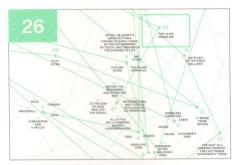
BEFORE THE BEGINNING AND AFTER THE END

GOSHKA MACUGA



THE ALIEN INSIDE ME

2015

Goshka Macuga visited the volcanic island of Stromboli in Italy a number of times between 2009 and 2015, the year when she presented the performance The Alien Inside Me (formerly titled Where Is My Alien?) [T] as part of the Fiorucci Art Trust's summer festival "Volcano Extravaganza: In Favour of a Total Eclipse." Responding to the proposition put forward by the Trust's curator Milovan Farronato, "In Favour of a Total Eclipse"a theme setting forth ideas of natural forces, a temporary shifting in the balance of light and shadow, bad omens and a sense of renewal-Macuga proposed to "return to Stromboli as an alien" stating "I have not decided yet about any specific physical attributes I should carry, but my message is that the End is Nigh." In a dialogue written between Farronato and Macuga, the pair contemplate this proposal as they reflect on the idea of a pilgrimage to Stromboli that would see the volcano becoming the backdrop to a post-gender, post-human world.

Already in the midst of contemplating themes of endings, post-human scenarios, and "humanity's ability to conceive itself abstractly" in her research for her exhibition at Fondazione Prada, Macuga wrote a performance featuring an alien visiting earth after humanity's extinction. Intrigued by Immanuel Kant's longstanding interest in the existence of aliens, Macuga uses this as a starting point to create a comic scene derived from an alien's research. Prompted by his contact with the works of astronomer Thomas Wright, Kant was fascinated by the possibilities that arose from the study of the universe and the idea of the existence of extra-terrestrial life, the thought of which gave rise to a guestion that he deemed could only be answerable by aliens: "What is man?" Kant's contemplations comically shrink man's importance within the universe, comparing "man" to an over-confident insect who finds the non-insect world to be irrelevant, "Man, standing immensely removed from the uppermost rank of beings, is indeed bold to flatter himself in a similar delusion [i.e., similar to that of the blithe bug] about the necessity of his own existence." This observation is later echoed by Friedrich Nietzsche but phrased in the first person, the statement elaborates on the ontological threat posed by the study of astronomy. Concerning the humiliating and discrediting effect of astronomy, Kant has left us a remarkable confession: "It annihilates my importance."

Played out across the apocalyptic, black-rocked, landscape of Stromboli, a believable setting for a play featuring the Alien's investigation of a barren planet, the alien (Ziggy) discusses his plans to attempt to recreate the lost species of Homo sapiens. Being a specialist in Homo sapiens and using his extra time on earth to revisit, via YouTube and the internet, the different representations that humans have made



of aliens, Ziggy concludes that Homo sapiens' destructive behavior, indicative of our insecurity at our position in the universe, is the cause of our disappearance. Kant's question "What is man?," reposed by Macuga and played out within this particular context, recalls many of the core philosophical questions regarding our existence and the possibility of verifying our knowledge and experience of the world.

Created at a moment that coincided with Macuga's research that led up to her 2016 project at Fondazione Prada [27], The Alien Inside Me comically captures some of the questions around human nature that also inform To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll.

Bibliography: Chus Martínez, "Volcano Extravag Stromboli, Italy," in Artforum International, vol. 54.1 December, 2015, pp. 216-219

Featured artist: Nicola Borghesi

Reference people: Immanuel Kant, Ronald Reagan

Reference subjects and objects: 3rd Rock from a 1996–2001; David Bowie, Ziggy Stardust (from The and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Ma 1972); Jonathan Glazer, *Under the Skin*, 2013; Yusal Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, 2017 Homo sapiens; Eartha Kitt, Where is my man? and Mindy, 1978–1982; Number of Names-Shari Var Hacker & Vitalic Remix); Ridley Scott, Alien, 1973 Spielberg, E. T., 1982; Stromboli; Sumerian Gods Te Volcanoes on Mars; Robert Wise, The Day the Earl Stood Still, 1951

EXHIBITIONS | WORKS



"In Favour of a Total Eclipse," 5th Volcano Extravaganza 2015, Stromboli, Italy, July 25, 2015 [G] ▲1 The Alien Inside Me (Where Is My Alien?), 2015

















THE ALIEN INSIDE ME

The rocks at the front of the house are lit in a bright and silvery cold tone. There is a telescope. There is also an undefined sound playing and it becomes a more disturbing high frequency sound with strobe light effect accompanying. Spotlight searches and finds alien clambering over rocks, his voice emerges and we can hear him muttering to himself in what sounds like jibberish but is interpreted as alien cursing ahh shuznut meeeson nuzbuckling flinking.... Etc

On stage is a large egg broken in to two parts that could be a spacecraft or sleeping chamber.

The alien clambers awkwardly towards the egg. The alien could be coming out of the egg also. He's tired and annoyed. He looks at the telescope for a brief moment.

He's been carrying what would appear to be two specimen jars. He puts them down, dusts off his spacesuit and stands, feet slightly apart, as if about to salute, he looks to the middle distance, puts his finger to his oversized ear as if tuning a radio:

Neeeeeep.... Neeeeeep..... come in Reagan.... Reagan do you read me, come in.

[with some insincerity] Good evening your immenseness. May I say you are looking truly cosmic today. Looking into your eye is like gazing into infinity... [listens to Reagan as if

Yes I have something for you... look [he shows/ directs the jars to the space and shakes them a little-clearly proud of

his findings.] I now have everything we set of humans that you wanted. You wo watch my observation efforts sir... I have to attempting to place myself into the mindset of acting and behaving just like one, I have en research exactly as they did and have die replicate the process that they used to babies... Humans used a very basic sys tralised communication interface that they net" to access what they thought was co Yes, it meant that numerous errors very absorbed into their reality... anyway they a their collective memory there too. I search of this and found a recipe for test-tube be called you-tube. Its all very simple, I just___________

No. your immenseness... I haven't been s again but the volcano... [pointing to the a smoking all sorts of stuff. [pauses and list

Yes, this is the real recipe for making bab sapiens.... And the best bit is that they get m I won't make a mess all over the lizard skin ership like last time. [pauses and listens]

That's exactly what I'm saying, real. Live. Hon human elixir here to make 3 homos, which will be fit in that little dark chamber on your ship.

Well, now that's just unkind sir... I've been w enduring long phases of loneliness. Cruising the been easy, especially when you're looking for its