

BY DAYLIGHT

MAAIKE GOUWENBERG IN CONVERSATION WITH NICOLE O'NIEL

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 Nicole O'Niel *By Daylight*, April 26 2013 till May 25 2013 in 1646.

This artist
Nicole O'Niel

This correspondent
Maaïke Gouwenberg

Concept and design
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APR 1: Nicole O'Niel [NO] - Maaïke Gouwenberg [MG]

Dear Maaïke,

I would like to take this opportunity to fill you in about my preparations for the show at 1646.

The idea for the exhibition is based around the question: 'emotion exists, why?' Should this be simply ascertained or is there more significance. My intention is to appeal to the intuitive understanding of the observer. The works are reflections, or documents - however you want to interpret it - from research to the source of the psyche. In this I focus on emotion as purely a transcendental phenomenon and I attempt to capture and accentuate the latent understanding of human reality. Regardless of how incomprehensible this understanding might be.

In order to give myself more insight into this phenomenon, I study emotion and behaviour through observation and experience. Emotion and 'the situation' is a self-contained fact which never allows an understanding of anything but itself. I personally believe that it can therefore never be fully explained. It is exactly this magic or confusion - or whatever you might call it - that I would like to bring into the light of day as a kind of 'Ding an Sich'.

The ambivalent title 'By Daylight' refers to a feeling. Disappointment, the confrontational economic forecast, an end to atmospheric candle light. The feeling you get when the illusion has vanished and the curiosity is gone. It refers to the awakening and the subsequent, inevitable daily duty within which the longing for a state of sleep is concealed.

The exhibition consists mainly of video work, both fiction and real. I choose for a sober and relatively formal form and use of space which, from my background, can be interpreted as a form of aggression.

The distinct individuality of the works convey an emotional consciousness as the consciousness of the world. An example of such is, for instance, fear. When we are afraid, we are afraid of something. This means for the world we perceive. In that sense I don't interpret emotion as coincidence. It is a means for consciousness to exist, a means through which its 'existence in the world' is understood.

Actions

APR 3: MG - NO

Hello Nicole

Before leaving the house this afternoon I started writing you an e-mail. Now I open my laptop and your e-mail addressed to me appears at the top of my inbox.

Do you think this is due to telepathy? Or is it just a matter of timing within our schedules - or maybe prompted by Nico - so that the magic of a coincidental moment of telepathy is instantly debunked.

My initial questions to you were uncomplicated. I wanted to know about your idea for 1646 and how you were thinking to present your work. I was particularly interested in what you might do with the possibility offered by 1646 to adapt the space so that the work would be presented in an optimal and challenging way. Thank you for your explanation of this. Your description is quite cryptic in places and I believe it to be an excellent departure point for a conversation.

Emotion and sensation and the investigation of the source of the psychic are challenging themes. Courageous of you to attempt it.

You write that an emotion which belongs to a specific situation is a self-contained fact which never allows an understanding of anything but itself. For the exhibition you intend to create a 'Ding an Sich' of the magic of the confusion which lies within this. Could you tell me a little more about how you might capture this confusion or magic and secure it in a 'Ding an Sich' and how you intend to involve the intuitive understanding of the viewer.

What does the intuitive in relation to emotion and sensation mean to you. All are intangible situations, they are speculative.

I can almost imagine a situation where the spectator's personal emotions are immediately addressed. An almost physical confrontation between the work and the viewer, between your orchestration and the reaction of the public. Is it this directness which is important to you or is it your goal to comment - through the work and the specific way of exhibiting - on what you consider to be the magic and the confusing.

I hope to mail you more questions soon
Greetings, Maaïke

ps.

It was my intention to send this mail on April 1st which might explain this strange beginning ;-)

APR 6: NO- MG

Hi Maaïke,

How amusing... telepathy? Nico? Let's leave it up in the air. Psychic occurrences are indeed challenging themes. As we know, science doesn't have adequate tools to investigate these occurrences. Which is the reason that research into the human being is so different to other investigations. It doesn't allow itself to be studied with one or other 'Traumdeutungs tabel.'

When you discover the boundaries of language, you increasingly believe in concepts, emotions, behaviour - without subtitle. This also happens to be the manner in which I am motivated and inspired. 'Art' offers me the space to play with this. Unexpected, novel enhancements of 'knowledge' concerning the psychic surface in and

through the work.

To answer your question on how I try to capture the magic, it's not something I actively pursue. By referring to something different and not isolating or embedding the phenomenon, I approach that which intrigues me. It simultaneously does and does not arise from a specific composition of manifestations. As the transcendental consciousness/ factor forms a common thread in the work, I attempt to clarify this transcendental type of consciousness in a 'Ding an Sich.' In this I don't want to be too tied down to concepts and try to be careful with the words I use.

I mostly direct myself to the individual in the situation or onto themselves. We live in a time when we hardly dare and are hardly able to be alone. We are being entertained everywhere. This is why we fail to learn to be alone and it is the reason we underestimate the reserves of our inner strength. This is exactly what fascinates and, simultaneously, distresses me. It is especially the psychological and mostly nonverbal situations which I create in my work that lead to a longing of the intuitive understanding of the spectator. I believe that intuition - just like emotion - can tell us about ourselves and creates a tangibility of 'human reality.'

It is intuitively that we understand the meaning of something, as if it imposes itself in a direct abstract manner and penetrates us. By calling on the viewer's 'intuitive understanding' I long for a specific communicative independent stand in relation to the work and subsequently an abstract understanding of the essence which act within the hidden/transcendental field.

I hope I have answered the question concerning the importance of directness in my work. I am in fact particularly fascinated by the directness of music as the most abstract art form (and in my opinion the highest.) I have the tendency to compare my work with compositions as rhythm and repetition are important factors in it. The directness is definitely important, together with a certain layering and meaning in the work.

I will choose a sober, formal form for the presentation in 1646. This might be interpreted as a violent simplification of the lively or dynamic. I view the desire to systemize as a form of aggression expressed (neurotically) in precision.

I will hear from you :-)

APR 12: MG - NO

Hello Nicole,

Time flies. Maybe because I am attempting to get to know New Orleans by surrendering myself to what is happening in the city at the moment. This means I am spending a great deal of time with artists and cultural producers without directly seeking results or filling my schedule. The Big easy (as this musically rich city is called) takes its time and because everyone appears to have time, it eats time. Efficiency appears temporarily less important.

To return to the various ways you try to capture magic. Could you use an example from the coming exhibition

of a 'Ding an Sich' and how the transcendental threads through your work. Do you think that the essence of that which you seek emerges by referring to something different and could you share your thoughts behind this with us the reader/ viewer?

I find it fascinating how you strive to allow the viewer to trust their own intuition and understanding. Do you want to know whether this works for the viewer, for instance when you are at the exhibition and see the spectator looking at the work? This question arises from your apparent desire to involve the viewer by making a direct claim on their manner of interpretation. The work almost becomes a research tool to capture the emotion of the viewer.

You write that you find music an important source of inspiration, especially the composition and abstraction of music. Can you tell me a little more about which composers or musical pieces intrigue you and might influence you in structure, rhythm or repetition? Could you see music as a choreography of tones and subsequently could you see the rhythm and repetition in your work as a choreography. Both are equally abstract or non-abstract and are systems which, through its medium (sound, movement, an object,) convey emotion of the idea which is between the idea and the spectator.

To return to what you wrote in your first e-mail:

The ambivalent title 'By Daylight' refers to a feeling. Disappointment, the confrontational economic forecast, an end to atmospheric candle light. The feeling you get when the illusion has vanished and the curiosity is gone. It refers to the awakening and the subsequent, inevitable daily duty within which the longing for a state of sleep is concealed. It appears from this description that, with your work, you intend to hold a mirror up to the spectator. Is that mirror a result of the directness of your work and its formal presentation or is it due to the chosen subject matter? I wouldn't want you to explain too much however, I believe it might also be interesting to revisit your work after reading more about your ideas. The double meaning behind

the title - the loss of the illusion and also freshness/ clarity of awakening - fascinates me.

I return to the Big easy where illusion and reality are often impossible to distinguish.
Greetings Maaike

APR 20: MG - NO

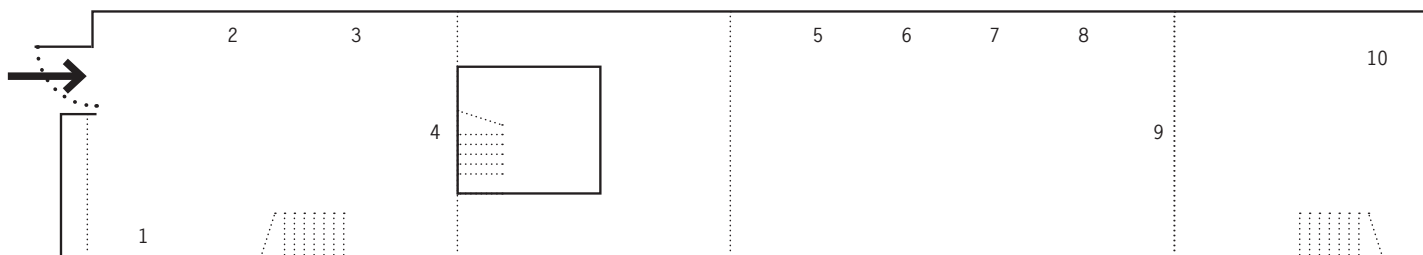
Hello Nicole

How is it going with the exhibition at 1646?
Recently I have spent a lot of time thinking about space because I took the car through Alabama and Mississippi and suddenly found myself driving through the same streets as in the Fall of 2010. Except now it is Spring and the streets give a completely different sensation. The heavy sultry heat of October has yet to arrive. I thought back on my 1646 exhibition in 2011 and how inspiring it was to work in the space and have the possibility to form ideas and work which have come from a very different space.
How do your ideas develop now that you are working in the space? What happens during your conversations with the people at 1646? Does a detailed knowledge of the space influence your decisions?

APR 22: NO - MG

It's nice that you are enjoying yourself and that you had your flashback. At the moment we are building the exhibition. It is always interesting to see how a work can change in a different space. As I have many video works it is important to find a balance in which everything has a voice and nothing obstructs anything else. The people at 1646 have good ideas and their knowledge of the space is essential in a practical sense.

To answer some of your questions. Music (and sound) are indeed an important aspect of my work. I am often annoyed how indifferently it is used in, for instance, video art. I feel it serves to compensate for flaws or the fear to not be entertaining enough. Generally speaking I refrain from using music unless it has a specific goal.



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|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. <i>Untitled</i> | 5. <i>To hear What One is seeing and to see What One is hearing</i> | 8. <i>The Comical about Artistic Discharge</i> |
| 2. <i>Evolution</i> | 6. <i>Looking up</i> | 9. <i>New Consciousness</i> |
| 3. <i>Life is Beautiful</i> | 7. <i>Monologue</i> | 10. <i>Leiden mit ein Roter Kugelschreiber</i> |
| 4. <i>Immanentia</i> | | |

In situations we are accompanied by the original sound and I don't want to manipulate or idealize this realistic fact/feeling. The problem with music at the moment is that there is too much good and too much bad music. We are being inundated and confronted by music everywhere. In fact, we are being forced to listen to music and can hardly get away from it: every shopping street, each apartment... people are being swamped and stuffed with music on a daily basis to the extent that they have lost a feeling for it. This means that listening to music has become a mundane habit supported by the music industry.'

Repetition, rhythm and structure are - just as in music - inseparable phenomena. I can't really explain how I adapt them as each work is different and dictated by different laws. I do however generally believe that repetition allows for a change in certain possibilities and intentions (this is also true for sounds and structures.) It could, as you said, be connected to choreography. In any case, I believe all art forms are connected. Just as a tone can evoke a colour, sounds can be associated with colours or feeling etc.

To deal with your questions:

'... you want to know whether this works with the viewer, for instance when you are at the exhibition and see the spectator looking at the work. This question arises from your apparent desire to involve the viewer by making a direct claim on their manner of interpretation. The work almost becomes a research tool to capture the emotion of the viewer.' It is not my intention to read the emotions of the viewer when they see a specific work, I am not interested in this. In any case this superficial expression says little about the actual genuine feeling the viewer might have.

'It appears from this description that, with your work, you intend to hold a mirror up to the spectator.' It is true that I want to confront the viewer. This mirror is dependent on varying factors and differs with each work. The choice of subject matter is important in this.

Greetings and enjoy yourself there!