

A Dedication,
as Opening Notes to an Exhibition Series at Gallery 8:
for Timea Junghaus and the Staff, Guests & Friends

13 March 2015, Budapest, Hungary

By Camilo C. Antonio

I have accepted this invitation to make the opening notes marking an important step in a series of educational exhibitions here in Gallery8: because I know that Timea Junghaus and her colleagues have recognized that I also know how it feels to have to tear down the masks as a way of unbinding humanity's chains...

masks and chains that are tightened or multiplied from that peculiar lens, "the Gaze": the medieval EYE in our digital camera that fixes and memorializes as it angles the desired body, like the disembodied poetry that have been also dressing up in dressing down your Roma bodies in history...

That Gaze racializes through the tyranny of static ways of looking-sans-seeing in a misguided cultural politics by those who wield those whips-as-truths that make us altogether more slavishly unfree...

we still have to unmask and deconstruct that prevailing Gaze from which that label "Race", in all its variants, emerge and which form the power bases of the overpowering judgmental mind that dominates and suffuses public spaces and media discourse...

we need to unmask that prevailing gaze of binding Race until all humans become free from the shackles of ignorance and arrogance imposed upon minorities who, altogether, form the majority, including you, the Roma, but who have been paralyzed and who still need to awaken and re-occupy the cerebral spaces of imperial cultural implantations...

we must unmask that disturbing Gaze until all can transcend and transform the non-freeways that we have been renegotiating within the terms of ongoing social inequalities and political injustices.

Like you, Roma and non-Roma gathered here today, I am a nomad at heart. But, perhaps, I may not have been consistent in being proud of that diasporic part in my brain and genes.

Like many of you: I have seen the silence of trees that have been praised for being rooted and potted in their assigned places

to dance under the free air and giving skies...

Like many of you: I have tasted the whispers through the trees nodding as when we accept to flee like the birds who seek the noise and the smells of the cities, to move in urbane ways and to don the civil-urban masks...

Like many of you: I have been encrypted within the folds of that wonderful feeling when, rising like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes of the subaltern, I was told and made to feel in the manifold forms of mediated modernity: "you may be no longer there; but you are not yet here"...

It is human encounters like those with you, Timea and staff in Gallery8, and the example of many other seers who empower us to move beyond imposed-upon-destinies: to become non-gazers in the diaspora as we naturally respond to the call: that the human urge to fulfil oneself is out there, interactively, with other beings where we each are empowered to discover what civil liberties mean and thus make and unmake civil-EYE-sense-ations.

Like many of you who refuse to raise your hands above the hypocrisies of our emerging histories, I know how it is to be forced to choose between a grateful response that must contain angers and seeds of hatred so as not to disgrace what civilizing tools we have been given and that response, which out rightly manifests tricks we have learned with distasteful or vengeful knowing.

Well, I am grown old with the boomer babes and countercultural children of 1968: who must be consoled that there are much more now of us out there, who, in our renewed heart of arts, have been crying and laughing out the pain in disembodied brains, as when we renew our promise in protests: not just to give peace a chance but especially so that, you, the Roma can share even if, as yet, piece-by-piece, how to let the body free with gusto: "con duendes del flamenco" as they say in Sevilla, in that song and dance only you, the Roma, can give...

Camilo@camiloantonio.com Gallery8, Budapest, Hungary, 13 March 2015,