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## *I Will Go There, Where I Do Not Belong*

**Milovan Farronato**

*Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you are destined for.*  
Constantine Cavafy

**Milovan Farronato** On the island of Kastellorizo, as part of the Public Program of the 14th Istanbul Biennial, you wove constant dialogs with the Syrian refugees, who were arriving on its beaches.

**Anna Boghiguan** Everybody was doing just one thing on Kastellorizo: they were swimming, whether tourists, turtles, or refugees. They were swimming in order to relax. They were swimming in order to survive. None of us knows what the future holds. We're heading for the Unknown. For the refugees, there's this paradox of belonging and not belonging; leaving behind an old past that was part of your culture and totally forgetting what that life was like. So the question becomes life or death.

**MF** What are the conditions of exile? How do they relate to such notions as belonging?

**AB** When you're in exile, you don't even have a suitcase. You only have your clothes, and you don't know where you're coming from or where you're going. You become like a newborn with no direction; every possibility is open. When people are in exile nowadays, they're often refugees due to mass destruction. Before, they were like unwanted dogs, exiled either because of their convictions or excluded by other groups. In the past, the government would give them twenty-four hours, six hours or even one hour to leave the country. There's yet another exile: enemies of the neighborhood. They're unwanted human beings, exiled while living within their own community, by the mental attitude of others. And then there are people who are exiled because they feel they don't belong to this universe, that they come from outer space, like aliens. They feel as if they've been exiled to a planet that they don't understand. What does it mean to belong to a space? Is there such a thing as to belong? I think that people make themselves belong by attaching themselves to a history, to a social tradition, to an attitude of their community. They start making changes for themselves in order to attach to the environment they're in and they become like the group of people they belong to. But once they decide to be free from this, they exile themselves, like quite a few intellectuals have done—like Gauguin. They exile themselves to an island like Tahiti in order to become the mental king of their existence. In the end, does anybody belong to planet Earth? I don't know if anybody really belongs to this planet. Everybody who lives here is somehow in exile. I think people feel uncomfortable because there are many questions that are not being answered.

People are just dumped into this world when they're born, and they have to live in it. So they create the condition of belonging.

**MF** You often quote the poem *Ithaca* by Cavafy. What do you think about the myth of Ulysses?

**AB** It's interesting, Bengalis have a story very similar to Ulysses. It's metaphorical. It can be interpreted in thousands of ways: it can be seen as the history of Greece; as an inner voyage; as the unification of the self; as a continuation of the story of Gilgamesh, who lost his other self. It's the weaving and unweaving of the story that life creates. We have to create and weave and unweave stories until we arrive at our reality. Ithaca is what you sometimes see, and sometimes don't see. It's a mirage, an illusion.

**MF** In your studio now exhibited in Castello di Rivoli, which presents materials "translated" from Cairo to Turin, there's a series of drawings dedicated to the months that Nietzsche spent in Turin, right before being sent to a mental asylum. What's your interest in Nietzsche?

**AB** I'm interested in what happened when Nietzsche went crazy. In the end he was very confused and lost. He was Dionysus, but then he went silent and died. Perhaps he didn't go crazy. I think he just moved out of this world. I use Nietzsche as an example because I feel he's the most misinterpreted artist.