

# OUT THERE

## JACK SEGBARS IN CONVERSATION WITH KAMEN STOYANOV

Anybody invited to realize a project in 1646 is asked to engage in conversation with a previously unknown correspondent.

This conversation takes place via e-mail and stretches through the whole period during which the artists develop their initial idea into final results. 1646 invites the correspondent at the other end of this contact to figure his/her way through this actual process.

In trying to picture what result the artists' work is going to, such exchange can become a reflection on the amount of otherwise untraceable choices of the moment which make up to the artists' practice.

This issue is part of the exhibition by Kamen Stoyanov *Out There*, April 22 2011 till May 28 2011 in 1646.

This artist  
Kamen Stoyanov

This correspondent  
Jack Segbars

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# 1646.

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15 APRIL: Jack Segbars [JS] to Kamen Stoyanov [KS]

Dear Kamen,

Hi there, I've been asked by 1646 to get in touch with you and to start up a short correspondence during your build-up period there. The set-up is that we start this without much, or preferably little, knowledge of each other.

I agreed to go along with such a little experiment. It's like getting informed, or to set up an information stream from scratch/zero which is exciting.

But now I'm immediately faced with the problem how to do this, how to start up?

I'll begin with asking about how your collaboration with 1646 came about and what your intentions for the show there are? 1646 is a nice gallery, situated in a rather rough area of town. And that has a regular gallery interior: clean and white. Do you usually work in gallery-spaces? Does that fit the character of your work? Do you have a specific plan?

KS - JS  
Dear Jack,

thanks for mailing me. I agree, that it is not easy to start from zero, but let's try. I will start answering your question and coming slowly to the ideas of the show.

As I know Johan has been in Sofia last year and he had looked to some portfolios. So he came to my works. He also has seen works of mine at Manifesta 7 in Rovereto. I think he was interested about the social and economical issues in my practice.

I have showed in videos practices outside of the white cube and in a way very close to art. One can call them social realities. This will be also the idea of the show at 1646.

I didn't know about the area where 1646 is situated, but I like that it is kind of a rough one.

My plan for this show is based on two fundamentals. The first one is a body of works which deals with street musicians, artists and sellers. Those are in a way video portraits showing their practices and questioning the boundary of the cultural industry and the authorities. This videos will be situated in the first space of 1646 after one enters from the street. In the second one, which looks much more like a gallery according to the idea of the white cube I am going to show my last works in progress I have started and made during my last residency in the Hungarian country side. They deal with the questions around the idea of the artist work at a residency and in this specific situation also reflecting on the country side.

I started two projects there. One with a car painter from the next

village, who usually paints kitsch motives like animals on the cars. I gave him an assignment to paint on the bonnet of a car I used for my last performance in Slovenia in 2010 the can of the bulgarian yoghurt brand Cultura. For the performance in Slovenia I had transported from Sofia to Maribor a full load of this yoghurt in the boot of the car and then sold it to the visitors of the vernissage.

The whole story plays with the missing support for the visual arts in Bulgaria and the lack of culture. I am using the idea of the transport of goods and production of the food as an art practice. In this painting on the car project I am combining those practices outside of the cultural frame and my position as an art producer and transporter or transporter.

In the show one can see the bonnet and a short video showing the process of the painting as well as two photographs showing me staying next to the car in front of the residency house in Hungary. On one photo one can see on the bonnet the painting of the can Cultura and the 0,1 % content, which in a way equates to the money spent in Bulgaria for culture. On the other photo a tiger head is painted on the bonnet. This is the model, or sample which this hungarian car painter uses and I had one week on the car waiting for my motive.

The second project is the Tomato project which I have started at my last art residency in Hungary on the countryside last february.

The concept takes the format of the popular Facebook game Farmville, in which each player gets a small piece of land and starts planting, growing and harvesting virtual crops. Farmville has been object for many discussions and controversies about the translation of everyday-life into the virtual space and the social impact which is being produced. For the purpose of the project I have chosen the tomato because it has different connections to art history (Andy Warhol's work Campbell's Tomato Soup), but also to some stereotypes about my country of origin Bulgaria (the famous sorts of 'Bulgarian' tomato).

For this project I am giving volunteers a piece of the small plants to take care of and I am asking this people to participate in the project on Facebook there they can get instructions and we can communicate. At the end I am planning a group tomato eating on the net.

This is may be enough now. Or even too much.

APR 15: JS - KS

Dear Kamen,

Thanks for your swift reply.

After having browsed through your portfolio and reply I will react to what I think the intention of your presentation may be. I like the idea of separating the gallery-space into two halves that represent different realms and different interactions between the work and the location. The first space seems to make a straight connection as a presentation space where the topic of your work is presented: the fascination of the constellation of the production of cultural value goods versus or in regards to the economical framework or set-up in which they are produced and function.

As I understand it, these works will be presented not

so much in the fashion of the white cube modus? Will it be more casual and not so much concerned with it being presented as art-objects presented in an aesthetic composition?

And it seems to me that these works are of a more documentary nature. The artist as anthropologist.

That is a nice contrast with the presentation of the other projects that play with the space being more of a white cube character. That aspect is countered by the nature of the work which has a distinct performative or temporal character putting a tension in the presentation between art-object, the temporal and the location. They also reflect back on the fact that these were also made in constellation of the residency-idea, don't they? And thus reflecting on the scope of contemporary art production.

This combination of different ways of presentation and the fact that you are separating them will bring on a nice awareness of the different modes, tactics/methodology of art-production and subsequent status of the art product and locations.

I hope the installing goes well?

Does your method of working leave space open for change whilst installing? Do you apply your idea to the space or does the space/constellation of the location talk back?

APR 18: KS - JS

thanks, the installing is going well.

my idea for the first room is to show the works in a way that one can feel the street character of the works. that means not to isolate them but, on the contrary, to make some thing like a choir, an organism.

Yes, the works have this anthropological character, but also a sense of confusion towards their documentary character, which makes them interesting for me.

One of the videos, Phantom, will be screened on a black wall. This is an additional, let's say aesthetic composition. One can see a headless figure playing the accordion that coming out of the wall. It will be on the wall that leads to the second room in 1646 as a sort of transition.

In the other projects connected to the production side - the residency or the conditions of making contemporary art - I am trying to combine the activities of the 'non artist' with those of the 'artist'.

The artist is doing things which hardly could be seen as being art activities like driving goods, planting tomatoes, commissioning a painting on his car bonnet and the non artist is painting a motive on the bonnet, which will be seen in the exhibition and on a video. In this way I am questioning the specific role of the artist in the cultural industry as a distributor. The whole second space is also connected to my Bulgarian background, the missing support for culture we experience there.

Boris Groys for example speaks about the fact that the only interesting things that eastern european countries could export are cultural products. In my works I am going one step further as I export everyday agricultural products as art objects.

Sure, there is room for changes in the realm of the actual space of the exhibition. I am planning a new work for the show.

APR 20: JS - KS

Dear Kamen,

I like this last part very much that deals with the positions of the artist versus the non-artist.

It reflects nicely on the issue of authorship: who is the producer of culture (goods) and thereby is the author of culture.

It's nice to imagine this issue being played out in daily consumer goods and productive activities. I imagine that in the end it's not only about the distribution but in authorship as a whole?

And I like very much how these underlying references to Western Modern Art are woven into the works.

These references become the framework that is being made active again, that changes from its more abstract cultural meaning into a more concrete playing field. They are being confronted with what they originally were referring to.

Your interest in minimal and formal art is nicely played out in reality and questions both ideological authorship versus the concrete and questions of authorship in a cross-cultural sense. My question to you would be: what do you think about the connection between the aesthetic and the real, the aesthetics versus the political?

You obviously play with such relationship though you seem to have reservations about their close connection. Are you also propagating an artistic stance, do you have a program?

KS - JS

thanks for the comments.

Sure the question is also about the authorship or let's say the authorized authorship.

Putting or using banal activities in a specific language while referring to Modern and Contemporary Art gives me a possibility to, let's say, enlarge the aesthetic field. If I had a program it should be the central point. This of course has a political meaning of participation. I think artistic activities give on the one hand deeper understanding of the political, social and the aesthetic and on the other they undermine the status of those. But I don't have one, because for me is much more important to move free through those fields.

I mentioned that I am doing a new work here. It is a transportable art piece: 20kg of Euroking possibilities. I bought a bag and objects from cheap shops like Euroking or 1-euro shops: a satellite dish, a gas cooker, a globe, a disco light, laser light, a banana holder, a scale, a dolma can. For the opening the gas cooker will burn and on I am going to put food on the satellite dish and some times to go through the space with it.

APR 21: JS - KS

Dear Kamen,

I think it's interesting to see you use this reference to Modern/Minimalistic art that in itself has become an -ism, of course, but was once rooted in an actual political and cultural development. It offered a critique

and a possible synthesis between the societal, political and the aesthetic.

It's nice to see that issue in its particular political and societal viewpoint revived again in your activities. To see this effort under the flag of Modernism gives a sense and quality of sadness to it, since that is a language that already has a connotation of being from the past.

And that obviously hasn't fulfilled its promise and by being delved up again, presents an 'image' of the possible (but for you maybe still holds that promise?).

Maybe in that sense it is used as a critique towards ideologies in general? I guess that you mean that also the status of the aesthetic is undermined in the triangle of the cultural, the societal and the political? And why you don't offer a program? Still there is this issue of the communal and of participation and what possibilities art has in this respect.

20 kg is also the weight allowed in commercial flight without extra charges, isn't it? A nice image for the cultural diaspora. I like the title, especially the mentioning of 'possibilities', which can be read in multiple readings.

I won't be able to make it to the opening tomorrow night. But I am surely going to see your show. Hope you have a nice time.

best, J.

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