

## **GIVING EARTH & DIVIDING WATERS**

“What is on your mind?” is a casual question we unthinkingly answer, along with inquiries such as “Where were you?” and “Who were you with?” - especially since social networks remind us to update our status constantly. But doesn't it take on a whole new meaning when it is asked in the perspective of the advent of dreaded times?

Looking back at the programme and the mediation tool set developed during our opening, two-days training session - *Giving Earth & Dividing Waters* - one could say, a posteriori, that we successfully ran a live and full scale test of an “emergency escape kit” that opens windows onto providential mindscapes and helps us face strandedness at sea, highland isolation... and confinement at home.

The *Last Cup of Earth* performance featured altogether the absence of its initiator [Amine had not been granted his visa and was stuck in his home country] and the presence of an element that isn't usually traded nor shipped [1 kilogram of earth he had collected from a dried out underground water channel in Marrakesh]. If people can't make it to foreign lands, maybe land can make it up to them instead?

That soil was carefully shared as if it was an essential good, like flour or sugar. Part “went Dutch” in the streets of Utrecht out of solidarity for the needy, just like water carriers in Morocco hand out water in brass cups to the thirsty. Part was vested with the mission of being ‘informed’ by Utrecht water in order to ‘curate’ afflicted grounds in the outskirts of Marrakech.

The *Atlas and Calypso* role playing protocol highlighted our intimate relation to the outdoors within a mile of BAK headquarters. First as a herd and then as individuals wearing “projection masks”, trainees quested the environment for meaningful places, beyond streets, onto rooftop heights and down into waterway shallows. They fantasized their escapade across the neighbourhood by embodying mythical creatures: Atlas, a titan, literally holding Earth in his hands, and Calypso, one of his daughters, a nymph, known for holding men insularly captive from waters. And they poetically humanised them: by handling that alien orange Atlas mountain piedmont soil and spiritually disseminating it, by dividing waters and subversively drawing free samples that would later be packed and labelled for export... They gave it way, broke free and delivered raw material for us to edit sounds, words, thoughts and auguries...

All the while, minds wandered and trains of thoughts we set loose: Do we ever reflect profoundly on our exposure to global collapse mechanisms? Can we anticipate an apocalypse, divine behind the mirror, foresee beyond the mask ? What is it we really need: a resilient mindset, an imaginary corpus of beliefs or else a range of active resistance strategies? During the *Wishing Well* last round of exchange, attendees finally met Amine on live video and the assembly shared insights of what it takes to save what still can be saved or maybe just restore humanity in times and spaces of crisis. And as they chatted away into the Not-Yet, they patiently kneaded the brown paste made from leftover earth and freshly informed waters, just like distanced friends or parents getting digitally active over homemade bread and urban tales...

Our speculation may have seemed vain at the beginning but it proved itself meaningful to many on the way, so let's continue mirroring more morrows, hearing more thoughts, sharing more grounds and digging more sources to get there together.

Edouard SORS

### **Present Absence, Absent Presence**

Soil wanders the world, in air and in earth. Water wanders the world, in clouds and in earth. Clouds swim in the sky, high above, and let down the rain. Rain falls below, and fills with water. Below and above, they move, back and forth, they turn. Like me. The difference between us? They stay like that. Without borders. Me, I have borders, born from limits of roots, and time. And death. And if you want to know me? I am human.

One day, I collected soil. With my brother and sister. I sent it with them on their way. They drew lines in the clouds, and they made the wind dance. And then came back to the surface, to that place right between what's above and below. In that place, there were brothers and sisters. People, like us. They collected water, mixed it

with soil, and wrote what was written. And then, in the middle of the winds, my sound and my image traveled too. And meanwhile? I was in my place. I saw them, I heard their wishes. They planted their wishes, in an imagination, to make real what had only been imagined.

Amine Lahrach

Credit:

'Giving Earth & Dividing Waters' was developed as part of the QANAT "Training for the Underwater(ed) Land" by Abdellah Hassak, Amine Lahrach and Edouard Sors, in the framework of the "Trainings for the Not Yet" at BAK in December 2019.