

Your recent work also appropriates material such as serial killers' letters and drawings. How do you see this content relating to the other content? Are this and pornography both representations of "evil"?

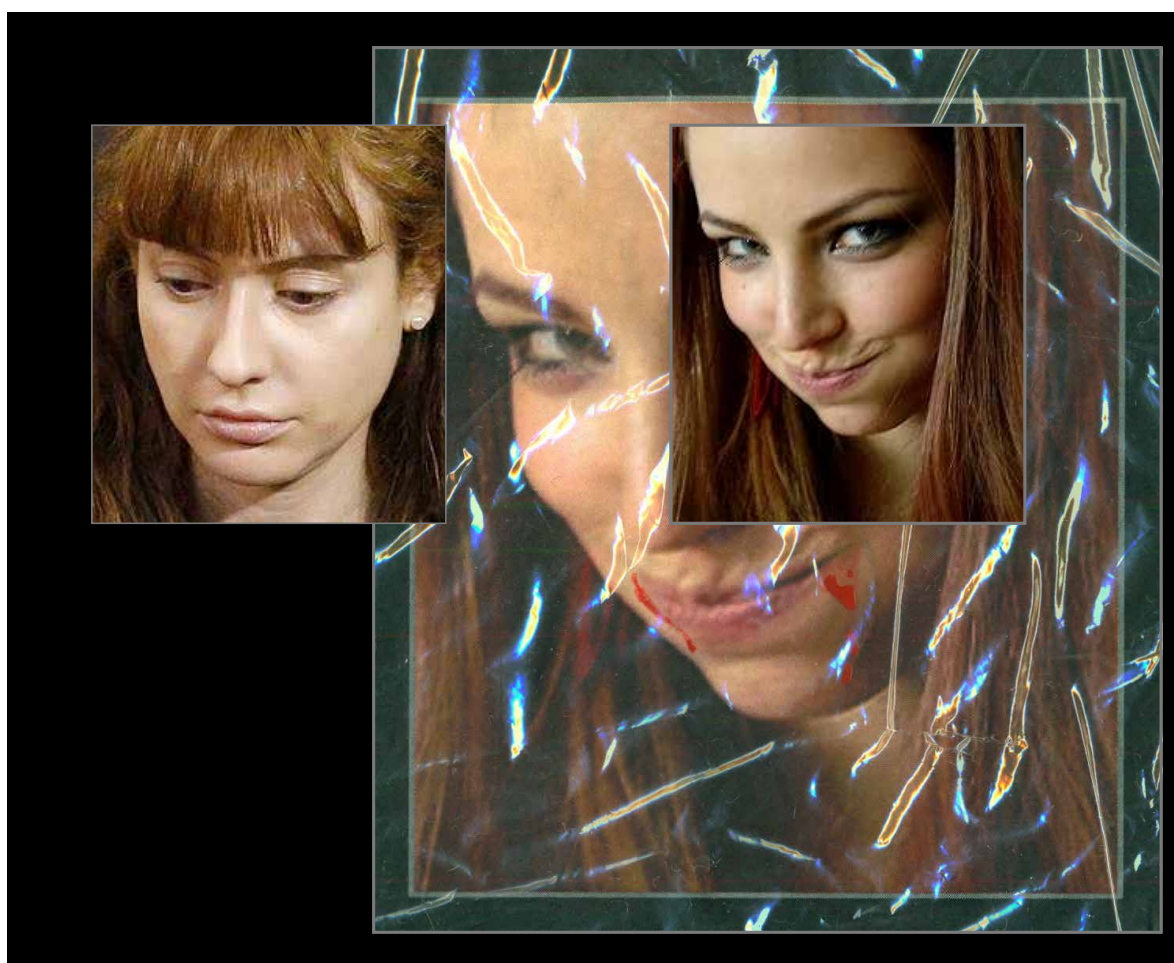
No, they are not representations of "evil" because—to quote Alain Badiou—"Evil does not exist except as a judgment made."

I collect serial killers' ephemera that depict she-devils, pornographic actresses, and other representations of women. It relates to the pornographic images—they both raise questions about conceptions of "good" and "evil" and are forms of collective self-expression—pure, profane, free.

You've said you "don't think that women need to be saved." Can you explain what you mean by this?

This was in response to a question about my "refusal to be an activist about my subject." I do not want to rehabilitate anyone, or not to rehabilitate anyone. That is not my job.

You avoid being photographed and in the past have reported any tagged photos of you on Facebook. What is it about



your own image being captured and shared that you don't like?

I prefer the focus to be placed on the artworks, including the girls in the artworks—their faces, their gazes. Somehow, they seem more representative of me. There is more of me to see in them than in me.

What kind of social media do you use / not use and why?

I use Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter. I use Instagram to share my own images; Tumblr for news and updates; Twitter

I appreciate the subversiveness of pornography.

Above: *Lost Girls (Ft. Ice Cream Killer)*, 2014  
for words. I do not use Facebook—it feels too personal and invasive.

Would you follow yourself on Instagram?  
All images courtesy of the artist.

I mostly post pictures of awkward, amusing texts ("Call Me! / I'll Whip Your Ass Purple!"), or semi-gore images from B-horror movie reviews, or cute animals. I am into all this stuff, so yes, I would follow myself!

We are interested in compiling a book of interviews based on banal security questions asked when one sets up an online account. In what year was your father born?

1954.

What is your mother's maiden name?

Radović.

What was the name of your elementary school?

Pakistan International School, and Donley Elementary School.

What is your oldest sibling's birthday month and year?

I have one sibling, and his name is Filip; his birthday month is November and year is 1978.

What is your favorite color?

Gray.

For the 89plus Marathon in 2013, you participated digitally through your work *The A Project*, in which you checked out a book from your university's library and marked out every appearance of the letter A, keeping a tal-

ly along the way. Where does a project like this sit in your oeuvre?

I don't think a surface reading of any one thing is an efficient one.

The book was *Elogio della menzogna* (ed.: Salvatore S. Nigro)—Italian, of 154 marked pages. Online, its "subjects" are listed as "Truthfulness and Falsehood" and "Deception— Early works to 1800." The cover of the book features the painting *Portrait of a Woman of the Hofer Family*, dated about 1470 and belong-

Darja Bajagić (Montenegrin, b. 1990) is an artist who lives and works in New York. She is represented by Room East, New York.

ing to the collection of the National Gallery, London; the artist remains unknown, as does the sitter. The de-

scription of the painting on the National Gallery's website reads, "On her headdress is a fly, either a symbol of mortality or a reminder of the artist's skills of illusion."

I was drawn to this indecipherability, the sense of mystery. The project began as a passive, then active nihilistic endeavor—and a questioning of meaningfulness. I dwelled on this idea: "Thinking is an arbitrary fiction, the false sign of an equally false inner experience." ☺

## Milovan Farronato and Goshka Macuga share memories of STROMBOLI

AS THE CULTURAL CALENDAR INCREASINGLY BECOMES A FEAST OF OPPORTUNITIES TO FLY OFF THE BEATEN TRACK, THE PANORAMA SERIES TRAVELS THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF WRITERS AND ARTISTS.

All images: Goshka Macuga Courtesy of the artist.

MF: I remember the first time I saw you was underwater. It was August 2009, and you were diving for sea urchins, wearing a one-piece bathing suit, kept together by strings and ribbons revealing your pale skin. I, on the other hand, was wearing a makeshift burkini to protect myself from the sun. When we first met, we were swimming. The water was dark, warm and deep; the mountains around us, collapsed and eroding, seemed in constant flux.

We had spoken before this encounter—on the phone, never in person. You had arrived in Stromboli from Venice, where you were participating in the Biennale with one of your first tapestries. We were in front of the Sciara del Fuoco, the only area where the volcano's lava meets the sea yet without endangering the two nearby villages: Stromboli and Ginostra. We were swimming at the feet of the active volcano—a triangular podium resonating with loud opinions spoken from his crater every fifteen minutes or so. At the time, the volcano had three mouths; today, he has thirteen. That trinity of voices has now become a chorus. I realize I've been speaking of the

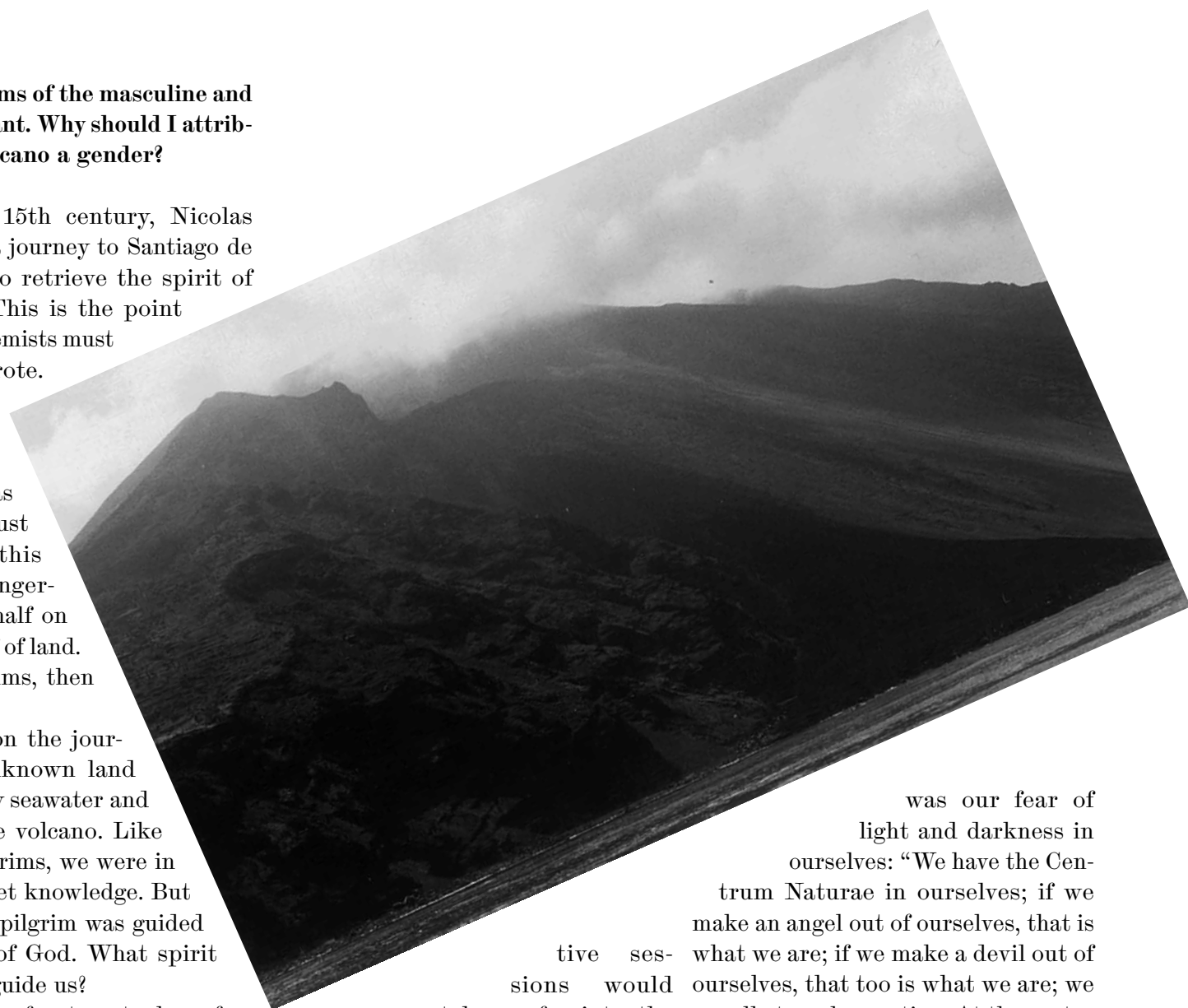


**volcano in terms of the masculine and am now hesitant. Why should I attribute to the volcano a gender?**

GM: In the 15th century, Nicolas Flamel took a journey to Santiago de Compostela to retrieve the spirit of St. James. “This is the point where all alchemists must begin,” he wrote. “With their pilgrim’s staff as a guide and a scallop as a sign, they must undertake this long and dangerous journey, half on the water, half of land. First as pilgrims, then as pilots.”

We too met on the journey to an unknown land surrounded by seawater and the fire of the volcano. Like Hermetic pilgrims, we were in search of secret knowledge. But the Christian pilgrim was guided by the word of God. What spirit was there to guide us?

A shared fear of nature took us far back to a time when man, afraid of the unknown, created rituals to make sense of the world. I was reminded of the snake ritual narrated to me in a lecture by my “old friend” Aby Warburg. We stepped tentatively on the way to the mouth of the volcano, treading carefully to avoid encountering the serpent, watching for other signs and symbols. Aside from climbing the volcano, our most memorable rituals were less physically challenging. Office work, for instance, was performed in a horizontal position, under a tree—our “philosophical tree.” Spending all day and night together, we were united by the joy of discussing matters of life, love, and of course, the art world. These produc-



was our fear of light and darkness in ourselves: “We have the Centrum Naturae in ourselves; if we make an angel out of ourselves, that is what we are; if we make a devil out of ourselves, that too is what we are; we are all at work, creating. At the center of all things resides the sun. Could we find a better place in this most beautiful of all temples, from whence this light illuminates all things at once? Rightly is it called the lamp, the spirit,

**What is the gender of the volcano?  
Is it male or female?**

so quickly into one. Running through the alleyways of Stromboli, we were haunted by shadows of people that were not there. What emerged the ruler of the universe.” This lamp does not choose what to light. Good and bad stand together in the glory of its brightness. We were good and bad during our visits to the island. We embraced chaos

and productive order. We drank and danced and played and worked. We looked after others and others looked after us in equal measure.

The group truly found its strength in December 2010. It was then that I fell in love with our group. The beautiful sunshine that had lead us to the top of the volcano on December 31 disappeared, gone for the remainder of our stay. The wind tore the house apart, the waves swallowed the rocks we stood upon, and the low, heavy rumble of thunder felt as if it were competing with the music of the volcanic eruptions. Even if we had wanted to, we were unable to leave the island. This temporary incarceration did not frighten us, if anything it offered us relief. But though we struggled constantly with the elements, we were in total harmony with each other. Beyond the existence of our perfect group, all that lay waiting for us was the chaos of our individual worlds.

I tried to write a word in the sky by blurring and smudging the image of the moon in the lens of my camera. Like Ramon Lull’s memory wheel, the letters constructed by the movement of my lens helped me to store memories of the volcano and of the group.

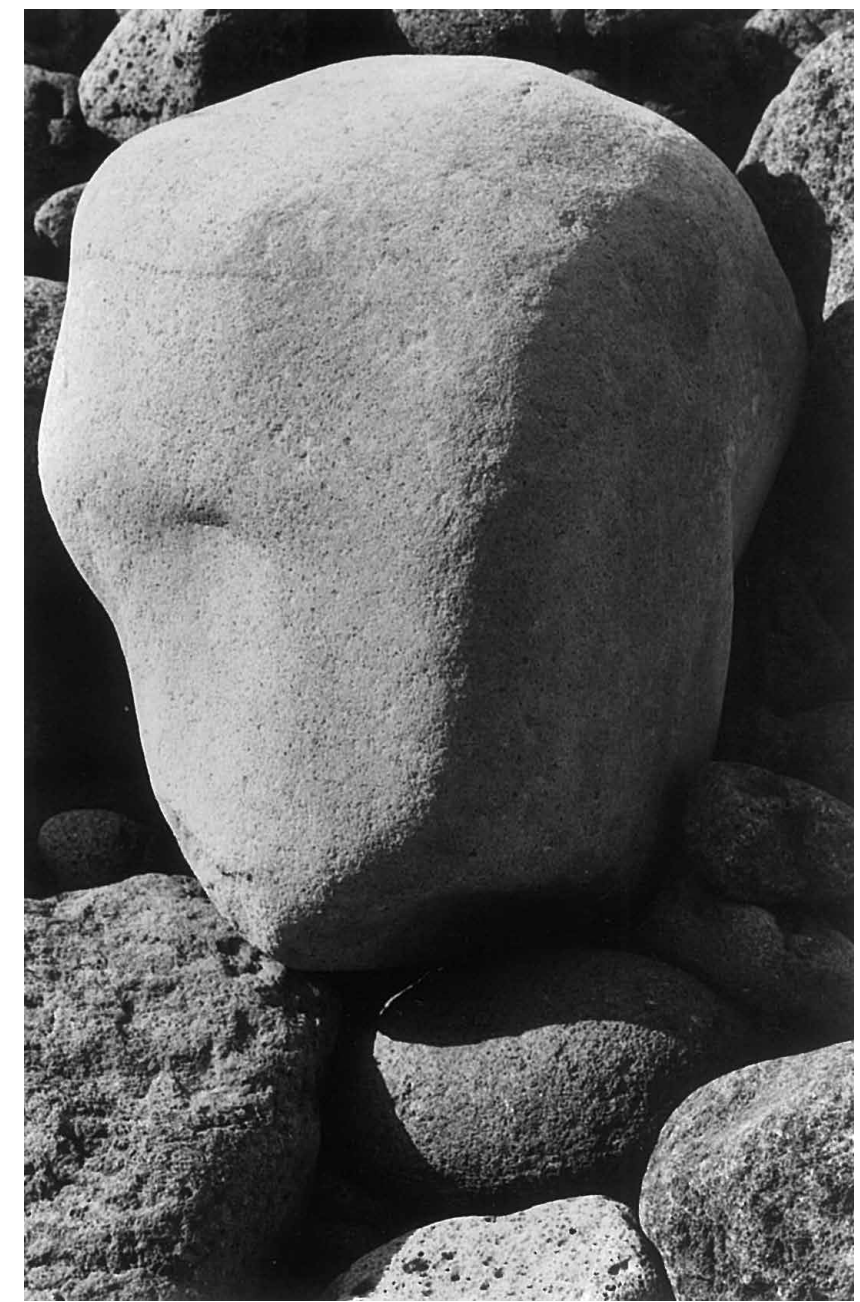
**MF: On 3 August 2012, we were listening to a monologue by Florence Derieux about Rimbaud’s legacy, sitting on the terrace of the Lunatica—the house where the Fiorucci Art Trust hosts its yearly summer events program, “Volcano Extravaganza.” That year’s session was the second for which we’d invited an artistic leader—in this case, Nick Mauss—to co-curate the festival.**

**That’s when you and I exploded. I promised you that I would never forgive you. You told me I was pathetic. I believe the reason for our catfight was that we were going through**

“Volcano Extravaganza” is a yearly summer festival presented by Fiorucci Art Trust on the volcanic island of Stromboli, Italy. The fifth edition, “In Favour of a Total Eclipse,” will run from July 17–27, 2015.

**similar personal experiences. My boyfriend of five years was turning towards heterosexuality, while yours had been indulging in gay activities. We were having a mirrored experience, which duplicated the sense of loss. We recognized in each other what we disliked in ourselves. It would be over a year before we spoke again. You missed two straight editions of the “Volcano Extravaganza”: 2013’s “Evil Under the Sun,” led by Lucy McKenzie and 2014’s “For-**

**get Amnesia,’ conceived with Haroon Mirza. Now it’s almost time for the 2015 edition, and this summer you will again be in Stromboli—not only as a rediscovered friend, but also as a participant, a special guest. For this fifth edition, “In Favor of a Total Eclipse,” I chose to fight a solitary**





Goshka Macuga (Polish, b. 1967) lives and works in London. She is represented by Kate MacGarry, London.

him to earthly ideas like gender and restrict the potential of his experience by demanding that he sleep.

“The philosophers call the cold and moist matter, woman (moon), the hot and dry, man (sun). The androgynous being is all four qualities at once. With fire one can remove the excess of the moisture and form the idea in the philosophical work, which is tincture.” Stromboli’s signature tincture is called Donna Fugata, named after a woman rather than a man. So women are celebrated on the island, though not by all. I never could work out why this volcano is so popular between men. Many local men left the island to fight during World War II while women stayed and cherished the grape as well as the volcano. Many men died and never returned; others migrated to Australia or other countries. The grape became sick and the small industry that produced Donna Fugata almost died. Did the spirit of women die with it?

What is the gender of the volcano? Is it male or female? I say that the volcano cannot be occupied or colonized by any gender; its eruptions cannot simply be compared to a physical function of the male organ. It’s a place to embrace a moment of our difference and existence on this planet.

I once dreamt about being buried in the mouth of the crater. You were supposed to carry my dead body to the top of the volcano and immerse it in the hot lava. You were supposed to take me back to the core of this planet. I still expect from you nothing less.

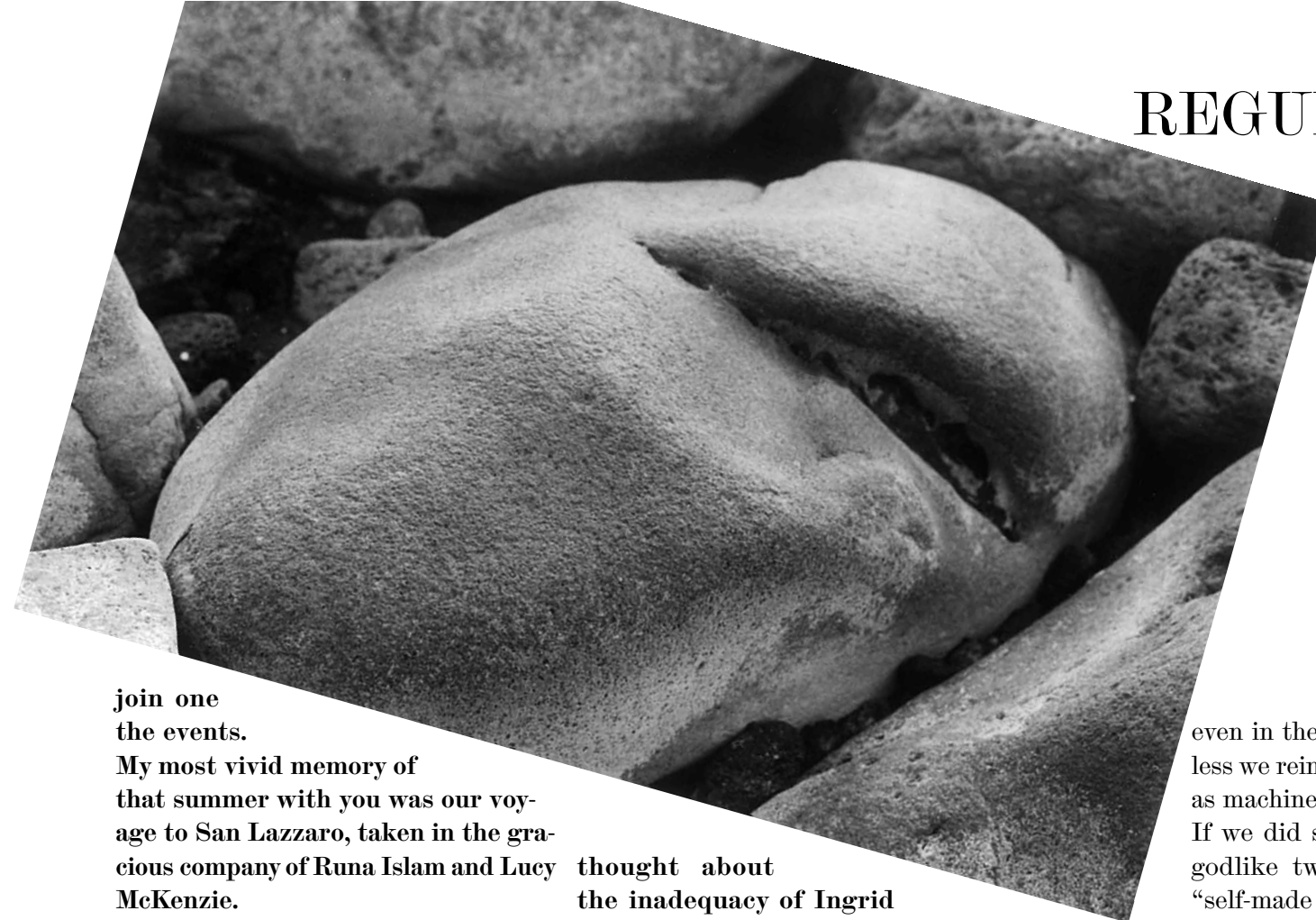
**MF: Let’s take a step back. In summer 2011, the casual summer gathering of previous years had turned into a proper program—a festival with invited participants, scheduled events and a growing audience. You arrived to Stromboli wearing a deep blue onesie and were immediately invited to**

**war against the visible, which starts with a praise for obscurity. Failing to appear is the virtue I see at stake. How do you feel about returning to such a familiar landscape after being apart for so long?**

GM: In order to make sense of the gender issues we experienced during our stay, let’s start by considering the beginning of time.

There are many stories that attempt to make sense of the beginning. One particular story, recounted to Hermes

by God, details the creation of the cosmos—the cosmetic conception of order and beauty carved out from the chaos of nothing. In this story, humans were originally androgynous, born as both man and woman. It is only later in the story that this godlike being succumbs to his adoration of nature and becomes slave to its limitations, which bind



**join one the events.**

**My most vivid memory of that summer with you was our voyage to San Lazzaro, taken in the gracious company of Runa Islam and Lucy McKenzie.**

**San Lazzaro is a radically isolated place—a pile of rocks, immersed in a variety of cactuses and run through by pathways overrun with lizards. We were invited by Corrado Beldi to watch the sunset from the roof of his**

**thought about the inadequacy of Ingrid**

**Bergman’s Karin, who, pushed by desperation for a more secure life, had decided to migrate to a deserted island in the Mediterranean and marry a local fisherman. I thought about all of her failed attempts to**

**I intend to return to Stromboli this year as an alien, a robot or a cyborg.**

**house and join him for a goat-based dinner. We had also been invited for a cocktail at Casa Poeti, a mysterious house completely hidden in the vegetation. We’d arrived early to Beldi’s and had time to spare, so we decided to try and find it. We were about to give up when, through the thorny brush, we saw it.**

**When we arrived, I was melting and couldn’t drink. You, too, were red from the heat and effort, while Lucy was about to faint and had to sit for a few minutes. Runa was trying to compensate this awkwardness by talking gibberish at the hosts. For the first**

**adapt, her desire to integrate and all of her foolish escape strategies. Inadequacy, isolation, desperation. What happens when a stranger, an alien, enters a closed-off community?**

GM: I intend to return to Stromboli this year as an alien, a robot or a cyborg. I have not yet decided about any specific physical attributes I should carry, but my message is that the “End is Nigh.” I have been exploring different fields of research, from art history to mathematics, anthropology to philosophy, only to arrive at the conclusion that we have no chance of remaining on this planet, or

Milovan Farronato is Director of the Fiorucci Art Trust, London and curator of “Volcano Extravaganza.”

even in the Universe, unless we reinvent ourselves as machines.

If we did so, would this godlike twisting of the “self-made man” offer us a new understanding of difference? Rather than being separated by circumstance, biology or environment, we might view “difference” as a matter of preference. Sex would be released from the shackles of reproductive functionality and age would become a lifestyle choice; death would no longer exist, and, with our ambitions of immortality achieved, our greatest concern would become how to pass the time when you have infinite time to pass.

Our time in Stromboli, however, will not be infinite. For a short moment, we will look again at the bright stars, swim in waters heated by the sun above and the lava below, and we will meditate on the notion of beginnings and ends. ☪