

Venice, February

2019

Dear visitor,

We do not feel represented by our governments and do not agree with decisions taken in our name. We witness European nations building giant walls and fences around borders that already didn't seem useful in the first place, rejecting rescue ships at the harbors. Philosopher Achille Mbembe speaks of the "Society of Enmity." Queer scholar José Esteban Muñoz calls the here and now a "prison house." People stop using gender neutral language and move from their polyamorous groups into traditional families. Hate speech not only seems acceptable, but becomes a motor of aggressively arresting us into what is considered a *normal life*. Do you sometimes feel as if you are massively being forced to move backwards?

We have, of course, no recipe. But after taking a deep breath we are up for turning disadvantage into a tool: *Let's collectively move backwards.*

Women of the Kurdish guerrillas wore their shoes the wrong way round to walk from one place in the snowy mountains to the other. This tactic saved their lives. It seems as if you are walking backwards, but actually you are walking forwards. Or the other way around.

Let's take this story as a starting point for the project: Can we use the tactical ambivalence of this movement as a means of coming together, re-organizing our desires, and finding ways of exercising freedoms? Can its feigned backwardness even fight the notion of progress's inevitability?

We will move backwards and think about the ways in which we wish to live with loved but also unloved others. We will move backwards, because strange encounters might be a pleasant starting point for something unforeseen to happen.

Yours, Renate and Pauline