

Verónica

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An exercise in Klecksography, based on Verónica

Arthur Dessine

Caution: The *Exercise in Klecksography based on Verónica* was beamed over the airwaves of Poulp Ubique on the programme *Beethoven po-po-po-pom!*, a verbal performance in the form of a dialogue between its two most well-known presenters: Arthur Dessine [AD] and Mulher Geométrica / *Geometric Woman* [MG]. In the course of the broadcast, this dialogue of the deaf was inspired by the work of Rita Ferreira in the exhibition *Verónica* at Rialto6, Lisbon; Verónica, a woman possessing great generosity who came to the aid of a tired man, offering him a pocket handkerchief on which, as if by a miracle, her silhouette became imprinted; klecksography, which is simultaneously the art of making inkblots and subsequently interpreting them, invented by the German poet Justinus Kerner who,

after accidentally dripping ink onto a piece of paper, kept the result and used it as a source of inspiration for creating a brief poem, a chance occurrence he then went on to make into a daily exercise based on which, at a late date, psychologist Hermann Rorschach would develop his famous homonymous test; and finally, the programme *Ici Londres*, which throughout the Second World War tirelessly broadcast thousands of code messages to the French resistance, such as the justly-famous *Berce mon coeur d'une langueur monotone*.

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

MG – Attention everyone ... are we all listening?

AD – Attention... and one more time.

MG – Are we all listening?

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

MG – An assortment of shrouds in a display case.

AD – Attention, one more time...

MG – An assortment of shrouds in a display case.

AD – Liquid metaphysics: the act of sweating through one's burial garments...

MG – Shrouds and bandages laid out on a counter.

AD – A secret *famadihana*.

MG – A turning of the bones.

AD – A “back to front” act.

MG – “A Verónica” sapped of all its colour.

AD – Wrapping paper unwrapped *in totum*.

MG – The changing of a totem on high.

AD – The shadow of a body cast upon a staircase.

MG – Attention, one more time...

AD – The shadow of a pig cast upon a staircase.

MG – The black of candlewax.

AD – Web colour: #000000.

MG – Bistre, anthracite, le *noir d'ivoire ou de carbone*.

AD – A world of antediluvian smudge marks.

MG – A King Vulture perched on my car.

AD – A downpour of cats and dogs.

MG – The nocturnal liturgy of the frog chorus.

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

AD – Attention, are we all listening?

MG – Two missives in two parts!

AD – Pay close attention!

MG – 1: A great cormorant, at rest, wings crossed, tail idling on the head of the Cristo Rei. 2: A cormorant crucified on its sunny spot, amen!

AD – Attention, are we all listening?

And once again, two for one... pay close attention!

MG – 1: A cyclops wearing a monocle.

2: A lone eye in the rear-view mirror.

AD – A King Vulture perched on my car.

MG – A downpour of cats and dogs.

AD – A farm machine busy turning, turning, turning over big clumps of earth.

MG – Attention, one more time.

AD – A farm machine busy turning, turning, turning over big clumps of earth.

MG – A machine for counting grains of sand, and for solving once and for all the Sorites paradox.

AD – A terrible eye disease, brought on by a mania for smudge marks.

MG – *coming to a black point under my voracious gaze.*

AD – A musical instrument made of hand-cast small metal discs, which go *dong-ding ding-dong* when played.

MG – One more time.

AD – cast by hand, which go *ding-dong dong-ding* when played.

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

MG – Toilet paper crumpled by the fair hand of painter Pierre Soulages.

AD – Toilet paper crumpled by the fair hand of painter Jackson Pollock.

MG – Toilet paper crumpled by the fair hand of painter Bitter Gourd Monk.

AD – Toilet paper crumpled by the fair hand of a serial killer.

MG – A light brown Kraft paper bag for extremely buttery croissants.

AD – Talcum powder in coat pockets.

MG – A cigarette butt in a shirt pocket.

AD – Rags and tatters.

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

MG – Missive number two for one... pay close attention!

AD – A Kleenex on which the baby Jesus wiped his snot. Amen!

MG – The immaculate handkerchief on which the baby Jesus, guilty of a nocturnal emission, left a map of Eden. Amen!

AD – Careful... No mixing up snot with wattle, also known as...

MG – The carbuncle on a turkey's chin. Amen!

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

AD – Attention! No change!

MG – A snot rag in a litter bin.

AD – The skin of a *lynx lynx*, tautological animal.

MG – Bleach stains on a black shirt.

AD – A sheet of paper stamped with a cock(eral), used to wrap cowbeef.

MG – A blackened bloodstain.

AD – The skin of Sleeping Beauty.

AD – A wad of cotton maculated with makeup.

MG – Nivea cream gone mouldy.

AD – An oracle. A guessing-game.

A charade.

MG – A baby crow learning to fly.

AD – The sudden assent of a bird of prey.

MG – A mask made out of pine bark.

AD – A parchment revealing the secrets of PATA-geometry.

MG – Only one word for the Rorschach test: butterflies.

AD – One more time.

MG – Only one word for the Rorschach test: uteri.

AD – Bi-Ro-Test-Robot-Test.

MG – Test i-cle.

AD – An unidentified white birdie.

MG – A ghost image *in praesenti*.

AD – Colours without contrast.

MG – A beetle, a squiggle, um doodle.

AD – Coffee grinds beside the seaside.

MG – Grimace rhymes with taking the piss.

AD – Octo-people baked *à lagareiro*.

MG – with mashed potato. Amen!

AD – A hand codjob. Amen!

MG – A heavenly *toucinho do céu*. Amen!

AD – A cuttlefish in its ink.

MG – Narcissistic cacti.

AD – A horse went that-a-way...

pata-clop-pata-clop-pata-clop...

MG – Attention: One more time.

AD – A horse went that-a-way, on its duck-

feet... pata-clop-pata-clop-pata-clop...

MG – Celestial traces.

AD – Footprints, in the snow, of a Barbary duck.

MG – The way to go.

AD – In a dancer's footsteps.

MG – As the moon rises.

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

MG – Attention everyone, are we all listening?

MG – Paintings that look at themselves when there's no one around to look at them.

MG – Paintings that admire their reflection in the glass of other paintings which admire their reflection in the glass of other paintings which admire their reflection in the glass of other paintings which admire their reflection in the glass of other paintings... etc.

AD – Extremely equilateral triangles, dissolved in water.

MG – So-and-so, such-and-such, a person, an individual, someone who checks themselves out in the shop window, fiddles with their hair, touches up their mascara, and applies more lip gloss.

AD – *Black lipstick. Toning Lip Balm number 06 Black Honey.*

MG – The smudge.

AD – The stain.

MG – A man leaning against a cactus reads a book on masochism.

AD – In the corner of the page, the footprint of an unknown animal.

MG – One last point.

AD – Two, three, four last points...

MG – A school of moving fish at the mouth of a sewer.

AD – A pack of geometric wolves crossed the silent yellow plain.

MG – A shy, bulimic cat devours the world, beginning with the moon.

AD – Dirty snow.

MG – Desert rain.

AD – One's destiny the loss of fluids.

MG – Down the drain, disliked, delighted.

AD – Attention everyone, a message in French...

MG – *Un gros cactus mou; un gros matou dur; un gros dur tatoué mou; un dur matou tatou du mou.*

AD – A mixture of earth and water silently oozes over the hotel room's windows.

MG – Liquified luminous advertising.

AD – Flooded landfills.

MG – Floating cars, gently carried by the current.

AD – A soaking wet cat.

MG – Filthy walls.

AD – Disrobed, adios. A naked stroll.

MG – A ruin.

AD – Urine in the snow.

MG – Colour of Betadine, Mercurochrome.

AD – The aroma of the Turin Shroud, or Verónica's smell...

MG – An ungodly Archeiropoieta.

AD – An X-ray of an iron plate screwed onto bone.

MG – A non-miracle, *Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

AD – The first drop of rain after the fire.

MG – The sound of urine putting out the blaze.

AD – Staging of: the Great Flood... are you all ready?

MG – A brown stain where the black drowns.

AD – The spittle on the end of a gypsy's cigarette.

MG – Nicotine and tar, fifth volume of the mythology.

AD – *Brou de noix* and *Bitume de judée*.

MG – A photograph of an old, worn-out lung.

AD – Verónica, name a nuclear test?

MG – Crossing extremely vicious circles, with an irreproachable stake.

AD – *Attention, one more time*.

MG – Crossing extremely vicious circles, with an irreproachable stake.

AD – A downtrodden heart.

MG – Three lustreless moons.

AD – One more time...

MG – Three lustreless moons.

AD – Wings tattooed with three eggs.

MG – Frames imprinted on the eyelids of a woman busy dreaming.

AD – Eye movements in *bouffée*.

MG – *A bouffée delirante*.

AD – True story: in the studio garden

of a well-known painter, a man opened a tiny souvenir shop and his wife, who was psychic, read – for special customers – their futures in the complex marks left behind on the crumpled pieces of paper used for cleaning brushes.

MG – An unrecognisable black and white pornographic image, dropped on the floor, torn and stepped on countless times.

AD – A story too long to be told.

MG – A dystopia where the bigwigs of the cosmetics industry become masters of the world.¹

¹ – As you get older my dear, you still look as young as ever.

– It's because I shed my skin frequently.

– You shed your skin? Like snakes do?

– You've never heard of IS? It was a long, long time ago, in a distant future. At that time, technically, completely shedding your skin was no longer a problem. It was as easy as changing a shirt.

The cosmetics industry, allied with the pharmaceutical laboratories, had managed to develop the *Interchangeable-Skin* from cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis* and *Sepiola atlantica*) and the larvae of different insects (mainly cicadas). With IS, the promise of eternal youth had finally been achieved. Between you and me, truth be told, it was never anything but a false promise, because while we can

substitute one epidermis for another, the internal organs continue mutely on their way to obsolescence. Nonetheless, the cosmetics industry, by limiting the visible wear-and-tear of aging, managed to hijack something at once extremely powerful and lucrative: our obsession with eternal life. Who hasn't wished, once they hit 30, that they could change their skin? Here and there, the first signs of the catastrophe to come start appearing: those damned wrinkles, which even the most sophisticated creams will effectively fail to alleviate, let alone get rid of once and for all.

As a result, the leaders of these industries, at first discreetly, but in the space of a few years, rose to the ranks of true masters of this world. But IS production costs were so high due to the scarcity of materials and excessive transport costs caused by interminable wars and the excessive profits

these same industries made on each skin. Even a skin of average quality cost a fortune and such a luxury, as can be imagined, was only accessible to the select few. Like a cake given too much yeast, the resentment felt by those who had been barred entry to this exclusive club was inevitable. The frustration was palpable even in the remotest corners of the planet. To avoid riots of the likes seen, as we know, in our prisons, cemeteries and mental institutions, putting money in the pockets of funeral parlours and costing the state and taxpayers dearly, the powers-that-be had to find a solution, and fast. Developing more democratic IS became the order of the day. In spite of the repeated warnings of specialists on the potential risks of putting untested skins, whose durability no one could predict, on the market, the capitocrats, hellbent on protecting their

interests, ignored recommendations and convinced less-scrupulous manufacturers and scientists to satisfy the discontented masses, immediately making IS that were accessible to all. Obviously, quality plummeted like *peau de chagrin*. There were many who, confusing desire with reality, gave credit to ads claiming skins for 10,000 were as good as those costing 100,000. Many were they who suspended disbelief. Rapidly, in the intimacy of their humble bathrooms, they were confronted with sordid reality. While the luxury skins resisted the premature aging process, excepting a slight yellowing at the edges and signs of mould on the joins, the low-cost skins shriveled up like petals plucked prematurely from the flower. But what humanity wants, humanity gets, and in spite of the countless incidents, lawsuits and bombings the industry suffered on account

of the poor quality of its skins, demand continued unabated. Secondhand skins began appearing on the market: wrinkled, blotchy and worn, for unbeatable prices. Imitations flooded the market. Outraged, some prematurely-aged citizens demanded their old skins back, but the most obscure clauses of their contracts were worded in favour of the cosmetics companies, for whom an army of lawyers worked round the clock to avoid any setbacks.

– Fascinating! So that was when you had a skin-change?

No, mine changes naturally.

AD – A utopia where the bigwigs of the cosmetics industry become masters of the world.²

² I couldn't imagine a utopia in which the leaders of the cosmetics industry became masters of our world.

MG – A conversation between close friends who like to touch each other.

AD – A paper thief.

MG – Isn't it ironic, Veronic?

AD – *Verónica in naturalibus.*

MG – *Cunt in situ.*

AD – A projective hypothesis *in silico.*

MG – A tête-à-tête *in mente.*

AD – The sharpened blade *in aeternum.*

MG – A lie in the hour of truth and vice-versa.

AD – An exercise: chewing slowly on rice paper.

MG – Old wrinkled notes in the pocket of a pair of soiled blue jeans.

AD – Many sweaty fingers.

MG – The fingerprints left by a criminal, *in loco.*

AD – A dirty, white collar.

MG – The old-school-tie brigade.

AD – And once again, with feeling...

MG – the old-school-tie brigade.

Beethoven po-po-po-pom!

AD – And now to finish, no change as
always:

MG – Water-spirit.

AD – All-purpose wash.

MG – *Decapante decapite.*

AD – The lichen list: the wolf, the foliose, the
crustose, sclerosus, radiant, leprous and
gelatinous.

MG – A big old cactus, head-down.

AD – Calcinated leaves and a book salvaged
in extremis from an auto-da-fé.

MG – A soaking wet sheet of paper.

AD – The shrouds of forgotten divinities.

MG – Your epiphany is nothing but an
apophenia.

AD – And again.

MG – Your apophenia is nothing but

an epiphany.

AD – Nothing but and a lot more besides.

MG – And again.

AD – Nothing else and a lot more besides.



Dipolo-Dipolo

2024

Oil on paper,
dibond, mdf, steel
and glass

230 x 220 x 5 cm

Cristado

2024

Oil on paper,
dibond, mdf, steel
and glass

230 x 220 x 5 cm

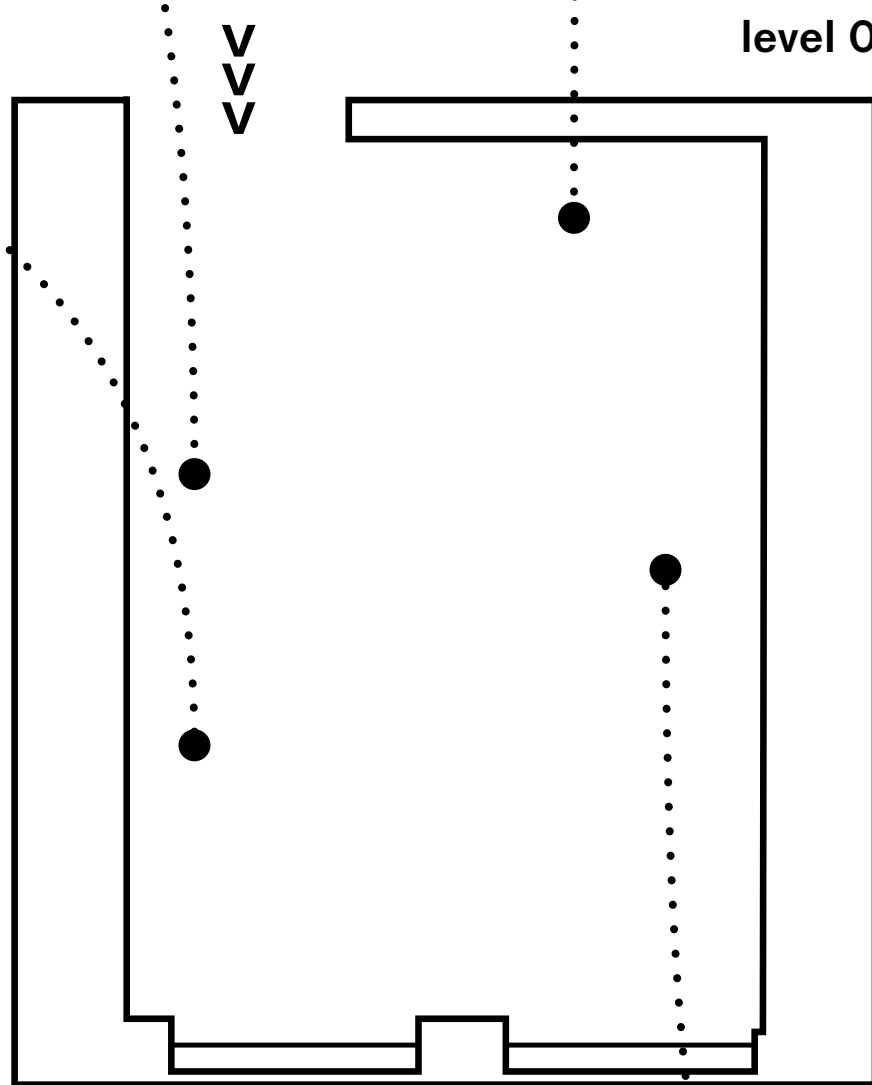


Adcos gold

2024

Oil on paper,
dibond, mdf, steel
and glass

230 x 220 x 5 cm



Goma guar

2024

Oil on paper,
dibond, mdf, steel
and glass

230 x 220 x 5 cm

