

*on a language for art and life / intensity / listening to the birds at 5:00 am /
performance with or without people / artists looking for something*

with **Mantas Indriūnas**
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*an ongoing collective exploration / learning from experiences of togetherness and uncertainty / reflecting on listening – with Mantas Indriūnas, Matteo Zoccolo – 14 may 2021
matteozoccolo.net/on_listening/conversations.html*

MI: Hey Matteo!

MZ: Hey Mantas!

MI: So, before this microphone discussion, you talked about different art vocabulary and ‘intimacy’ was just one example. But maybe I would like to know more about it. Why do you need a vocabulary to explain art? Why it’s so important for you to explain art?

MZ: Fuck, it’s a very difficult question. Um... Before, you said that art is already a language. So, maybe, sometimes there is no need to explain art with words. Music and painting are already languages. I would just like to ask you something. If we consider human interaction as art, then which kind of language do we use?

MI: Human interaction? Um... What is exactly human interaction? I speak, I walk in the room, I meet somebody, I walk on a wet ground, or cold. I use all my senses. Human interaction... What was the question?

MZ: If you consider interaction between people to have an artistic value, so that the interaction itself is considered art, then what is the language that we are speaking? What is that the language that two people use when their interaction is considered art?

MI: I think about performance, which comprehends more forms of expression: sound, body language, sometimes smell, feelings, visuals, words. All these expressions together are an artistic act. And what is life, then?

MZ: Yes, it’s life. And sometimes I ask myself, “Why do we need to separate art from life?” I mean, too much has already been said about this... Whether there is a distinction between art and life, you have a bunch of artists trying to blur this distinction. But I actually find myself in this same place, because my artistic practice is very much connected to life, to my own life and the life of the people I work with.

MI: Um... If I think about myself when I do something I consider art, it always has to do with intensity. And *Beobachtung*, observation. Most artists I know somehow feel the importance of the moment. It could be in painting, just like a framed canvas, in which somehow there is only one message. It can one color, a texture, an image with some symbolic meaning.

MZ: What do you mean by ‘intensity’? Do you think this intensity is something that is inside the body and mind of the artist, or is it something in between two or more bodies?

MI: Well, I thought interaction can happen not only between two people, but also when you are walking in a

forest you have some kind of interaction. The cold water, the colors... Every second, so many things are happening. Most people just don't realize, don't grasp, don't take care. People don't notice things. And artists have their own way of perceiving, which can bring importance to these small things, moments feelings, sounds, emotions, words, logical connections, colors, symbols...

MZ: And how can you see this intensity? Do you actually perceive it? And where?

MI: I had this thought about our dialogue right now. I'm usually not so focused on one topic. And actually, this topic is so... Indescribable. I'm speaking, trying to find something. This makes this moment really intense. And I would see this type of art, I don't know what exactly it is, but it's some art of thinking. I speak, I think, and a lot of emotions, images and memories come to my head. This kind of intensity doesn't usually happen in the daily life of people who are not so related to art. Many are lost in their daily routine, have their own goals and the fear to let it go and just be present in the moment. And see what happens.

MZ: So, for you, intensity is something you can only experience here and now. It's a sort of non-mediated experience, it's direct. Where is the intensity between two people talking or watching a painting? Is there an intensity? So, does the intensity lie on me, since I am the one who reacts to something? Is this intensity something external, and that, as such, you can only feel when you are in relation with the other?

MI: It in between two people or you and an artwork. Intensity could happen between two people, yes. But also between you and an artwork. And of course, it's another kind of intense. Intensity is what's happening now in my body. It's a sort of resonance that happens while having this dialogue. I feel really intense. And I also try to be in the moment, to be as open as I can. There are a lot of kinds of intensity. It could also be silence and calmness. If you wake up at 5:00 in the morning, you could hear a lot of birds, and it's so intense. If you described it in words, music, colors or dance, this form of art could resonate the same intensity with people who would look at it.

MZ: Um... But for me, the intensity of something like birds at 5:00 am, stays at 5:00 am. If you want to get that intensity, then you have to wake up at 5:00 am. You cannot get it at 4:00 pm when you watch a painting that tries to represent that intensity. You know what I mean?

MI: Yeah.

MZ: That's where the distinction between art and life gets so blurred. When I gather a group of 10 people, we go to sleep together and wake up at 5:00 am, we sit and listen

to the birds, then I can consider it as a performance, an artwork.

MI: Because you somehow shared this experience with other people? Would it be for your performance if you wouldn't involve other people? Only you and birds?

MZ: Yes, it could be seen as such. But then, I have to tell some other people that I did that thing. How can I tell it? It depends. You can consider art as a need, something self-therapeutic, just for you. Otherwise, you can consider art as communication between an artist and a viewer, or a listener.

So, if I wake up at 5:00 am and I listen to the birds without telling anyone, nobody knows that I did that thing, is that still art? And if you wake up at 5:00 am with other 9 people, you listen to the birds and still don't tell anyone else outside the group. Then, is that art? But most of all, is there really a need to call it art when you meet with 9 people and listen to the birds, which is already a nice experience? And actually, it can still be a nice experience if you wake up alone to listen to the birds.

MI: Somehow, when I talked about intensity, I was thinking about our relation with nature. These days we have so little of it. There's almost no natural forest in cities. We live quite a comfortable life, which is so scheduled. We have a routine. I could imagine it's really different if you would live in a forest, which every day would look completely different.

And I see artists who somehow are not happy with their lives. They are looking for something. And, at the same time, other people can see that artists are looking for something. Maybe, this is the reason why words and artists exist. Somehow, I don't think it's so important to communicate what you do. Most of the time, it happens by itself. And if you meditate all the time and think about nature and forest and colors and ideas which relate with people in your environment, other people could just see it by themselves. And if you can express it in some form of art, it's just an additional value. It's only an additional value. I think that the best is not to concentrate on this additional value, but to the roots of what interest you.

For example, if it's interesting for you to make this dialogue, it could maybe go into a book, right. But, in my opinion, it's art just because you are interested in it. What could bring this dialogue? If you reflect on that and put it in a book, it would just benefit. You would materialize that. But not only this makes you an artist.