

13/9/2019

HIS HIGHNESS IN A DITCH

CHARLES AUBIN
IN CONVERSATION WITH
TOVA MOZARD

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 getting 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 Tova Mozard, *His Highness in a Ditch*, September 13 2019, in 1646.

1646.

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AUG 29: Charles Aubin [CA] to Tova Mozard [TM]

Dear Tova,

It's a pleasure to be in touch. I'm curious what was the starting point for your upcoming show at 1646?

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,
Charles

SEPT 2: TM - CA

Dear Charles,

The starting point... if I freely elaborate on that question I would say it's two videos, one with cops and one with a former addict and a thief.

I wanted to call the show *Police and Thief* at first...

One film is older, the other one is brand new and they are both semi-staged and both deal with real life but also play on theatrics.

They also sort of deal with masculinity and role-playing and how to behave to fit in...

And from these two films two new performance pieces will be developed and made specifically for the show.

I'm super excited since all my work, although staged and framed, is very much taken directly from "reality" and real people's lives. My work is not made through big productions... so documentary and improvisation are very much part of the works I do in film and photography. So developing already made films into theatre/performance is natural but a bit new too.

Ask me more!

3 SEPT: CA - TM

Thanks Tova. Can you elaborate on the process? Where or how do you meet these people? And what do you tell them? How do you work together? For instance, what kind of directions do you give? Can you give examples?

6 SEPT: TM - CA

I usually meet them on "the street". But to give a few examples: Leona Babette I met at a bar, Russ I met at a friends' movie shoot when we were both extras, Eddy I saw dancing at a club, Chuck I saw perform at the *Magic Castle* and then I also cast my family in my films, photos and performances.

So, it's all very fluent, you could say.

I don't tell them that much, first we get to know each other based on shared interests in films or comedy or art or performance and then pretty fast ideas come and we elaborate on some work. But I don't want it to sound too relaxed, cause I know that in the back of my head I always have a plan or my head is working on wanting to execute and try out ideas. But I am invested in having a good relationship with these people, almost like I base work and scripts on who they are as people/characters in real life as well as performers.

A lot of early works were people just telling their stories... with easy directions from my part. I would set the set, frame the image of the video and give subtle directions.

A lot of my directions are a sort of anti directions... I use a sort of mix of both, a very clear intuitive seeing, knowing and a sort of withdrawal... to give the person a space and way to think and try out things themselves... so instead

of taking charge and making them follow me I let them have more power and in that way we together develop the act but under my “umbrella”.

6 SEPT: CA - TM

Thanks Tova. You said your videos for this exhibition explore masculinity. I read it's about “figures of authority” but I haven't seen them, can you please describe what happens and say what you were looking for?

9 SEPT: TM - CA

I think that specific description “exploring masculinity” came from the readings from 1646. But that's fine, sometimes it's nice to let others identify and determine what your work is about. Also, I think it's because the two films I'm showing both have male protagonists and also play and embody personas that have a somewhat over representative role in the male, in this case being a cop and a criminal and drug addict.

I agree with the “figures of authority” cause even a drug addict has a figure of authority...

It's all about taking charge over the role you want to be in and how you control that and use it for your survival or your profession, it can be both.

What happens is that they perform their roles as cop and “outcast”, both in movement and language and both in a naturalistic way (documentary manner) and in a more scripted or directed way, coming from me.

So I form them and they form themselves. We work out a story together based on who they are.

So it's a way of giving something to the audience but also a somewhat intersecting journey for the people/actors I work with. This goes for practically all my work, I would say.

For the film *Repertoire* I think I was looking for closure and clues and also my dad in another dad (Micheal, in the film, is my stepdad) my real father also was a sort of outcast who never could find his way into society and all.

I thought that if a life story was told from the beginning to the end perhaps that was the best way to understand things you ponder... and also move on. But it turned out that wasn't the case.

For the film *Smoke* (I think that will be the title), the one with the cops, I was looking for a state of being I found liberating... perhaps. Two people, in this case twins and amateur actors and very interesting people in general, are playing cops or rehearsing the roles of cops, playing with it and analyzing it at the same time.

Also a story is developed, while this takes place.

It's both an urge to undress “figures of authority”, the LAPD, and play with the role of masculinity and power and the insecurity and play that come with it and at the same time, as I mentioned above, I realize I'm looking for a state of bliss through them, a state of mind where you can move freely between reality and fiction.

But I'm also looking for the gap between knowing and not knowing, being in a story that you follow and at the same time taking control of the story.



A still from *Smoke*, by Tova Mozard.

SEPT 12: CA - TM

Hi Tova,

I'm intrigued by the search for blissfulness you mention. Having that in mind and the autobiographical elements you shared, I'd like to hear you elaborate on how you treat fiction in this respect.

12 SEPT - TM - CA

Great question!

So therefore hard to answer... I like to think I don't care about the lines between fiction and the autobiographical, but I do very much when it comes to the actual work.

I have a very high ideal when it comes to representing the "truth" or someone's own story. I can frame a story or a person but I won't mess with what I believe that person is about...

But since I am looking for escape and a state of mind that is bliss, I try to look for areas, both in the topic and the personal stories, that represent that.

So that usually makes for the persons and subject matter to be a bit "eccentric" and outside normality or on its own path...

So getting to the blissful state for me is to find equal parts of reality and fiction, and the best of all is if they already have a perfect match and usually they have, more or less...

I am not at all fond of making up stories or plain pretending. I started out as a dancer very much influenced by Pina Bausch and those associated with her like, Rosas and Meryl Tankard, DV8 etc. For me that type of work is super autobiographical and documentary and "real" and dance is such a hard work too (that's why I quit)... but still it's turning real life into abstraction, right away, without any translation besides the choreography... that's a very blissful moment.

And after my dancing career I went into photography and then more into documentary type of images, but soon I started combining a sense of the stage and theatricality with that interest in real life (that also has its roots in growing up in a family of addicts and somewhat misfits).

So the conclusion would be, I think, that I found a way to come to terms with emotions that lies in between the acute and the ones harder to reach, by working with subjects and people who are representing that gap.

It can be someone's persona or someone's place in society or someone's occupation or someone's specific interest.

Again, the bliss is a freedom that comes after the search is over... when you have discovered an idea or when the art piece is finished.

But then it starts all over again.

HIS HIGHNESS IN A DITCH

TOVA MOZARD

1 *Repertoire (28 min.)*

2 *Smoke (30 min.)*

