel

Name

Napoleone

Place

Exarchia

Profession

Retired

*I think that Europe is a great
brothel. Proliferates on the
skin of those who live there.*



Two Athenians



Europe is

Love

Name

Two Athenians

Place

Syntagma Square

Profession

-

We love Europe!



Gina

journalist



Europe is
Federation

Name

Gina

Place

Syntagma Square

Profession

Journalist

*I have a positive thinking
about Europe and I imagine it
as a federation of states.*



Yiannis



Europe is

Culture

Name

Yiannis

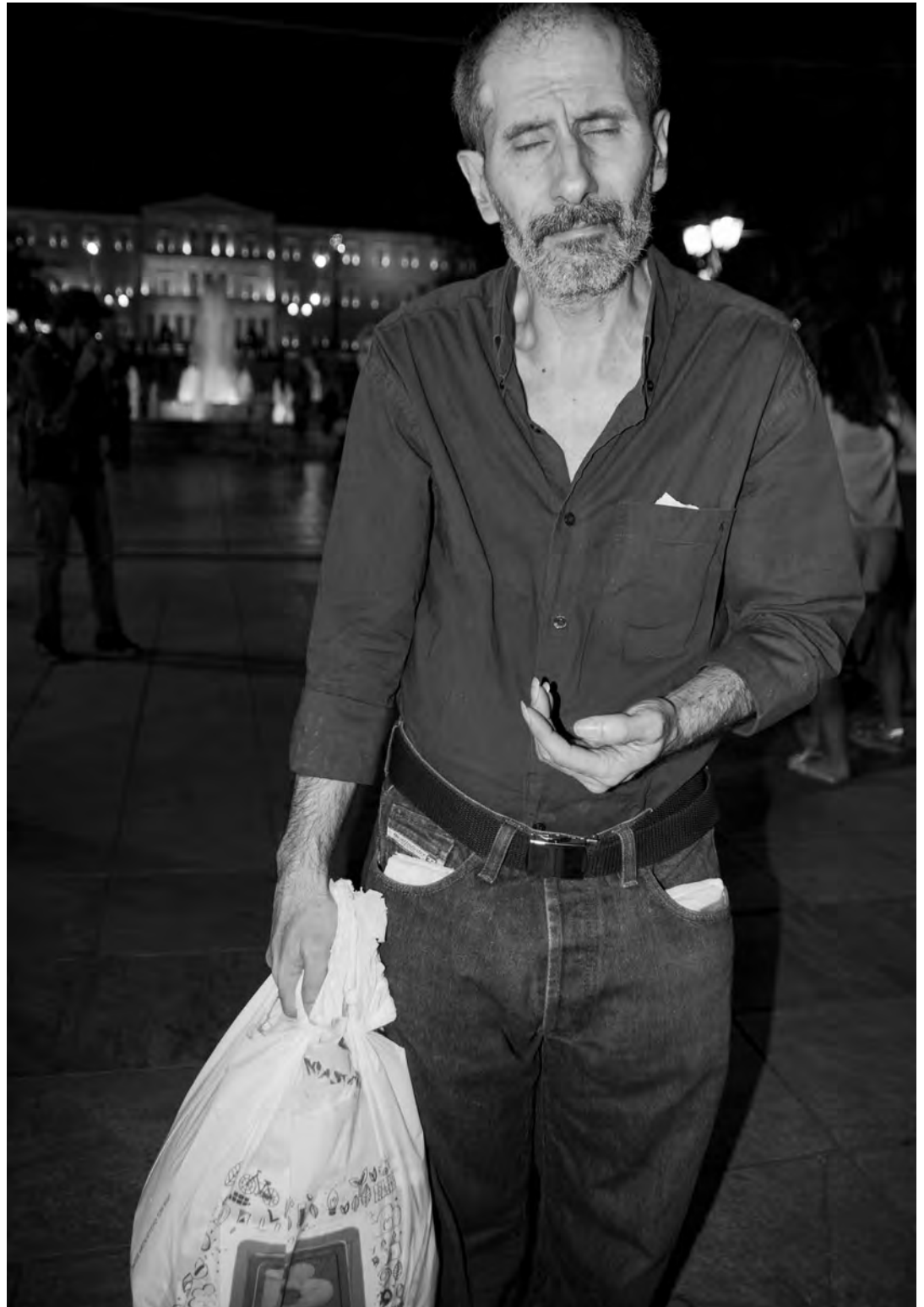
Place

Syntagma Square

Profession

-

*Europe is everything.
People are struggling every-
day and they should be hap-
py to live here. Europe for me
is democracy, culture, many
jobs and... Greatness. Prime
ministers of Europe think very
seriously about people's pro-
blems, but they should think
more about the poorest.*



Nikos

doctor



Europe is

Dignity

Name

Nikos

Place

Herodes Atticus Theater

Profession

Doctor

*I think that Europe is a good
and right thing till it does not
insult the dignity of people*



One Athenian



Europe is

Disorder

Name

One Athenian

Place

Athens Beach

Profession

-

They keep on talking about economy, but when it deals with economy and finance, Europe is poorly organized.



Three Athenians

Europe is

Community



Name

Three Athenians

Place

Athens beach

Profession

-

*For me Europe
is a community.
I know it is a very simple concept,
but it is already hard to fulfill it.*



Bilal

Europe is
Holiday



Name

Bilal

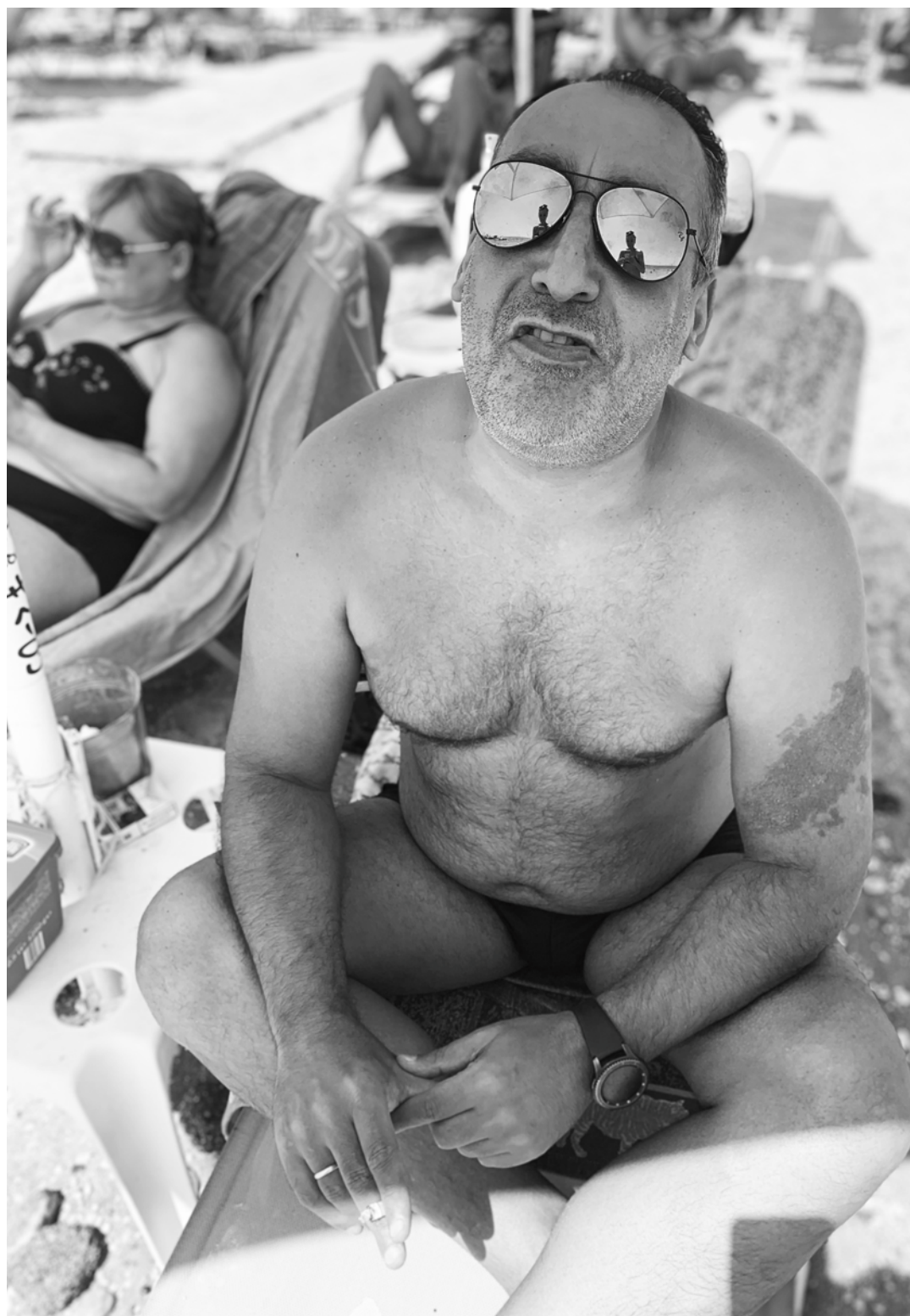
Place

Athens beach

Profession

-

I come from Lebanon but I have been living in Europe since a while. I cannot really understand what it is, but surely it is great for holiday and food!



Christos

restaurant owner



Europe is

Flexibility

Name

Christos

Place

Restaurant Rakadiko, Pireo

Profession

Restaurant owner

I believed a lot in the European Union and I still want to do that. But Bruxelles must show more flexibility and listen to us more vulnerable.



Yorgos

retired



Europe is

Ruin

Name

Yorgos

Place

Athens metro

Profession

retired

*I think that Europe is a ruin,
at least for me.
Bruxelles impoverished me
and now I cannot neither take
care of my health.*



One Athenian



Europe is

People

Name

One Athenian

Place

Vuelo Beach

Profession

-

*I really hope all the people
of Europe are going to be
united.*



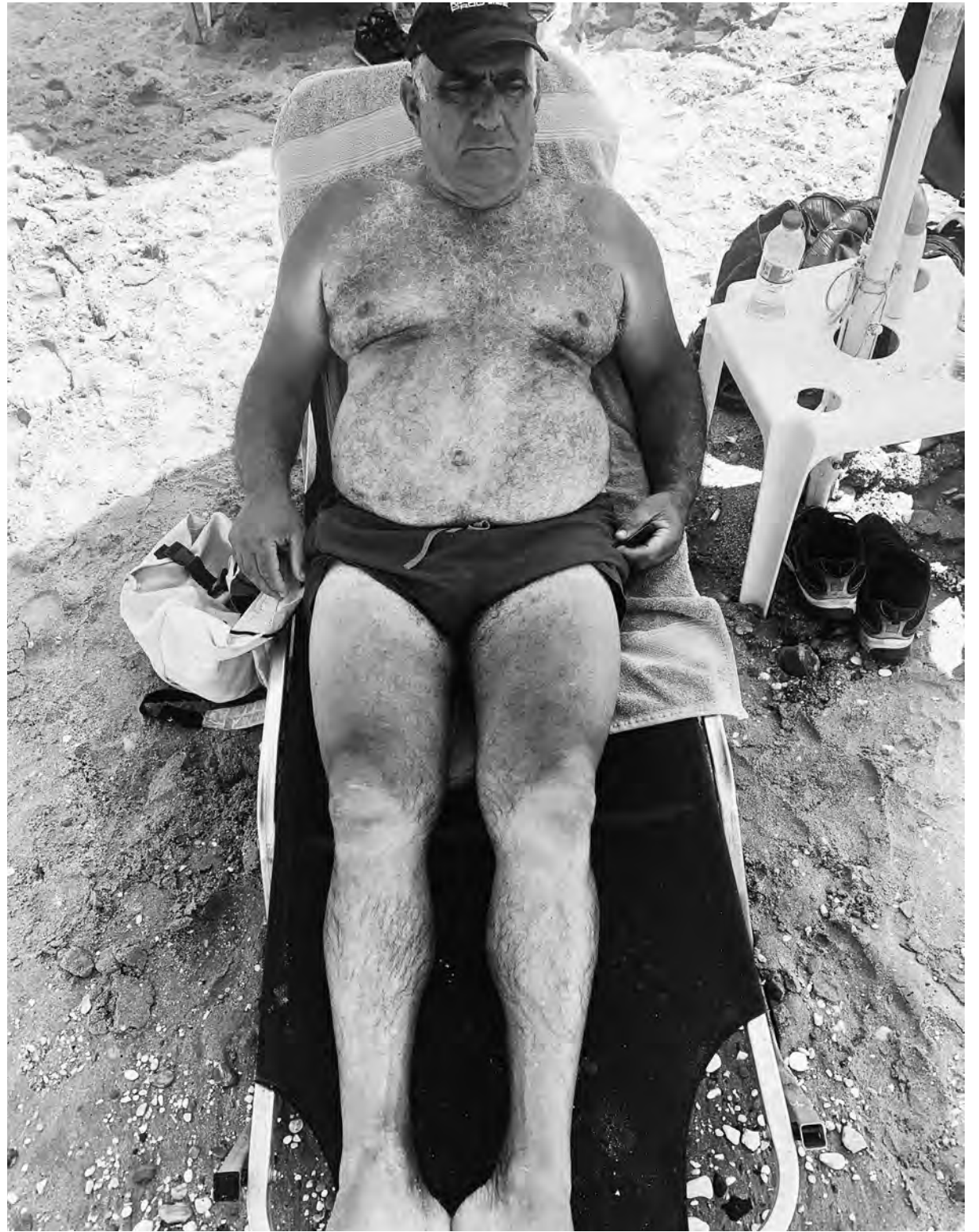
Secret moments

We spoke to many people during our trip.

Some of them agreed to be interviewed but they did not want it to be published.

Some people spoke through their own eyes.







FUCK NGO'S CHARITY
CLASS SOLIDARITY

ΟΙ ΚΑΛΥΤΕΡΟΙ ΔΕ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΝ

ΑΝΤΙΦΑΣΙΣΤΙΚΗ
ΑΝΤΕΠΙΘΕΣΗ
ΟΡΜΑ

R S

ΔΙΕΘΝΙΣΤ
ΤΑΞΙΚΗ
ΑΜΗΛΕΤ

























Lisa Borgiani, Marta Ottaviani

What is Europe to you?

the European project

Interviews and texts by Marta Ottaviani

Photographs by Lisa Borgiani

www.whatseurope.eu

Graphic and cover design by Alessandro Colombo

Lisa Borgiani

Lisa Borgiani (Verona, 1979) is an Italian artist and photographer. Her work ranges from photography, installations and mobile sculptures. She has exhibited in various galleries, museums, international art fairs and public institutions: Embassy of Italy in Washington D.C., European Parliament in Brussels, Italian Cultural Institute of San Francisco, London, Singapore and others. For several years she has collaborated with architects, researchers, Italian and American universities, directors and economists.

In October 2017 her permanent installation "Waves of Light" was inaugurated at the San Raffaele Hospital in Milan.

In June 2018 her work "The unexpected meets rationalism" won the tender organized by the Brera Academy with the residence on the Comacina Island (Como), where she created an installation inside the house designed by the architect Pietro Lingeri and built in 1939.

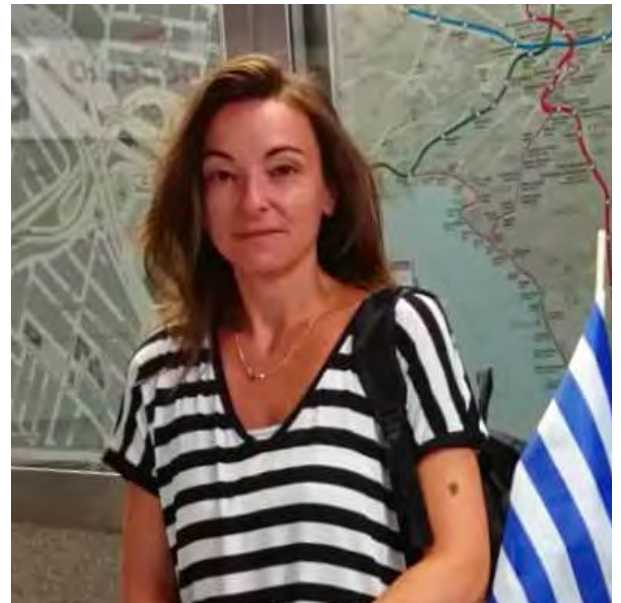
In October 2018 she participated with the installation "enne points of tension" at the Fabbrica del Vapore as a Special Project, Step Art Fair 2018, Milan Sculpture.

In March 2019 she created the installation "The unexpected meets rationalism" at Villa Leoni, Ossuccio (CO) continuing her dialogue with the rationalist architecture.

Since 2003 she has been working on various street photography projects in Bosnia, south America, United States, Italy, Israel and Greece.

Lisa Borgiani lives and works in Milan.

www.lisaborgiani.com



Marta Ottaviani

Marta Ottaviani (Milan, 1976) is an Italian freelance journalist and analyst, focused on Turkey, Greece and Russia. She contributes to high profile Italian daily newspapers such as Avvenire and La Stampa. Her first two books were published in 2008 and 2010.

In 2005, she moved to Istanbul to nurture her interest in Turkish politics and to further develop her expertise. She worked as a correspondent for several media organisations.

She has been a direct witness of the ascent of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his authoritarian revolution. From 2008, she went to Athens regularly, to report on the debt crisis and the political situation in the country.

She decided to capture what she had observed in Turkey in her 2016 book, *Il Reïs. Come Erdoğan ha cambiato la Turchia* (The Reïs. How Erdoğan changed Turkey). In this book, Marta Ottaviani explains how Turkish internal and external policies changed, describing how this affected the local society and increasingly distanced the country from the European Union. The book has been extremely well received in the academic and mainstream environments and has won several awards.



Marta Ottaviani currently lives in Milan with her bevoled cat, Erdogat, and she is starting to deal with Russia as well, deepening the knowledge of the country's language and culture.

She likes to described herself like a diehard optimist, wannabe lindy hopper and proudly European.

@martaottaviani



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