

*on feast as dispositif for collective resistance to productivity, sobriety, capitalism, fascism, consumerism... /
the bread concert / food as social tool / bread and intimacy / practicing pleasure / delegated responsibility /
fighting power with joy / setting the space / political hedonism / micro-powers and micro-efforts*

with **Mariona Pujol Miravent**
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an ongoing collective exploration / learning from experiences of togetherness and uncertainty / reflecting on listening – with Mariona Pujol Miravent, Matteo Zoecolo – 19 may 2021
matteozoecolo.net/on_listening/conversations.html

MPM: I remember when you came to my place in Jerusalem and we started to mix all the ingredients and recording for ‘the bread concert’. I also remember all the technical problems involved. The fridge is louder than I thought!

MZ: True! It took two days in a row to make the bread and record the process. Later on we worked on the raw recordings, mixing them for the radiosqu broadcast on 1st July 2020.

MPM: One of the things I fondly remember is my flat mate coming afterwards and eating with us the bread we made, you brought hummus and baba ghanoush from Damascus Gate. We suddenly started talking about different stuff and making connections, but mostly talking about food. That moment I realized how food and eating itself can be so powerful as a social tool. And of course as a political one, especially there in Jerusalem. But how a loaf of bread can bring people together so easily... It’s just amazing how food connects people. I also remember this moment when we went to the Holy Sepulchre and recorded the ‘Masa Madre’ prayer, it was really special.

MZ: It was amazingly silent.

MPM: No one was there, which is unbelievable for that place.

MZ: True, because of the lockdown.

MPM: We were so privileged to live it like we did. It was really special to explore all these little secret rooms. And the sound of the echo was amazing, though I guess a lot had to do with the energy of that place.

MZ: I feel like we learned something from that experience.

MPM: You know, it might sound frivolous, but I learned some technical stuff about sound and recording. And also how to work with you, how to set boundaries and connect, to develop an artistic process together. What would you say? Maybe you expected something else.

MZ: No, no, I didn’t expect anything. I learned many things on how to make bread, and by recording it, we kind of extended our auditory capabilities. Thanks to the microphone, we were able to hear hidden and unusual sounds. We also discovered that most of the sounds had a sort of sexual touch.

MPM: Totally. I think making bread is so related to making love. You know, the sourdough is like a pussy full of bacteria and smelly. It’s amazing. Luckily there wasn’t any sexual tension between us, cause it could have brought us to some scenario!

MZ: I agree. It could be a good strategy for a first date!

MPM: Sure! “Would you like to make bread with me and record the sound of...?”

MZ: That’s lovely. But let’s stay here, because I think this might connect to your artistic practice.

MPM: Oh Matteo, I have to confess something to you... I just made up an art project to justify partying all the time and having a lot of food, alcohol and drugs. Kind of joking. The thing is that there was a moment when I had to start the final project of the degree, the stuff you are working on right now. But, you know, at that moment my major motivation was to do this thing I call ‘festin’ with my university friends, which is a Spanish word that includes eating, drinking, dancing and celebrating. It could be translated in ‘feast’. So, from the start until now, we’ve been doing this sort of parties together. And at one point I just realized this *festines* were the project itself.

MZ: Sounds clever.

MPM: So, the idea is to propose pleasure as practice of resistance generating temporary hedonistic zones and situations through the *festin*, working as a relational device to present a collective pleasure through food, cooking, drinking and partying. So, the theoretical body of the project, which has been developed hand in hand with the practice itself, makes a lot of references to Michel Onfray’s political hedonism, the Temporary Autonomous Zone of Hakim Bey, the bacchanals of Greeks and Romans and then other situated practices such as the ones from The Diggers of San Francisco, the FOOD of Gordon Matta-Clarck or Dash Snow

MZ: It would be interesting to relate your practice to what we did with ‘the bread concert’ for radiosug, and also in a broader sense to the concept of listening.

MPM: I think working at the bread concert made us amplify all our senses, for sure. It’s interesting to work with senses because we are so used to and so comfortable in this culture of ocularcentrism. So, I think we worked not just listening, but also touching, smelling, tasting. This kind of next-level listening didn’t have to do with our ears, but it was about listening to the rhythms of the dough, understanding if it needed more water, more kneading or more resting. And that’s how you get to construct an intimate relationship with bread and with things in general. So for the audio, we focused on recording all the process of bread making and baking, from the liquid bubbling sourdough to the chewing of the still warm bread. At the end, it made us feel like kids, right?

MZ: Exactly, I felt that.

MPM: It makes sense, we were doing it with curiosity. We are both curious people.

MZ: And there is also this playfulness in your project, right?

MPM: Yes, totally. Basically, it’s about playing and partying. It’s very cheeky, that’s why I also delegate some responsibilities to others.

MZ: What do you mean?

MPM: I’m not the leader of anything. It’s not my project. The project, if we want to call it a project (which I have my doubts about), it’s from everyone that has taken part in these *festines*. So, I delegate in terms of authorship and also in logistical stuff, such as the registering of it, and the memory of the project, which has been constructed from others’ voices. And if I could, I would also delegate the presentation in front of the commission, for sure.

MZ: Nice. So, you consider it as a *dispositif*. But for what?

MPM: For resistance.

MZ: To what?

MPM: Resistance can be individual or collective. We resist productivity, for example. Resistance to sobriety. How pleasure can also be an element of resistance, which makes us take care of each other. We are collectively caring about each other. We are cooking together, many people and many hands are constructing everything. I think this has a lot to do with care. And care has to do with collective resistance. We also dance. There is this quote from this anarchist woman from the early 20th century that says something like, “If I can’t dance, it’s not my revolution.” There is something really political in moving and caring for our bodies.

MZ: Do you think this connects to the current pandemic situation?

MPM: Yes, it’s also resistance to what we’ve been imposed to do, or how we are supposed to relate to each other. Not just physically, but also emotionally. To relate to each other and to celebrate has become a form of resistance at this point. We’ve got to a point where I feel like, “Am I here to enjoy, or to fight for our joy?”

MZ: Would you call your artistic practice relational, participatory, collective...?

MPM: You know, last day I was thinking about that. Maybe I don’t want to call it ‘artistic practice’. I feel like my position in this group of friends, that we also happen to work as a collective, is to function as a glue, I would say. A

glue between all their practices and needs. I would say it's a curatorial-like practice.

MZ: Are you maybe a facilitator or caretaker?

MPM: Actually, I like to think of myself as a curator, because there is this thing about cure and care in the word, which I think makes it so literal.

MZ: Alright. So, you don't use 'curator' in the context of art-system exhibitions.

MPM: It could be, I like ambiguity. But actually this group of friends I've been working and parting with... We also think of ourselves as a collective of artists. There are so many bridges within our practices.

MZ: I think what we are doing is very similar, especially thinking about the *hörraum*.

MPM: I know!!

MZ: I like the concept of being a sort of glue between people. And to me, it also seems like you create the opportunity for them to meet.

MPM: Totally, it's all about setting the space!

MZ: So, how can you suggest people to do things together?

MPM: You mean how do I activate the *dispositif*?

MZ: Exactly.

MPM: It can happen in many ways. Sometimes we just plan it in advance. "We're going to do a *festin* this day and hour." And someone says, "Yeah, we could cook some tacos or something!" And someone else adds, "Yeah, I'm bringing some fun!" And sometimes it happens more spontaneously. It can also happen in a bar. I like to think that this *dispositif* is something like as mushroom that can pop up in many places, private or public whatsoever. In June, it will be in a gallery space, where we will do a collective exhibition. It can last ten minutes, three hours or two days...

MZ: So, for you, it's not about the space, it's more about a collective of people, right?

MPM: Yes, it's about that group. In this sense, it's a practice situated in a group of friends. Not democratic at all. It's not always about making things accessible to everyone. But I understand this participatory thing and the exercise of democratizing art has been a fashion in recent times regarding artistic practices.

MZ: How did this group get started?

MPM: They were already my friends, we are mostly studying together. It happened quite organically. Some of us are doing an artistic residency in a place called Fabra i Coats, which is this thing called 'creation factory', really shitty name I would say, where we basically have our own space to do the stuff we want. I have this table with closets which I stuffed with kitchen utensils and food. I just started cooking when people were there, and most of the time these people were this group of friends. We were just cooking, this person would bring tomatoes, another person would bring tuna and a sandwich with tomatoes and tuna would be created. This is how the thing started. It's been a process. It just happened naturally, sharing some space and a table.

MZ: So cool! How do your friends call you? Are you just a friend or also the organizer of these events?

MPM: I guess mostly their friend. When we're doing this kind of things, they call it 'bacanal'. Last weekend we did it from Friday to Sunday in a house in the countryside. We were there just drinking, talking, eating, partying, massaging one another... Just laughing a lot and caring about each other.

MZ: This doesn't get into an orgy or something, right?

MPM: Mmm, no, no! Well... We just kiss each other when we are drunk, like everyone does. It rarely goes further than that, even though it maybe could... There have been some couples within this group of friends.

MZ: Oh Mariona!

MPM: I can feel a kind of pressure because you're recording it.

MZ: I will send it to you, of course. You can check it and apply your censorship!

MPM: Alright!

MZ: So, would you say this *dispositif* also functions to provide alternative values or ways of living other than the ones suggested by our economic system?

MPM: Yes. I was telling you before that I've been really interested in Michel Onfray, this cynical philosopher who wrote 'A Hedonist Manifesto: The Power to Exist'. We are facing today the impulse to resist all this power that exists in our capitalist social structure. The resistance goes against capitalism, fascism, consumerism. So, the way this power is imposed to us is in the form of micro-fascisms, micro-powers, he says. The way we can answer to these micro-powers we are being exposed to is through micro-resistance. And this is so related to the 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' by Hakim Bey, which

suggests organizing new social structures through actions like Poetic Terrorism. I think that, as always, the thing is not to invent something new, but to situate it. To take the feast, which exists since forever, and to use it as *dispositif* for resistance. And it is political hedonism.

MZ: Cool!

MPM: Did you understand? My English is a bit rusty.

MZ: I think I got the vibe.

MPM: Great!

MZ: I didn't read the books, but I definitely can relate when you speak about those micro-powers that must be counteracted by micro-efforts as a form of resistance. I like this concept of starting from little actions instead of thinking big and saying, "This is how we can solve a problem."

MPM: Yes. In terms of organizing, it's much better because when you plan to do big things, it's way easier to impose things on others. When you plan things on a big scale, you also plan yourself as a leader. That's why anarchist groups and guerrillas are not so anarchist in the end. People want to stay in power, even if what you want is to fight against the power.

MZ: So, would you imagine your feasts on a bigger scale or do you think they only work if the group of people is small, with everybody knowing, caring and trusting each other? Would you expand it or keep it very situated and specific?

MPM: That's hard to predict what will happen. It will just be an experiment. That's what we'll try out in our upcoming exhibition in Halfhouse Gallery. I don't know, honestly. I think it doesn't depend on the amount of people that are in a place, or the existing dynamics between them. There is no rule that can predict how it will and can be. I think it's more related to energy or the environment. But as a *dispositif*, it can happen in many ways. Maybe it would work and maybe not. For sure, it's easier to work on a small scale and with a group of friends that you already know.

MZ: Yeah. I just have another question. If I understood well, your focus is on what happens here and now during the feast. Do you think it's also important to document what is happening, so that other people who are not present can know about it?

MPM: Well, thinking of this project in the context of the university, yes, it's important to document it. But maybe, if I wasn't in the context of a university thesis, I wouldn't have any trace. I'm more interested in what is happening there, which can only be experienced by the people who are present. These are just moments. If you're there it's

cool, if you're not there, also cool. I'm interested in avoiding documentation, which is also something many artists have already spoken about. To give value to what's going on now.