

S A N D

Evangelia Spiliopoulou
(Work Proposal)

The topic I develop here is named after the very fine substance of Sand.

Sand is a natural material on Earth which derives from finely divided rock and minerals. Although it may have different coloration and various compositions, sand is mainly defined by the size of its grains. Most common constituent of sand in inland continental settings and non-tropical coastal settings is silica (silicon dioxide, or SiO₂). Calcium carbonate is the second most common type of sand (aragonite), which has mostly been created, over the past 500 million years, by various forms of life, like coral and shellfish.

50 billion tons of beach sand and fossil sand is used each year for construction ending up to sand being one of the most exploited commodities facing shortage on a global scale; only second after water. Desert sand, although plentiful, it is not suitable for concrete.

My interest on the substance of sand, as with other substances I work on the last two years, derives from an overlap of social themes, economical issues, interests on Nature, psychological, aesthetic and poetic triggers. As with the substance of Milk and Dust, Sand offers the possibility to address to the topic in a micro and a macroscale.

The majority of humans has visually or physically encountered this fine matter; yet, the various ways it relates to the world are not yet grasped. Some examples follow.

- The financial aspect.

As mentioned above, sand is a cheap yet multiply acquired commodity. Due to the fact that it is added to concrete it is necessary to any kind of construction which contains concrete; housing, public constructions, roads, bridges, fences, benches etc; from the smallest to the biggest building work and maintenance sand related in a remote but solid way to civic life.

- The socio-political aspect and the metaphor.

Like the term humanity, the term 'sand' stands for a great unaccountable mass of various distinct solids of diverse origins, qualities, times of creation, environments and conditions which gave them form and substance. Each of them stands for a seemingly insignificant part which nevertheless connects the planetary present to billions of formative years and immense geological temperatures, pressures, frictions, replacements, flood and drought periods; this puts in perspective the extraordinary past of the particular substance, now subject to extinction as a result of its commodification.

Similarly to sand, humanity as a term, stands for an equally generic yet divergent mass of individuals; stories, history, livelihoods, political and social conditions which shape and give integrity to each person regardless displacement and the conditions they are found in at the moment.

- The poetic aspect.

There is a phenomenon occurring in sand dunes called Singing Sand: 'Singing sand, also called whistling sand or barking sand, is a sound produced by sand under particular conditions. This sound emission may be caused by wind passing over dunes or by walking on the sand. The distinctive conditions which have to come together to create singing sand include:

- The sand grains have to be round and between 0.1 and 0.5 mm in diameter.
- The sand has to contain silica.
- The sand needs to be at a certain humidity.

The most common frequency emitted seems to be close to 450 Hz.' (Wikipedia)

- Meteorological and Geopolitical overlap.

In countries around the Mediterranean Basin there is a common phenomenon of sand dust traveling from Africa through clouds and landing to the southern countries after rain. This phenomenon causes a yellow coloured misty atmosphere blurring the definition of geopolitical borders on a distinction and separation base; it reminds the unaccountability of migrating elements, the accommodation of the different and that osmosis and interdependence were once naturally regulated.