



KYRIAKI GONI: NETWORKS OF TRUST

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The notion of the network is a slippery one. It is often employed throughout critical literature and artistic or curatorial statements to describe actual or imagined connections between subjects, technical devices, locations, and other kinds of actors. The idea of a network is not unlike how a 3D-image emerges from a blurry drawing on a 2D-page: you see the network if you intend to, and by squinting your eyes, its contours will appear. While it's easy to propose a network based on trust, how may we move from just pointing at it, to producing it, and embodying it?

Athens-based artist Kyriaki Goni's exhibition on display at SixtyEight Art Institute is an attempt to do precisely this. Overall, the exhibition is an inquiry into and proposal for establishing potential and future networks of trust.

articulations, Goni's exhibition maps and produces a network that connects the Aegean island of Tilos, including its history of insular adaptations and remoteness, to Athens, Berlin, Copenhagen, Manchester, Paros, Samos, Shanghai, and other possible and future locations. The idea of the network has to be understood in this expanded sense: as the existing support structures and infrastructures in the Aegean archipelago and as the connections between nodes made possible through the setting up of the local Wi-Fi network.

"Trust comes into play when there is risk."

(1) The notions of trust and networks of trust form a field of study within social psychology that explains trust as something that gets established through social exchange and the maintenance of relations, often based on norms of reciprocity, but which is at the same time a prerequisite for taking part in the exchange. Furthermore, trust is produced or maintained through social institutions and exchange systems, moving from norms to networks that govern interactions and relations. But even in so-called networked societies, social networks are crucial to the individual's access to support and social resources. Goni's exhibition engages with this dual understanding of the network, looking



Kyriaki Goni, Networks of trust. Photo: Jenny Sundby.

In 2019, Kyriaki Goni installed the first local network on Tilos, a small island in the Aegean archipelago, covering an area of about 64,5 square metres and with a population of around 500 inhabitants. It is an isolated and remote place when viewed from central Greece, even though it shares its specific conditions of situatedness with other islands in the area. Goni wrote in one of the journal entries on view in the gallery that it took 14 hours to get there.

The flag, flying outside the gallery and captured in a photographic print hanging on one of the gallery walls, is one territory marker encompassing the project

was mounted, but it also inspired me to consider the relations between Greek territory and recent waves of migration. How does the notion of remoteness connect to Greece as the main point of entry for migrants into Europe?



Kyriaki Goni, Networks of trust. Photo: Jenny Sundby.

In a journal entry, Goni narrates how she was invited into the museum on the island of Tilos by one of the palaeontologists who found fossil remains of dwarf elephants on the island. Researchers have found that the elephants which migrated to the island evolved a reduced body size due to the

elephant that lived on Tilos from 45,000 to 3,500 years ago, Goni's account connects deep time and stories of insular adaptation to the present and future state of the island. In another journal entry displayed in the gallery, Goni explains how the municipality of Tilos aims to become self-sustainable in terms of energy and how the island's approach to refugees is of a very welcoming sort: "The island has been on the international and local news for achieving that. I deeply believe that both facts have something to do with the need to nurture networks, to maintain them, and due to the harsh conditions, they need to be self-sustained."



After skirting the surface of all material on display and its stories of fossil remains of the dwarf elephant and the graphically beautiful but relatively neutral maps, I sat down to log on to the offline Wi-Fi network called "Networks of Trust" via my iPhone. Once connected to the closed server and the <https://archipelago2092.xyz> website, it was possible to access files uploaded by visitors in this and other locations where the artist has set up this local network. The first installation of this Network of Trust started as a way to make a dynamic testimony of the specific challenges of the island of Tilos accessible. When displaced to other localities, it somehow drags with it this potential for viewing the complex overlays of time on Tilos, just as it carries the sense of creating a communal space for reflection and imagining between the nodes where the network is set up.

As it says in the exhibition brochure: "The artwork is based on the idea that decentralised Wi-Fi networks offer privacy and anonymity, but also new ways of connectivity and togetherness. (...) Thus ad hoc peer-to-peer networks can operate as a prototype for mega-infrastructures. From a technological perspective, the work incorporates P2P technologies, and aims to overcome the



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The exhibition's strength lies in the actual sharing of space – offline but connected through the nomadic Wi-Fi network attached to a server – which as a node hosts accounts and reflections from people in the different locations where the digital network gets installed.

Because while the accounts of nurturing local networks and aiming for self-sustainability as a response to the island's remoteness very much make sense from the perspective of the Aegean archipelago, I am not sure how to translate Goni's observations and accounts into a Danish setting and what the connections may be between the specific locality of Tilos and that of Copenhagen. That is, how to take part in the proposed network of trust?



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As I took a moment to think about what entry to write myself, I became aware of the reality of the other persons behind the accounts accessible on the server, many of them rather poetic. One of them contained only a dot; another was an account of recent fires; and another

through the figure of the Zeitgenosse, the comrade of time, caring for one's time by being with it.

"'Con-temporary' in German is 'zeitgenössisch.' As Genosse means 'comrade,' to be con-temporary – zeitgenössisch – can thus be understood as being a "comrade of time" – as collaborating with time, helping time when it has problems, when it has difficulties. And under the conditions of our contemporary product-oriented civilization, time does indeed have problems when it is perceived as being unproductive, wasted, meaningless." (2)



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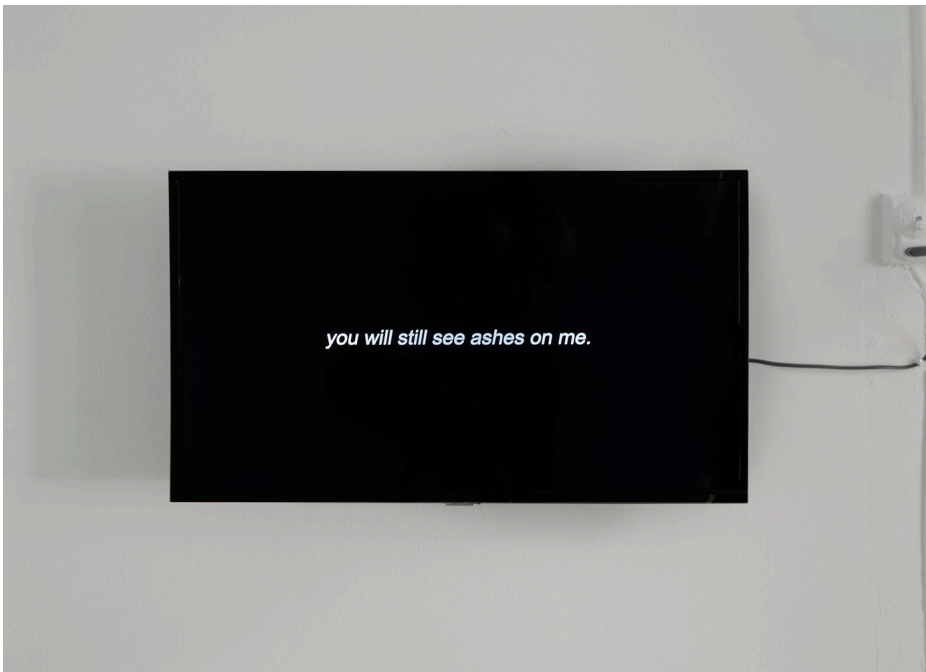
Kyriaki Goni, Networks of trust. Photo: Jenny Sundby.

By actually taking time to read and relate to the entries on the server, the artist's vision of connection became apparent. In that sense, the network of trust works

read, reflect and participate. It would have been even more potent if Goni had been more precise about the similarities and differences between the specific conditions of Tilos, its prehistoric and historic networks on the one hand, and the proposed networks of the now and future on the other. Maybe by incorporating the accounts hosted on the server into the overall narrative of Networks of Trust as represented in diagrams and journal entries. Perhaps as well by inviting a reflection and discussion around the differences and similarities between the Aegean archipelago and the actualized node. I am still curious to know more about the terms on which they connect and disconnect or the ideas of remoteness and isolation as compared to exchange and interaction. Just as the sea divides territories, it is also what connects them. The same may be said about virtual networks: they can be a marker of presence and absence at once, of distance and connection. If Goni's exhibition left me with questions about how to understand and relate to her accounts of the conditions on the island of Tilos, it also made it apparent that you have to take part in the exchange to build and establish networks of trust.



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2. Boris Groys, "Comrades of Time," e-flux journal no. 11, December 2019.

This essay is part of an initiative to foster Danish and English language critical writings from a range of talents across the visual arts; and as a partnership between I DO ART and SixtyEight Art Institute.

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