

*Contribution sur l'économie des arts vivants pour l'ouvrage "Time is a Book". J'ignore si elle a finalement été publiée.*

Dear Els, dear Dirk,

In order to participate, there were choices that had to be made.

- 1 - choosing a time-frame to do it : the last minute.
- 2 - choosing a medium : this text, sent by mail. This choice may relate to the first choice.
- 3 - choosing a language : your questions have been asked in english, so I guess the answers come naturally in the same language. I spent the last evening with a turkish girl and a polish man talking in french about a japanese play in a Portugal. It gave me (apart from a strong euro-enthusiastic urge to sing Beethoven's 9th's presto) the strong conviction that french (my native tongue) is still the second official language of Europe. So I may use some, from time to time, when in need.

"My work" doesn't mean that much. I write and perform. Sometimes alone, sometimes not. I'm young and unexperienced. This may read as a provocation, but I'm pretty sure other contributors will have covered the mystical, the magic, the implicit...so let's say it : the economy of performing arts has become a, if not the, catalyst of my work.

It depends on a complex balance between meeting a space, an audience, and a structure (festivals, venues...). This balance is maintained by multiple actors of an economy that wasn't built on aesthetical principles (or in great secret, and it was a total failure).

Whoever they are, they have to deal with budget issues, mundane politics and organisation nightmares. And they are not necessarily evil (as I sometimes was told when I started). They are as far as I know, lovely and intelligent people that don't sleep enough. It's an economy of trust and belief. They think we have something to do, be it a 10mn performance, a 3 hours show or a two-weeks exhibition.

Truth is, most of the time, we don't know what we're doing. Structures and producers ask for texts presenting future work. They usually need them at a moment when we just know that we want to do *something*. I spent many hours polishing texts with the clear objective of making it so that it would preserve the possibility of doing almost everything on stage. And then, realising that out of this irresponsible behaviour, would actually come something good (the classic "*oh my, that actually makes sense*" epiphany).

This is a writing context that I'd consider to be legitimate. C'est un contexte d'énonciation légitime, qui ôte la vanité de l'acte d'écriture en avançant sous les oripeaux du trivial.

Just like improvisation patterns : you place yourself in a situation where you have to talk, it's clumsy in the beginning, and you end up acting your heart out. Having to write those communication texts may feel pointless until you realize you DO want to write. It's just that you forgot you wanted to. Because you're lazy or forgetful. Or both.

What does it tells us ? That the structure can be a catalyst.

What can we fear ? That it could become the only catalyst, or become evil.

What do we want ? To gain leverage on the structure.

And actually, as far as I can see, most venues and festivals are only asking for it. I lost count of festivals demanding artists to take part in the definition of the content or the method. Using tools that once came out of a very different art economy (CoBrA, Fluxus...) Is a good question suddenly a cheap cliché just because it's asked by a festival ? Then how does that becomes compatible with radicality when the back of the flyer is covered with logos of sponsors, including banks and hamburger joints, that actually helped funding ?

Here lies their limit, and mine. We make compromises. Beware, here it comes : double conceptual salto with pirouette : that's exactly the nature of my work, compromising. (grinning smile, hindered by tremendous pain in the ankles).

Until brainwaves-reading gets efficient, cheap, and safe, I can't communicate my ideas to people without using languages I don't master, movements I don't control, tools I don't fully understand. The tension these impossibilities arise, I guess, defines part of my work. The conditions in which those impossibilities are dealt with, defines the other part. Both can become subject of investigation, and material for research.

Considering the importance of this bizarre love triangle (space-audience-structure) in our work, we once made a statement that we were working in the entertainment industry (weird, deadpan, sometimes not entertaining), and that we were making *produits de luxe* (which is of course absolutely not a goal, that would anyway never really be achieved, thanks to sabotage reflexes deeply buried into our consciousness). If you divide the total cost (all included) of some performances by the actual number of people watching it, you get dizzy. I heard of great shows that premiered and died the same night. This is disgusting. And joyful too.

My commitment lies in my relationship to the world. I try to change the status of entities, making objects subjects, changing the grammar of my environment. Doing research is like doing linguistics, you are mostly observing. Doing shows is closer to inventing a grammar, using it and trying to get understood. Being radical is using this grammar without giving a clue to the audience. It's as bold as beautiful, and can be done whatever the context is.

Mad woman ranting about the economy in parks, smelling of cat shit : you are my peer. You are doing radical grammar. I love you. When you work bearing in mind that you can end up ranting in a park smelling of cat shit, it helps a lot. I just want to be sure that some people will actually get what I'm talking about.

with love,

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Halory Goerger