

THE HAND, THE EYE AND IT

ROBERTAS NARKUS IN CONVERSATION WITH HEDWIG HOUBEN

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 Hedwig Houben *The Hand, the Eye and It*, October 18 2013 till November 16 2013 in 1646.

This artist
Hedwig Houben

This correspondent
Robertas Narkus

Concept and design
Nico Feragnoli

1646.

Boekhorststraat 125, 2512 cn, The Hague
The Netherlands

<http://1646.nl> - info@1646.nl

4 OCTOBER: Robertas Narkus [RN] to Hedwig Houben [HH]

Hello, (Ha!low?) there,

the trains are different, but they all go to the train stations. I was pretty surprised to discover that in Netherlands before train doors close one can hear an old school whistle sound, (the one like in Paoaro drama series from probably 90's) but there is no man whistling. the sound comes from somewhere above the door. I don't know some how it made me think about technology with human face. (one could refer to capitalism with human face?) but , probably it's something else that attracted my attention there. It quite hard to grasp the silhouette of this question and where does it appears from (where all the questions comes from). But if the question could have a face do you think it could have a face of Mark Zuckerberg whistling "the train doors are closing" warning sound? Of course the question could have the face of Mark Zucerberg. But whom would like to see whistling your exhibition?

PS.: maybe this passage might be not the best Icebreaker, (funnily enough the other day I was examining the poster which contained the best "icebreaker phrases", but I remember just the most silly one. I'm not going to share this one, but if I'll remember the other, I let you know.

PPS.: tonight I have been having sms conversation with someone and I've got invited for diner on Sunday at 14.00, but I woke up before getting the address. I lost the message and the whole Nokia in the dream.

greetings from the train in Austria, (as I will sent this I will try to focus on beautiful mountains passing by)

Robertas

Yesterday morning I was reading a poster with a icebreaker craze

HH - RN
Dear Robertas,

Thanks for your message. I have to admit that I had to Google Mark Zuckerberg to be able to link his name to his own face. Otherwise I'm just seeing the actor that played him. But I'm also terribly bad at remembering names, which I'm sure I'm not the only one saying. Maybe that's just a bad excuse of me being lazy. At specially now that I'm practicing the text I wrote for the talk I'll give at 1646 and I'm able to remember every single word I wrote.

Now we are introduced, how do you like to start up the conversation?

Greetings back,
Hedwig

6 OCT: RN - HH
Dear Hedwig,

It seems like it's too late to start conversation since it already started. We could restart it, but where from? Long are gone the times when the internet was glamorous. Do you think googling someone before going to meet a person some how enhances possibilities of successful communication? Are you thinking about the addresser of your forthcoming talk?

HH - RN
Hi Robertas,

Yes, I do think about the addresser of my talk but not specifically about the people who will see it live. Although things are a little different now since I invited people personally this time, so I know who will be in the audience. But that doesn't change my approach. I need an audience because I need the tension that they bring, the fact that it's live, that's what makes it work. Like I need lightning to make the recording and a microphone to talk through. In fact the people who see my talk in real-life have a double role, they are functional and addresser at the same time. Not that I'm interacting so much with my audience -not at all- but they become definitely part of it somehow.

How did you think about me/my work as addresser when you wrote me the first email? So maybe not to make a new start but to think about what preceded this conversation.

best, Hedwig

8 OCT: RN - HH

I thought about our conversation as about a dish. I thought about this conversation as if it could have some kind of taste, colour, tactile experience, shape. What do you like to eat for breakfast? I like breakfast at hotel. Meeting a neighbour from the sixth floor and involving into conversation about bio-ethanol factories. Aren't we in some how a familiar situation? Could your upcoming talk have a smell?

PS:

Hedwig, maybe my questions are not relevant? I try to approach this conversation some how from a distance. It's kind of nice not know too much about what's happening. let me know how you feel about that. We could start another parallel conversation, meta-conversation .were we would talk like we would knew each other for three hundredts years. Or we could discus our ongoing conversation.

+,

R

HH - RN

OK, that sounds quite nice, the conversation as dish/dinner. Maybe instead of breakfast could it be a main dish? Then we could do the cooking together, and sort out by way of acting what kind of flavour we'll get.

Normally I rather start with the ingredients than with a recipe, if you don't mind. I could already do some suggestions maybe.

It's just a first try, we might have to experiment some more with the flavours later but let's give it a chance.

- Repetitions
- Opportunities
- Plasticine
- Performer

Would you know a good recipe with these?
Let me know what you think!

11 OCT: RN - HH

Oh je. P is for Plasticine and Plasticine is for Pasta? not sure where this comes from but have you heard of this saying: "hanging pasta on the ears". Which means blowing mist in to keys, or in other words it means telling something that is beyond true. Our pasta could be served with a slight twist of a lie. Do you think lying could be an artistic practice? Here I would consider a lie being not exactly a category of ethics, but rather a tactical manoeuvre and gesture that is an distracting of viewers eye, while illusionist does his trick in disguise. If sugar is a salt that lost it' saltiness, what would be plasticine then for you?

wet, wet, wet

R

12 OCT: HH - RN

Hi Robertas,

As a strategy I think it can work well but distracting the viewer's eye as a primary goal is not so interesting I guess.

That's indeed what the illusionist can do perfectly. Personally I think that most things are already complicated enough on it's own so I don't see the need for misleading/distracting the viewer on purpose. Often it will happen anyway, a sort of accidental distraction, to me that's much more interesting. For that reason I usually try to set up things extremely simple from the beginning. It's like trying to make a closed circle in which everything can be included. But that's an impossible mission, I will loose track along the way, it always is more complicated then that. Then it can happen that I get misled by it myself.

Therefore maybe I would suggest to serve our pasta when it's very hot so steam will make the intended lie

unnecessary.
How do you feel about that?

If the P of plasticine is for pasta, have you any idea how our pasta is made?
Even though each pasta starts with the same dough -I assume- it can still appear in many different forms. And according to their shape they will taste differently. It's not that I'm so interested in everything that can be made with pasta. The pasta might be present in some way, on the other hand it's also a medium to talk about what happens around and between that pasta.

Did you already think about the ones who we will serve our pasta to, our readers?

Today was very sunny!
Hedwig

13 OCT: RN - HH

Totally. I have to agree it's quite difficult task to distillate illusion form a pure lie. Once you pour milk in to coffee cup you are never able to un-mix it back. Getting lost in the forest and getting lost in the city is different. If you're lost in the city one usually loses direction,(back in the old days) but if you're lost in the forest one is more likely to walk in the circles. Is repetition an intention to find difference, where everything seems the same, or rather it is the opposite ?

HH - RN

Repetition can let you discover several layers, like when you watch a film over and over again.

14 OCT: RN - HH

There are several questions that are one word long, which one is your favourite?

Greetings, I hear kids shouting outside,

HH - RN

Why?

I prefer not to think in terms of favourites which include questions, music, food, etc.

Is that possible or do you think it happens anyway?

It might have to do with my tendency to postpone and stretch a final answer.

Tonight is the performance!

H

16 OCT: RN - HH

I like answers that sounds like questions. I've almost

asked you why your performance is today? (by the way, how was it?) I'm thinking about last questions.

maybe you would like to Skype today some time, around 13.-14.00? or between 16.30- 18.00 (maybe that would be better)?

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