

## WAITING FOR THE WORLD TO CHANGE

by Yasen Vasilev

Where I am, who am I, what I long for? Three questions you may find yourself thinking about after you first see Eleonora Marzani's exhibition POSTCARDS. Also: What am I wearing today and why? Charged with an eerie melancholy, these series of uneventful videos in the backdrop of local natural landscapes or decaying pieces of architecture, have a recurring element: a lonely human, dressed exquisitely, is standing still, waiting.

According to Wikipedia, a postcard or post card is a rectangular piece of thick paper or thin cardboard intended for writing and mailing without an envelope. The world's oldest postcard was sent in 1840 to the writer Theodore Hook from Fulham in London, England. Postcards are something like last century's equivalent of posting a public message on someone's Facebook wall. They were the physical proof of travels in unknown lands, a photograph or painting, usually accompanied by a short and more often banal texts about daily life experiences.

Eleonora Marzani updates the concept of the postcard in her series of video performances: the stillness of the postcard is captured on video and the text itself becomes deeply personal confession or memory. The artist chooses a context and invites a number of local non-performers to join the project by wearing a special and important piece of clothing which they usually don't have the occasion to wear. While the video captures the melancholy of waiting, the text refers to what has already passed, usually a story related to that particular piece of clothing. Future and past collide in curious ways and open up space in the performer to reflect on one's own existence.

Eleonora Marzani's background in theatre and performing arts is visible in her exploration of the performative possibilities of waiting. The lack of action stands in stark contrast to the contemporary overconsumption of images. Waiting is something as last-century as the postcard – we no longer have the time to stop and even if we do, we're in constant connection, constantly occupied by our mobile devices. In our swipe-addicted culture of social media and dating apps stillness makes us feel deeply uncomfortable. Compared to works of art, informed by fast-paced montage, glamorous elements of spectacle and easily digestible images, the uneventful nature of the POSTCARDS opens up space for introspection, both needed and feared, in the viewer.

As the postcard of the past offered a glimpse of another land, Eleonora Marzani's POSTCARDS offer to her collaborators and her audience the possibility to disconnect with everyday life and move their gaze inwards. These POSTCARDS arrive from an internal, immaterial land, the artist calls it an introspective landscape, an intimate space of hope, related to the self-image and identity. In the era of

efficiency, self-exploitation and capitalization of time, who can afford to stay still? In the global uniformity of branded clothing (and thinking), wearing an inherited, unique piece of clothing, tightly linked to one's identity, is indeed a political act. Simple unproductive and non aggressive acts suddenly become disturbing as they challenge the way we live our lives today. Researchers point out that the best creative ideas are born when the mind is left to wander. The acts of waiting, standing still, wasting time or not doing anything can actually be seen both as productive acts and as acts of resistance against the ideology of our time.

These processes of waiting remind of rituals, intended to re-imagine a possible future together. POSTCARDS is not just an aesthetic visual artwork or a participatory performance, it's the artist's strategy to approach and enter a local context, to communicate with its inhabitants and explore the complex relationships between identity, home, memory and desire. In a time when the UK appointed its first ever Minister of Loneliness and rural areas across ageing Europe are being depopulated, POSTCARDS documents what it means to be human in a painful historical process of transition in which the future remains uncertain. Avoiding the megapolis of the globalization, it also looks like an attempt to find a crossing point between man-made time and natural cycles.

Because of its potential to be infinitely expanded in different territories and to penetrate different local contexts and various personal stories through visual and performative elements like dressing up and waiting, this project doesn't seek to produce a finished exhibition once and for all. It's more like an ongoing quiet and nostalgic observation of a disappearing world, with new territories and stories urgently waiting to be explored. The physical and mental exploration of silence and stillness allow the content to emerge from the subjects themselves so it's less an intervention and more an exploration: these POSTCARDS don't generate, they reveal stories. The local context, the identity and their relation to time constitute Eleonora Marzani's minimalistic artistic approach to our common reality.