

SOMEBODY SAID SHE FINDS TRIANGLES SCARY I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT

VALENTINAS
KLIMAŠAUSKAS
IN CONVERSATION WITH
MIKKO KUORINKI

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 Mikko Kuorinki *Somebody Said she Finds Triangles Scary I can Understand That*, September 7 2013 till October 5 2013 in 1646.

This artist
Mikko Kuorinki

This correspondent
Valentinas Klimašauskas

Concept and design
Nico Feragnoli

1646.

Boekhorststraat 125, 2512 cn, The Hague
The Netherlands

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

The following conversation was based on an agreement that both participants perform the conversation from a perspective as if they are aboard on "Solaris Station", a scientific research station hovering near the oceanic surface of the planet Solaris as in 1961 Polish science fiction novel by Stanislaw Lem.

Q: Let's put some music on. May I ask you to tell us more about your "This is our music" publication?

A: *"This Is Our Music" is a booklet that was written in Seoul in April 2013. It's a collection of fragmentary sights. For example:*

*boy smells the mouth part of a public phone
cigarette or lipstick
mix of both*

Or:

*man washing his face in a dimly lit garage
so much foam*

It was a way to capture moments and details from this new surrounding I was placed in. I've written similar kind of texts for 3-4 years now, I like to keep doing it wherever I am. This habit started when I was studying photography and became increasingly uncomfortable with taking pictures. The title of the booklet is lifted from Ornette Coleman's album, which probably has one of the best album covers ever.

How exactly is it connected to music?

There is no direct relation to music. The title is sort of a found sight similar to the other texts in the publication.

What did you have for breakfast today?

For breakfast I had a bowl of ascetic muesli with soy milk and half of a banana sliced in it. And a cup of coffee (2 shots of espresso and warmed up milk). This is pretty much what I have every morning.

Would you agree that 'ascetic' is one of the adjectives that programs your days (or even artworks)? Or is it more about coffee and half a sliced banana?

I used to be more of a sliced banana and coffee kind of guy. Actually some years ago I used to have just bread rolls and some sweet stuff for breakfast.

But yes, in one way I do enjoy the ascetic approach. It's satisfying to look at something that is so stripped down to the bare essentials and compressed that one can't add anything to it. But lately I've been moving away from this tendency into something that is more uncontrollable and unpredictable.

Could you tell us more about your “Shrine” (2011-2013) projects which may be described physically as a juxtaposition of random objects put on a shelf, right? How do you decide which object might be part of it and which one may not?

I’ve made shrines so far in Malmö, The Hague, Stockholm, Detroit, Oslo and Helsinki. I wanted to make my own shrine after I saw a modest looking shrine in a Thai restaurant placed in a corner high near the ceiling. I wanted to make myself think about what to place in a shrine. Also I wanted to study what objects would I use were I to create a fake one. Some of the items had a lot of personal meaning attached to them and some had none. Some were loaded and some were empty, some were there to get sort of charged. I wanted to raise these objects for a while to this shelf, so they would have no other function for that period of time. Somehow my guiding line was also how truck drivers collect stuff on their windshields.

Recently I was listening to a Heidegger podcast and found out Heidegger wrote something about “shrine of nothing”. Not getting into what Heidegger meant with it, but just isolating those words I could say my shrines are shrines of nothing.

Accordingly, this questionnaire was composed in the same manner a trucker called Heidegger would collect stuff for his windshield.
What was the last poem you tried to memorise?

A poem by Philip Larkin, for a performance. I ended up reading it from the book.

Why specifically that poem?

I wanted to use his poem “Ignorance” in its entirety as a title for my performance. My voice changes and I am a bit embarrassed when reading poetry out loud. That particular poem seemed to contain the essence of my performance, especially the lines “Strange to be ignorant of the way things work: / Their skill at finding what they need, / Their sense of shape, and punctual spread of seed, / And willingness to change;”

Are you also using poetry in your forthcoming show “Somebody said she’s afraid of triangles I can understand that”?

There will be text pieces in the show. Some months ago I sent a friend of mine a selection of those texts for her to take to a framer. She instantly called it poetry even though I don’t think I ever used that word. So maybe there is poetry in the show. For my last show there were at least two pieces that were direct results of reading poetry.

I recently read something I liked a lot: “The greatest of poems is an inventory.” (G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy, 1908).

I’ve been writing something like an inventory for about a year now, it’s going to be a book which is a list of objects and fragments. The working title is “Stuff.” I wanted to finish it for this show, but unfortunately I ran out

of time and will need to postpone it. Anyway, they are all details and words that I keep collecting, each being rooted in my surroundings...

There will be one work which relates to a joke by Mitch Hedberg.

Which joke? Would you agree with a statement that art is a very special way to make us smile and tell jokes that are too long or difficult to tell or get otherwise? For example, I smile when I think of your book “All the Words from Michel Foucault’s The Order of Things - An Archeology of Human Sciences in Alphabetical Order”.

I’m not going to tell which Hedberg joke it is. Let me tell another Hedberg joke instead: When I was a boy, I laid in my twin-sized bed and wondered where my brother was. I agree with your statement about art and jokes. For me Andy Kaufman was and is one of the best artists. He changed the way I wanted to make art. I wanted to make pieces that were like his bongo playing and dancing comedy.

Great to hear you smile to the Foucault book. I have been wondering why so many people are just confused about that piece. Many want me to explain why I did what I did with it. They look really blank when they browse through it, which is hilarious.

Do you prefer metonymy or synecdoche (I know, usually synecdoche’s just a type of metonymy)?

[**Metonymy** is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is called not by its own name but rather by the name of something associated with that thing or concept.

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a term for a part of something is used to refer to the whole of something, or vice-versa.]

Definitely synecdoche is more interesting at the moment for me because it has the direct link to the thing it describes. I like the concreteness. I don’t want to think that a dustbin necessarily represents something; I like the dustbin because it’s a dustbin.

Do you have a favourite robot?

Cheetah robot. You can find a clip from YouTube.

I am surprised it has no tail, maybe that’s why it is a robot.

Do you think cats and dogs use their tails to communicate or just involuntarily express their feelings?

When I watch that video I feel really weird, it somehow messes me up a bit. The tail... for some reason I’ve always thought its involuntary expression. Why have I been thinking that...? Tail wagging makes me think of how kids hum, sing and whistle in a way that is not conscious - they are really able to produce great lyrics sometimes.

Do you sometimes talk involuntarily?

At least in my sleep. I would be interested in making myself speak involuntary, unconsciously.

There is of course another form of involuntary speech...

the everyday speech you are forced to speak or saying something when you really have nothing to say.

What would be the colour of your parachute?

I have never seen a black parachute. Maybe that. With tiny white spots on it? Or sky blue.

Do you know if the blue of the sky in Finland is any different than in other countries?

I think it is a different colour. From the ground level I think it's deeper blue here... probably because there's not so many factories adding layers of haze and toxic waste as in some other parts of the world. This is not a patriotic statement. Didn't Jason Dodge also make one blanket with the colour of the Finnish sky? Maybe Jason Dodge could decide the colour of my parachute.

When was the last time you experienced a gap between things and concepts?

Can you give me an example of a gap between things and concepts?

Well, now that you ask me, I think not having cash in a bar where they don't take cards could be an example.

I just returned from Seoul, where I spend 3 months. A major part of that experience had to do with some sort of gap between things and concepts. There were so many visible and invisible rules and codes to follow and I was failing all the time. I was often told that I was doing things in confusing ways, sitting in a wrong position for example (like girls). Also I felt like my work there meant nothing, communicated nothing. There's some major gap between things and concepts for you.

What do you think would happen to art after the technological singularity (i.e. the theoretical emergence of superintelligence through technological means which in a super short period of time would solve all rational problems)?

Would the superintelligence then start to produce art because of boredom of having nothing to do? I feel like most human problems are not rational.

It's Friday evening, what are your plans for tonight?

Didn't get the question until Sunday. I spend Friday travelling to a cottage in the Finnish country side. After arriving we ate fish and potatoes; went to sauna; went swimming in the lake; had some beer and wine; and ate some more. It was a good relaxing night. How was your Friday?

I went to a bar where they don't take cards and I had no cash. So instead of having a drink I read an article which said that if evolution would start over again, we would end up with more or less similar results. I guess after "rebooting" nature I'd find myself in the same bar with no cash. Do you find humanity (and nature) to be imaginative enough?

If there was a "reboot" I believe the world would be as

fucked up as it is now. The appearance of things might be different but the content and results ultimately the same? Then again, there is hope in mutation.

I also spent some time in the countryside where I stumbled upon a story about introducing pumpkins to Europe. The story goes that some German farmer was going to the town market and lost a pumpkin along the way. Villagers found it and, as they had no explanation for what they found, brought it to the local town council. There a decision was made that the pumpkin might be an egg and that the town mayor - or *bürgermeister* in German - should incubate it on top of a mountain as higher meant closer to the Sun and thus sunnier and warmer. The *bürgermeister* fell asleep on the mountain and the pumpkin rolled down and scared a rabbit in the bushes below. As a result, the *bürgermeister* concluded that the egg might have belonged to an animal resembling a rabbit. Nobody knows what subsequently happened to the pumpkin or rabbit. Here comes my question - do you know if spectators who encounter your work usually undergo shorter or longer experiences or adventures?

Amazing story, I like the image of a pumpkin rolling down the hill.

I recently heard that in England they roll down a cheese from the hill and they compete who's going to catch it. That is just perfect. Art always loses to reality. With my work I want to place myself in situations like running down after a hill to catch a nine pound wheel of Double Gloucester cheese. And I don't mean this only in the artistic work, but everything involved in this profession. All this negotiating to get someone to do something which might seem impossible, irrational, stupid, useless. Of course I hope the viewer undergoes small adventures while seeing my work.

Aren't you afraid to install "Somebody said she's afraid of triangles I can understand that" in a white cube?

Why? What does the title mean for you?

Well, cubes are made of triangles that she's afraid of and you can understand that. My favourite cube is Rubik's Cube. I wish I knew how to curate shows there.

Oh yeah. No it doesn't scare me. My triangle in the show will be really small. There truly is something possessive about triangles. Just by looking one can already sense the danger, especially large ones. It's like they are able to affect one mentally. In Finland, if a medicine might have effects on the central nervous system, there will be a red triangle on the side of the package. Wonder if that is universal thing.

I never owned a Rubik's Cube, but my cousin had one. He had dismantled it once with a screwdriver and solved it that way. I am sure you will eventually find a way to curate a show in a Rubik's Cube.