

BreadMatters IV: Crossing Boundaries Intersecting the Grain

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1 | INTRODUCTION

BreadMatters is an inclusive, participatory, collaborative, and intercultural platform consisting of Exhibition and concurrent Forum that questions and focuses on issues around bread and the importance of bread in the history of humankind. *BreadMatters* Forum and Exhibition is location-specific oriented, with the thematic content derived from the historical, geographical, and social heritage of where the event is held.

1.1 CONCEPT AND THE ACTIVITY

BreadMatters invites artists and other participants to make new work and or presentations where 'bread' is the connector between the contributors. Each event is 'themed' to address a specific socio-cultural field (see past events on website: www.breadmatters.org). Designated themes for the programme are: Cultural, Social and Political Cohesion, Ethnicity Anthropological, Social, Ecological and Environmental Sustainability. Participants may work freely within these loose guidelines.

BM requires each event to commence with a public open forum, where papers are presented and debated between participants, (artists and others) alongside performances and sound installations.

1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ACTIVITY

BM reaches strata of the public who might not normally approach art; it encourages artists to work

with the community through artist led participation. Through the public open forum artists and other participants have direct contact and exchange with the community.

1.3 THE ACTIVITIES AFFECT ON AUDIENCE AND THE ARTS

BreadMatters establishes connections with audiences through participation, collaboration, dialogue and exchange. It is a cultural platform contextualising contemporaneous sociocultural issues through the medium of bread.

2 | HISTORY

The concept of *BreadMatters* evolved out of Inês Amado's research and practice through a series of works during the 1990's, which questioned the relationship between English society and the homeless, examined the phenomenon of mass media and focussed socio-political issues.

BreadMatters I - Socio-Political and Cultural in Bread - 2000, NN Theatre,

Lublin, Poland. (NN Theatre houses a Jewish Museum and is at the gateway to Lublin's former Jewish Ghetto. Participants from: Poland, Portugal, Australia, England and Spain.

BreadMatters II - The Performative in Bread - 2003, Museum of Water, Lisbon, Portugal. A museum dedicated to the history of water supply to Lisbon, through its Aqueduct built in 1746. Participants from:

Portugal, Poland, England, Holland, Angola, Norway, Italy and Cape Verde Islands.

BreadMatters III - Mediating through Art and Bread – 2005, West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen, Ireland. This event took place in the capital of the potato famine. 21 participants from: Ireland, England, Portugal and Poland.

3 | TAKING BREADMATTERS TO CYPRUS

By taking *BreadMatters* to Cyprus we intended to address, expand and question issues of boundaries, migration of people and of customs, dislocation, diaspora, identity, globalization, diversity and interconnectedness, under an umbrella of sustainability and cultural ecology. In Bruce Chatwin's book, *The Songlines* [1], he proposes that the connections between culture, land, body and spirit, present and future are inscribed in songlines where inner and outer worlds are understood as interlinked. It is by focussing on these interrelated aspects of human connections; to the land one inhabits or the land and the culture one becomes dispossessed from, the diaspora one faces as an exile, even in one's own country, that *BreadMatters* endeavours to challenge, motivate and engage.

BreadMatters IV - Crossing Boundaries Intersecting the Grain - held at ARTos in Nicosia, Cyprus during November 2014, explored the relationship between the "contemporary correct", the "ritualistic" and the "popular". It addressed the correlation between displacement, in terms of 'dislocated local' and global in its transcontinental diasporic effects by addressing the intense social, political and technological aspects of contemporary society.

BreadMatters IV Young Artists Exhibition, held in Paphos, brought together 18 young Cypriot artists for a workshop and exhibition that embraced the main concept using their practice to explore issues of social and political concerns around bread.

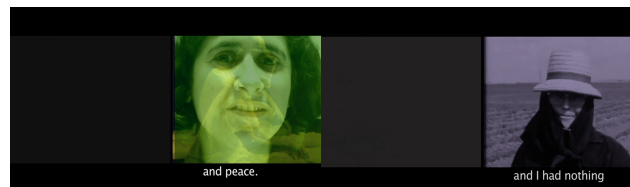
BreadMatters IV - Crossing Boundaries Intersecting the Grain at ARTos, involved 17 international artists who produced work, in many instances as collaborative and participative undertakings involving others who were asked to engage with the sub themes of the main project. Thus the overall exhibition had a cohesive conceptual and visual focus. There

was a sense of immersion and each work carried resonances and dialogical connections to the next.

3.1 PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Maria Lusitano – what are you hungry for?

A film shown on a split screen, which utilised film excerpts taken from fictional and documentary films around bread and food, together with a group of 12 participants from various countries connected in some way to the cultural sector.



Maria Lino – Cuban Bread Flotilla

In her *Cuban Bread Flotilla* Maria Lino dealt with migratory issues by the use of Cuban bread bags in her series of collages/paintings, questioning the migration and the crossing of boundaries of bread and of people.



Maria Paschalidou – Biography of the Bread

In the work of Maria Paschalidou - Biography of the Bread – bread has been dealt with as the foreground of instigating power and refuting political, cultural and religious ideologies. Her performative video work creates a ritualized space for contemplating the object 'bread' and exposes a fixation seen and felt as a fundamental necessity for survival.



Amado and Dave Lawrence, the viewer is presented with an array of flour drawings on an elevated floor, negatives of Greek and a Turkish Cypriot bread, the accompanying sound is made up of dissonant, and equivalent sounds/phrases from both communities.



Luisa Menano – impact of BreadMatters, Matters...

In her piece the impact of BreadMatters, Matters... Luisa Menano evokes the historical bearing and Islamic influences that were established by the Arabic legacy in Portugal, in the preliminary of the first millennium. Aware of those similitudes from that past she reflects upon her culture and its various effects, comparing and examining her actual experience within new surroundings.

Sue McCauley, Michael Buckley and Katerina Xenofontos

After a series of walks around and through the buffer zone, the authors decided to work in-situ and in collaboration, they constructed a piece with loaves of bread, which were held within a 'cage' of steel. This work conveyed simultaneous feelings of warmth, comfort and of hostility.



Inês Amado – Connecting differences

In Connecting differences - A drawing made in-situ by Inês Amado and sound installation piece by Inês

Keith Piper – First Corinthians (this is my body)

In First Corinthians (this is my body), a video piece by Keith Piper, one is faced with issues of transformation, interpretation and (re)/presentation. Bread is questioned from different angles and probed in its metaphoric embodiment of reverential and profane connotations, which address male gender hierarchy.



Maria Papacharalambous – Brain Matters

Brain Matters in this work the philosophical and poetical aspects of bread are encapsulated in a series of statements and quotations that directly or indirectly have bread present in their contents. She counterpoises those with a playfulness usage of forms, from ducks to hearts, flowers and others.



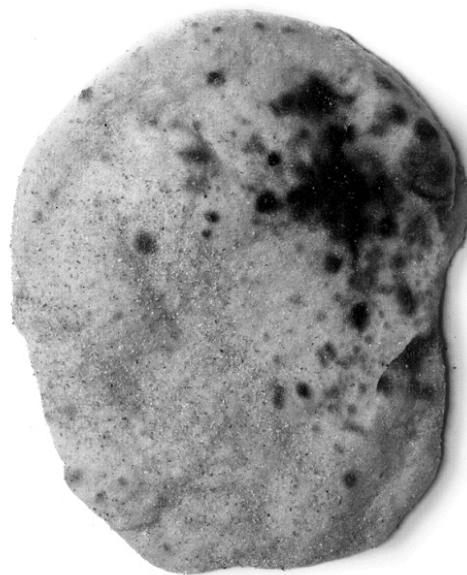
Susanne Egle – Unser Taeglich Brot (Our Daily Bread)

Susanne Egle made a wicker basket, its interiority a sensuous red, with the words Unser Taeglich Brot (Our Daily Bread), embossed on its wooden base. This basket, like a large mouth or a sound speaker, in its emptiness challenges the viewer in an understated / overt way, it forces us into questioning excess as well scarcity.



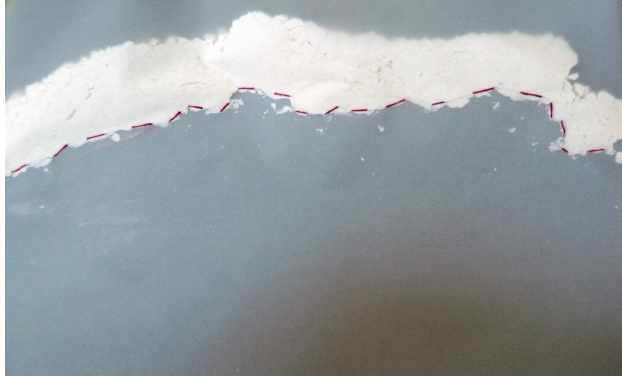
Haytham Nawar – The poor man's moon

Composed of three silkscreen prints - serigraphy -, which convey the most basic bread in Egypt. Haytham addresses in his work issues of history, tradition and hospitality.



Maria Kheirkhah

In her red stitched drawings containing flour, Maria Kheirkhah an Iranian artist leaving in the UK, deals with her own journey; crossing frontiers, both physically and emotionally, the stiches draw a connection to the place left behind.



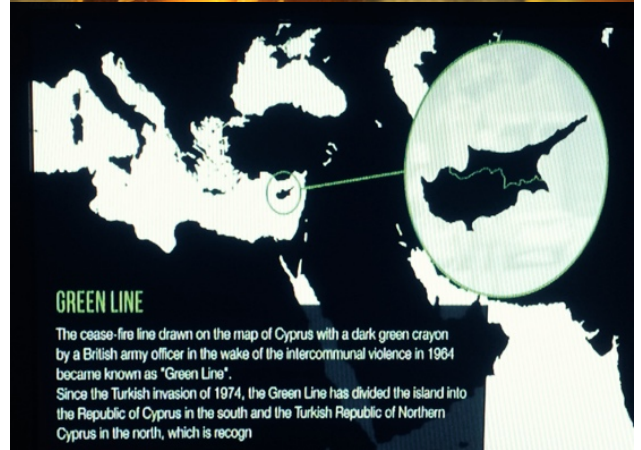
David Seaton— The threshing floor

The threshing floor is a drawing that suggests a connection between land and space, an open space that has no partitions, a grounded ovoid echoing the sky above. David states “The threshing floor is a space that has a relationship with the earth and the soil on earth as a place of labour and ritual.”



Mo Throp – Negotiating Difference: Reflections on the making of bread in a divided culture

For her video installation, Mo focussed on diaspora and used the voices of Cypriots from both communities, dislocated in London, living in an area within - Green Lanes -, which in a way resonates and connects with Cyprus and its Green Line of partition.



Katerina Xenophontos – Zimosis

Katerina Xenophontos’s video Zimosis encapsulates the sound of fermentation growth and expansion, sounds and murmurs that conveyed hope of further articulation and dialogue within two communities that could yet again be united.



4 | THE RESEARCH FROM THE ARTIST’S PERSPECTIVE

Within the works presented in *BreadMatters IV* there were many voices but a singular consistent and cohesive approach of encapsulating the fragmentation of contemporary life.

Through a series of collaborations we excavated embedded practices and awareness. We investigated the psychology of space/s, immersed and embodied knowledge. We questioned, endorsed and balanced making and being, thinking and knowing.

Cyprus is a divide country and its geography and physicality are at points confused, torn in a series of conjunctions disjunctions and dislocations. The various architectural, and structural influences – visible signs of continuous invasions, incessant impacts of historical and political incursions – mark the inhabitants’ behaviour as much as individual activity contributes to alter shared spaces. The ‘other’ is always present, yet also absent, the ‘other’ is the one that is on the other side of the border, the ‘other’ is in her/his essence an extension of the self in her/his otherness, in his/her differences, in her/his particular identity.

ENDNOTES

[1] Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*, Picador, Pan Books Ltd, 1988

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Inês Rolo Amado is an artist, academic, researcher, and curator; PhD supervisor at De Montfort University

and invited mentor at various Institutions. Born in Portugal, Amado works and lives in England. Her practice spans several media: sculpture, video, site-specific installation, and performance with a particular interest in interdisciplinary, collaboration and participatory projects through a process of dialogue, interaction and exchange. Amado is the creator and organiser of the Intercontinental project *BreadMatters*.

Luisa Menano is an artist, academic, researcher, and curator; Assistant Professor at E.C.A.E. (Emirates College for Advanced Education) in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. and invited MA Supervisor mentor at various Institutions. Born in Mozambique, Luisa Menano works and lives and lives between Abu Dhabi and England. Her practice involves several medias, from sculpture, video, site-specific installation, drawing and performance. Luisa Menano has been conducting her academic research in the UK where she accomplished her Ph.D at Southampton University in 2006. The research was under the title “The Uncertain Fragments of Memory” focused on the hidden memories from childhood to adulthood, exploring the relationship between time and place in a tangible direction with Motherhood, Displacement and Diaspora, which were the central points of her investigation.