

Juan Duque, Athens 06/2024

## Blue Bags

Moving things, carrying things, moving with things, 10kg, 8 kg max, 23 kg intercontinental flights, two small but apparently very heavy bags; blue bags, blue plastic bags; they are wet; they sweat tiny salty drops.

A woman, very slim, short arms, short limbs, is carrying with her probably more than her own weight. Bodily endurance and resilience, reclaiming humanity while walking.

Synthagma, Victoria Square, places of high exchange; many lives, many smiles, full of tears, tearing down, tired of being rebuilt.

Many shadows are timeless, passing by, kilos of life moving.

Tiny things we carry in our pockets, tiny arms, small fingers, like spider legs, moving things, carrying things, arrastrando cuerpos, things being rolled, unfolded, packed unpacked, disposed, thrown away and hardly consumed.

Bending broken bones, spines of pine, wooden cypress tree.

El Zocalo en Mexico DF, Plaza Simon Bolivar in Bogota, yielding stones, animal fat melts, adapts, and contorneandose with life.

We all are moving, moving things, and things are moving us. We are heavily affected by imposition, the mandatory weight of cultural appropriation, and the modern epistemological weight to be dismantled.

I am carrying a tiny silver virgin Mary medallita in my wallet; my mother gave it to me twenty years ago when I first migrated to London. It carries the soul.

The woman in front of me carries 50 kg; she stops just to grab the bags tighter.

We keep closer to what we also must let go soon, what we belong to, what somebody told us to carry for them, and what others impose onto our bodies through assimilation, oppression, and colonization.

We carry things because of work, because it is our task, because it is the job that no one else wants to do, and because someone else decided to rest and enjoy.

We also carry the joy of others, collectively and precariously, in the community.

We carry bodies, bones, flesh, organs, blood and the blue bags keep sweating.

We carry day- and nightlights, exhaustion in our constant need for validation, to be listened to attentively, and to be respected in our native language.

We carry with us property, private dreams, material possessions, emancipations, and translations into the colonizer's language.

We carry cages of knowledge that have been suppressed but are now innovative and critical and will suddenly liberate us. It will liberate our rights to free movement and our being differently in the world.

Up the street and down the metro, we are carrying the promise of learning how to unlearn. We carry the overweight of giving our knowledge. We carry the worrying feeling of having to pay for carrying to survive, to liberate someone else.

Once, I carried a small stone in my pocket around Seoul city to throw it away into the Han River, but while walking, the weight got heavier, the stone got bigger, my skin got yellow, and my legs got shorter, just to keep carrying. Once I lost 23 kg of things, books, and personal belongings at Heathrow airport, the loss became a heavy dream that haunts back into heavy bags.

Moving things, carrying things. A heavy weight is to be dehumanized, stigmatized by the colour of skin, objectified, appropriated, consumed, violated, and transacted to economic exchange.

White eyes, white teeth, white nails, white bones, white Adidas sneakers. We vibrate together, we are invisible together, the call of an ancestral part of me is sleeping on the floor of Noord station in Brussels, Matongé, Molenbeek, Parc Royal, Leopold's plain, Marollen.

Once, I saw the shadow of what remains as human in the streets of Brussels at the stairs of the EU parliament. Heavy walking, wet skin, wet clothes, wet shoes; a surreal/conceptual but inclusive/diverse multitude carrying things under the weight of a grey, dense, low sky.

I feel connected to times when people from one of the most ancient continents were sometidos, traisonados, enjaulados, and the waves of the Atlantique clashed with the shores of the Noordzee.

Blue imperial, orange Dutch wax, chocolate smell in Tervuren, San Basilio Palenque, Palmares, Martinique, Léopoldville/Kinshasa. Quilombos trying to resist and re-exist in temporalities of fugacity; I'm part of this too, my divided soul, my rhythmical sadness in fluidity with the Congo river, floating on a cage made with Swedish wood.

Carrying things, moving things, feeling the wound of time still open.

Once, I moved all my belongings, heavy things, during a long day through the narrow cobblestone streets of Gent, up and down, little sidewalks, little doors, little houses, little canals, little understanding, little empathy.

My name is not in a new address, my past is blurred, and my new life is in a non-welcoming place.

Heavy preconceptions about you, heavy opinions about you, heavy suggestions about which language you should talk, because it is time, because *I saw you around before*. Heavy divisions on how to think and do things, heavy inquiring about why you are away from where you come from.

Uniformity, monoculture, and nationalism dictate how your human subjectivity should look. I am still wondering what the ontologies, the roots, and the geology strata of this mono-humanism are; what is at the core of this epistemic enlightening, and what is the potential mobilizing progress at the centre of this civilized culture.

The dragon's fire and the black lion's sharp nails are not strong enough to tear down the rocky, heavy walls that build epistemic comfort, the lazy centralized gaze, and the ignorant thinking without the body.

Structural ignorance, cold old heavy ignorance, like a foggy winter morning in the north of the world.

Fleur-de-lys is still burning, marking. De ontwijkende blikken is more attracted by the decor and bourgeois grandeur.

Carrying with you what we exchange, I deposit the weight of my thoughts, words, sounds, and imaginations onto you. We create a temporary knot together with life through conversations; we lift that weight, but it becomes heavier with questions and misunderstandings, and the weight makes us roll up to the ground; it unfolds inside us.

Carrying as response-ability as the ability to be responsive to be affected with care, as Simone Forti teaches us. Carrying the movement of other bodies, animals, humans, matter, the stars, and the woman keeps carrying 50 kg at Syntagma square; she doesn't pass the weight, and nobody notes her because the bags are in all our arms, too.

She sits on the floor and smiles in a trance, 40 degrees, the heat of the day, the sea's salt and the sand in the air from the Sahara Desert flames in her red eyes. She stands up and continues carrying history, carrying Napoleon, the culture, the German kings, the West, Philosophy, Oratory, Teoria, Metaphor, Metamorphosis and mass tourism.

Walking down the long road, she hits the Piraeus port and jumps onto a ferry with the heavy blue wet plastic bags, her arms strongly carrying even more; she carries Hydra, Anafi, Tinos, Mykonos, Santorini, The Aegean, and all of Attica. She is now carrying to be the witness of something the youngsters had not seen yet. The woman looks back, smiling and dancing because her living task is to keep carrying.