

# Kronzeugenbericht

AIR Antwerpen

in September

(1) Trembling /

JELLE SPRUYT – Ebb or Flood

(2) Later that night

(3) Women, oh women /

PAKY VLASSOPOULOU – Hello Mrs Ramsay (Things Don't Change That Fast)

(4) Suddenly a man

(5) He is cool with fruits /

ROWAN VAN AS – East Village View Fruit Exchange

(6) Artwork out of red and blue /

KITTY KAMP – Objects of a Performance

(7) Beautifully googling moves /

AMBER VANLUFFELEN – Can I Listen Radio Over Here

(8) It is the curtain / JURGEN OTS – Blisko / KOBA DE MEUTTER – Wip

all 2017

***Trembling. The appearance of how we expect to look at an artist, or an artist to look like. (1) Air-driven pollen and dust by shaking the embroidered clothes. He gets calmer, after his first cigarette. Stake, totem, ritual, and liquid against the sun. Mosquitos bite, a bird shits on the girl's green dress next to me. The performer wonders why everyone contemplates so attentively the just-hung laundry on the clothesline, in the cleaner part of the garden. He colors and composes textures of textiles into a living object that sweats, changes, melts, and drips continuously. Selected and then compiled pieces, pinned like ordinary underwear drying in the last light of the day, ready to be***

*removed again. Innards – from tinted ice, looking like beetroot and apricots – encircle the creature. A heartened being, aroused from sleep. Thereby the act is quite simply structured: It has a beginning and an end in the making, a vesture, as said, and the moment of creation being watched by an audience. Afterwards, there is the possibility to question the originator about the chosen components and compositions. Headphones and clotheshorse, grounded and abstracted, concentrated inspiration and the viewers as witnesses: the staging of an artwork produced in time.*

Not an art critique: a *Kronzeugenbericht*. A crown witness account. And yet, not looking to “account,” but rather at an undeniable intertwinement with the manifestation the account is referring to. Intertwinement here does not mean any involvement in the preparatory production processes, like that of the organizers, nor any direct support in the conceptual or physical realization of the artwork. It is about the presence in the moment of production, and the possibility to write and to speak of it afterwards. Which applies to the performative act and likewise to static artwork – although, it seems, the entanglement becomes clearer and even more stimulated through temporal manifestations of time-based performances. Either way, the moment of production can be further extended in meaning: for example, it could take place through an interview or conversation with the artist, or by photographing the artwork (or the artist). An oral judgment after/during viewing, like “this is an artist/artwork,” potentially specifying that it is a bad or good one, contributes to this process as well. Or a witness account. All these are factors that help in constituting an artwork (and an artist): to perceive and describe it (her or him) as such. To produce what? The status of the artist, the expectations projected on her or him, and the particular, symbolic, political, or economic, interest in the label. In the end: glimpses of awareness of the connectedness of imagination and reality, a demanding proposal, within an incorporated system of value, and valuation.

Take a quick glance at the sky.

***Later that night some big cranes fly to the yard and encircle the arrangement with distrust. (2) They have never seen a figure like this before, and are not sure if they should be afraid, or ally with this mystical being. The following hours they***

*stay together, as other birds, some sort of herons, supposedly, arrive and survey the converging constellation. Ever-greater gatherings of birds continue: hawks and sparrows, ducks, I've even spotted owls there. All of them are staring at the creature, and, of course, at the present rows of birds in front of them. Seen from the hinder ranks, from the outer circles of birds, the figure in the middle becomes very small in size. But this does not really matter, because meanwhile the fowls, in turn, became interested in the formation itself, and, naturally, in the other species. So they rest. And still, after the laundry has already been long taken off, they come back in regular intervals, to sit together, arrange and dispose, around the now empty center, in the cleaner part of the garden.*

Digging low.

When writing about art, the own partake in the processes of historicization gets tangible, little by little. If interpretation is misleading, for example, but argued with verve, repeatedly, and then adopted by some, it can settle down on the work like a dusty cover, blending with its surface to finally become invisible. Glorification causes similar effects. The artist knows from the very beginning that this is going to happen: all channels cannot be controlled, and visibility as much as critical reflection are wished for, desired. Trying to separate these comments of the past from the future life of the work means following the dream of perceiving the once-happened, once-created, once-seen and sown artistic manifestation in an ever and ever fresh manner, undescribed anew. Caring for its freedom, without letting it appertain to anyone, or any narrative, in particular.

Why then not immediately write about the shadows that never – or not necessarily – existed? And speak through their unbelievability, as their potential.

***Women. Oh women. (3) Two of them enter like goddess-soldiers into the enchanted garden section. Who they are ought, how they are thought to be. Heavy weights on their feet, carried with grace. Distanced hospitality, regulated by stretched tools. Wine spills all over, buttered snails are guttering and smudging, flowing down on clothes, and hands. Garlic tastes long afterwards, yet in the moment of performance nobody seems***

*seriously bewildered or stressed: people are accustomed that the nice girls, undisturbed – rather slow in motion, and softly stiff here – are doing the service, with the right will.*

Silence.

How to write about women, as a woman. How to write as a man of kinds of men, of women, as a woman, in a mankind. How to write as a genderless on less genderness, about women, of men, about them. How to write as a child about the older ones, as a child about others, about other children. How to write as a middle-aged person about a young one, as a young one on the elder, on the females, the males, and the others. How to write about animals that cannot write, about silent stones and images, and how to write in a language that the described does not speak. How to write, to give a voice, better not write. How to keep the writing mine, while not possessing the described. How to write a start without describing art.

Short break, and breathe.

***Suddenly a man (4)***, no one really noticed him before, first holds still, then stands up, and imitates the women's body language. Another, not sure whether an elegant woman or a man full of grace, follows him. Percentages of audience and staged people – successively – start to shift. A loose moment in which those who were once observing, are now observed.

All we know about the absorbing qualities of the art system: Ideas are symbolic (and will very soon become concrete) capital, so, of course, words and writing about art, too. Then one must agree that feelings are capital, as well as movements, and the inventive links, especially those, between former split categories that stimulate redefinitions and connections. "Critique" is a favorite one, this is nothing new. But "the new," as such, is the most delightful in all of arts' capital account. Disappearings are the reactions, minimizations, explicitations, and shades; you may add a try, on a poet's escape.

Three more rounds, rather rebounds.

**He is cool with fruits. Also an entertainer. And he had a dream. That may not have become true. (5)** Now he is sitting in the middle of his shop selling fruits, a fruit shop pickled with art and news. Everything can be sold, depending on the demand, and strategy: "This is the only one left," and yes, hands raise, double price. He is singing for his public, desperately, through the imaginary image-inventory, of the failed city of desires that leaves us alone. "Exchange/change the world" – tough words not tough to grasp: the romance of impact, lost in commodification. **She is making an artwork out of red and blue. (6)** Something mediocre, still relevant for consideration, would be the mixture, purple, a compromise. Do-it-Yourself, an instruction for recycling an artist. She is losing track on the way, powder atomizes. Knowing well the processes of connoting emotions is part of the type case (Setzbaukasten), mass, color and concept, or massed color concept, bursting. The too-clever child can't keep distance. A face-to-face commentator, factor of this hard to disbelieve encounter. **And she – yes she – is beautifully googling moves. (7)** She is gorgeous. So great. Pretty. And she can move. She is also pretty sure of every gesture she makes: spontaneous, controlled, proved, exercised in mirrors. Simply walking, resting, running fingers through the hair is an apparition with her. We can't get enough, we want to touch, to be like her. And, you know what, she could also be imagined or perceived as a boy, boyish. Everything. Desiring. An absorbed revelation. Improved in the mirror, mirrored, we – mirroring at her.

Final jump.

**It is the curtain. (8)** On and off. Just like an invisible curtain. A decisive spotting light, beginning and an end, conducted attention. They ask: Is the status of the artwork outside of the designated territory more precarious? Like a balance on the border.

Every border can also be thought of as an extension, in both senses of the word: an extension of meaning, through mediation, an attempt of surpassing, the experience and exercise of a limit – just as proximity. Or else as an extended inhabitation of power structures, that we once, initially, tried to run away from. We are stuck and freed at this borderline. And here we are. Let's get turned off and on the light.

Julia Martha Müller  
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