

RUE DE LA RUE

BART RUTTEN IN CONVERSATION WITH DARAGH REEVES

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 going 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 Daragh Reeves *Rue De La Rue*, March 11 2013 till April 9 2013 in 1646.

This artist
Daragh Reeves

This correspondent
Bart Rutten

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6 MARCH: Bart Rutten [BR] to Daragh Reeves [DR]

Dear Daragh,

Here we go. It feels a bit like internet dating, writing you out of the blue and asking you to reveal some inner thoughts to prepare for a meeting. I mean, for a meeting your work. I am not sure if I ever saw some of yours. I looked online but did not find many images and then I started to like this set up. It is like approaching a work from the inside.

Tell me, what do you think I should know from your work before we enter this conversation?

And I am curious what your plan is for the set up of the show. Are you installing your work in the gallery based on a very detailed plan or is there room for improvisation?

Hope to hear from you soon,
Best,
Bart

DR - BR

Hi Bart,

I don't think Internet dating would be quite the hit if you knew all your chats would be published on a leaflet and given to your friends - ha! What we have is also the blind date scenario, which I must not ruin by talking too much about myself!

So (briefly)... yes I am installing now, and there is a plan, but not a detailed lay out one. I prepared several ideas in advance that I thought would work together - only in the sense that you might plan out an English garden. Many of the ideas came from notebooks over the years and most therefore needed realising.

In this show I had the feeling not to trade too much on personality. I aim to make a show like a design, like someone who directs a film for a producer who found a good script, rather than one who tells his own life story and plays the lead role.

In truth I normally prefer making art that pops up out of a sea of art making - and its form is more accidental and therefore more complete. These new realisations of ideas feel more like props and in the installation I am treating them like that - not as my art from the warm nether nether land but as plain things, as if they were found. The exhibition I believe will only succeed if they are set well and allowed to improvise well together - like in a Cassavetes.

It is a process that relies on time, trust, the right atmosphere and luck which officially I don't believe in. I want the result to be in tension with the overly clean look of the space that we spent the first days preparing.

What should I know about your work? Are you a curator?
best regards,
Daragh

DR - BR

Hi again Bart,
I have, since the last email found that you are a curator, teacher and historian of video art. I am sorry that there was not much more information about my work on the web, but it fits with this idea of talking with a stranger that we only know the bare facts.

I am finding with the installation as I have in the past too, that I must deal with tension between a purely decorative wilful side and another side which is overtly, almost ridiculously idea based. It is almost a case of dealing with the equivalent of two extreme sexes. But I prefer allow this difference, rather than actively resolving it - i suppose in inactive resolution.

I am attracted to art making because of the possibility to explore truths which relate to contradictions. I sense much of the rest of the world is locked into the more comfortable pursuit of singular conclusions - the results of which are eternally uncomfortable. In contrast, art and it's contradictions, seem to approach an easier inner peace, though the path is rocky.

Well just a few thoughts to get me out of the real work - have a nice evening and hope to hear from you again soon, best,
Daragh

MARCH 7: BR - DR

Thanks Daragh for the nice words. Yes, I am an art professional, but this conversation should rather be about you instead of me. You are describing beautifully the freedom art posses, to allow extremes next to each other. Something you think is harder to find somewhere else. Else like, not the art world. But how do you position art, or your art practice? As part of society, or is art a reserve where we cherish vulnerable values?

Another question is:

So, if this is taking you out of the real work, what is this real work consists of? I am still in the process of getting a picture of what you are doing. Let's zoom in to the show. What are you presenting in 1646?

I am on the road whole day, so will get back to you tomorrow!

Best
Bart

DR - BR

Hi Bart,
Talk to you later - today I feel like a scrambled egg!
best wishes,
Daragh

MARCH 7: BR - DR

How are you today?

How is it going in 1646?

Best,
Bart

MARCH 9: DR - BR

Good morning Bart,
I am fine today, thank you. Apologies for the absence. The nights were turning into mornings and everything else upside down too.

Last night I took a drive to Amsterdam to collect a small yellow suitcase and some glassware.

The other night, which was the one responsible for the trashed feeling, I had been making the hands of 21 alarm clocks white, instead of black. Since then I realised that alarm clock piece is everything I despise about art, and put it to one side.

Somehow the drive proved a better use of time and when I returned to my room I wrote something on an envelop that I wanted to say to you - it was late night stuff - but here goes:

What I want to say, is what I want to say

It is not easy knowing what you want to say - but sometimes you have to start speaking and find your thoughts from words that you know or have heard being used before.

This exhibition does not mean much other than this is what I wanted to say at this time given that I was expected to say something and agreed to and want to for my own benefit and fulfilment and equilibrium. All actual content is purely personal / subconscious / anecdotal but is not in itself profound.

During the exhibition preparations I have experienced different states - one, which is the most depressing, is to find oneself on the verge of being a schoolboy again, doing his homework and hoping that handing in a clever, well organised project will impress his teachers and get him a good grade etc.

I am convinced art cannot be made that way - or maybe it can - but perhaps I just need to believe in a world where art produced in that way will not be accepted by people's gut and therefore will fail. (Like maybe Dutch tomatoes in Italy - sorry.)

I mentioned Cassavetes before in the last mail - I don't really want to be that artist who will now talk about certain film directors as inspirations etc. - but nor do I want to be that artist who has a picture of Woody Allen and Julia Roberts in his exhibition either - but I do! Yet I feel comfortable with the analogy of directing (in the Cassavetes style) to describe the process of making this exhibition so far - the fact that strange things get into shot when you are focusing on one thing. And when you get back the footage and it is good, you must respect everything in the frame of the scene that just works. There is no point removing things just because you don't remember ordering a prop to be in a certain place - everything in the shot is in fact a member of a winning team and needs respecting like each cog in

a watch. On that level art is a strange kind of science, we don't know much about it, but we know that doing certain actions seem to upset it, while other things seem to make it happy - though we don't know the rationale. It's like being a dog with a master.

So I could, as you asked before, begin to describe certain things in the exhibition - but that would be like describing a good friend in terms of the bones, the organs, and skin - that we all in fact possess.

What I am attempting to do, as I believe all artists attempt to do, is have all those body parts add up to something, like life.

Before signing off entirely I wanted to mention 'The Yes Man', with Jim Carrey. This is a character who at first resists everything and then embraces everything and then realises it's more about a mix. Although the most fun part of the movie is when he is saying yes to everything.

I thought this says a lot about the dilemma of how to live and therefore also about how to make art. Though I don't really want to be that guy who preaches on either, especially in a time when opinions seem so irrelevant.

In another mail I could describe the works in my show, but it would be a comical list and an abstract work on its own, like the lists we make here of things to do that make me wonder - what kind of job do I have?! - what am I asking these poor people to do??!

Before I forget - there are 4 people who run 1646 - and working with them has been a big part of the show - they are all in the show as far as I am concerned.

best wishes for now,
Daragh

BR - DR

Hello Daragh,

Really looking forward to see the show now. Although I only can read through the lines what will be happening, I think I have a clear picture of your motives and commitment. The Space of 1646 is actually very nice to use as a body for your functioning organs.

Maybe a last question to fulfil my quest into your work world as a prelude to the real thing. You refer often to film culture. I was wondering if this is more a starting point for your work, in other words an inspiration, or is it more used as a broad cultural heritage, a shared memory for your audience as a reference. I am not sure if I am making myself clear here, but maybe you can elaborate a bit more on your love, fascination of film culture.

Thanks
Bart

MARCH 10: DR - BR

Dear Bart,

Film is not a starting point for me, instead it represents a world of excitement that I like to believe in - a state of living that I aspire to whether it really exists or not. With my head in these clouds, and others, I make

my art and even live my life.

I begin to think that people are really defined by their desires - whether they achieve them or not - to emit desire is a valid and defining feature in people. I like to see people's effort. To want to be beautiful is closer to the real thing. The act is related to reality. (This is no doubt debatable - since I sense in Holland there is possibly a different cultural attitude - there is an emphasis on sincerity, almost at the expense of all else - does this ring any bells or shall we skip it like the tomato comment?!)

For example - I noticed when I wear formal clothes, I become more conservative. When I wear my work clothes, I can easily become loutish.

I used to think badly of left-wingers who dressed left wing - because it seems like an ineffective, or rather unpowerful image to have. Better would be to be left and look right - just more effective - surely the goal. But now I think I could be wrong because maybe a soon as you start looking right you would soon start to behave right. Well that is what I suspect.

Another analogy comes to mind: I find, that a good way to copy someone's voice is to say their name in their voice. It is strange, since it is almost impossible to hear a star, for example, say their own name. But the name rubs off on the voice or almost to the extent that it is the voice. I need a philosopher to step in now and deliver the killer blow. This is obscure stuff.

I guess I want to say that I started to believe in the significance of form as an over-riding truth - and this makes firm my interest in working as an artist.

Anyway if this were a real date I am sure you would have escaped out the toilet window by now. Ideally I would have liked this to be a couple of blokes having a chat, rather than an interview kind of thing - at a certain point I begin to hear my own voice - always a bad sign.

Thanks for all the questions.

Should we call it a night?

best wishes,

Daragh

BR - DR

When you called it a night my night was already getting to its end. I have to young kids who wake up early.

This chat set up works very well, or should I say works very well for you ;)

It was really great to talk to you this way, although I feel a bit guilty you shared so much I was just some sort of investigator. Let's meet some day after the opening (unfortunately I won't be able to come to you openings, since I am stuck in conference Friday and Saturday) when I saw the work and can share some more of my insights. You live here in the Netherlands? (quite an essential question maybe, to ask rather late in conversation especially since you refer to not being Dutch). If not, till when will you be here?

I think looking at the history of this email conversation

set up by 1646, we harvested enough. This is not an escape from the toilet window, but an invitation to continue later on. I would like to send our correspondence to Nico now. Unless you think there is something you want to share, conscious of the fact that this chat among blokes - will be published...

Good luck with the black arms of the alarm clocks, the yellow suitcase with or without glass ware, the pictures of Julia Roberts and Woody Allen, and the Cassavetes attitude.

I get a picture, no matter what camera angle I use: I don't shoot any angles going back and forth. Almost everything is shot from the same place, from the same perspective, so that it's very important to me that the cameraman has feeling, and can move with the figures as he feels it, rather than me saying, 'Oh, we missed that.

Or to use another nice quote by Cassavetes: It doesn't matter if the words are written, because improvisation has been going on in films by everybody. There's nobody that doesn't improvise to some degree. So it just

depends on what degree you need.

It was my pleasure!

Best,

Bart

MARCH 11: DR - BR

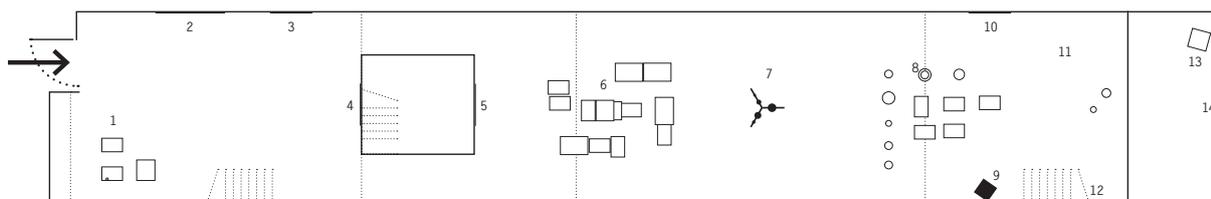
Dear Bart,

Thanks so much for the questions on the side of making this exhibition - it was very nice to have that place to go to and to build some castles in the sand with you and for you. I like Cassavetes' idea on camera movement - anyway I am looking forward to meeting in person - hopefully a couple of blokes having a beer somewhere soon!

Yes, let's then continue on the otherside of your visit in a couple of weeks.

thank you , best wishes,

Daragh



1. **Bushwick Conversation, 2011**
Assemblage with sound, 94 cm x 92 cm x 41 cm x 30 mins.
3 sound players, 3 beer cans, 3 polystyrene boxes, water, staples, videotape, peanuts, screw.

Sound emitting from three floating beer-cans restages a dialogue between three young Dominican men discussing the pro's and con's of New York life as compared to life in the Dominican Republic.
2. **Ring-Pull Menu, 2011**
Mural, 176 cm x 127 cm.
Aluminum ring-pulls (silver, blue, gold), glue.

New York take-out menu reproduced in ring-pull typeface designed by artist.
3. **Yellow Suitcase, 2011**
Single 35 mm colour slide projection, 50 cm x 75 cm, 500w bulb.

Image of Samsonite suitcase containing black jacket, camera and golden running shoes.
4. **Money Clock, 2004 / 2011**
Video, 24 hours, silent.
Single-channel projection, 55 cm x 79 cm.

Still-life tells the correct time via dollar bills and coins representing the hours and minutes.
Video composed of 1440 still photographs, each appearing for 1 minute. Lighting in the images changes according to the cycle of a summer day/night.
5. **Coin & Match Animation, 2004 / 2011**
Video, 1 min 22 secs, silent.
Single channel video projection 64 cm x 76 cm.

6. **Beach People, 2011**
Group of sculptures, 160 cm x 150 cm x 70 cm, (total).
Polystyrene, water, video tape, peanuts in shells, pistachio nut shells, dried corn seeds, euro coins, nails, rust, red soda, found images, paper, glue.
7. **Black Tripod and Coke, 2011**
Sculpture, 105 cm x 105 cm x 70 cm.
Black camera tripod, 4 glass vessels of various dimension and shape, each filled with Coca Cola to their brims.
8. **Drifting Tapes / Coke Sculptures, 2011**
Two groups of sculptures, 250 cm x 150 cm (total).
Polystyrene trays filled with water, magnetic video tape fragments floating on top. Glass vases and cut plastic bottles brimming with soft drinks (Coca Cola, Fanta, red soda), mould, one ripped-up snapshot distributed over the surfaces of the vessels.

Direct sunlight between 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm causes vivid red shadows to be projected through the red soda-filled vases.
9. **B + H Animation, 2004 / 2011**
Video, 1 min 3 secs, silent.
Single-channel video on monitor, 25 cm x 33 cm.

Animation of sales images from an electronics catalogue featuring professional video cameras, still cameras, TV sets, editing equipment and binoculars.
10. **Rio Man, 2011**
Double slide projection, 55 cm x 60 cm.

An original found image (street vendor with moustache and hat carrying a load of brooms and chairs) deconstructed into two slides. Reconstructed as two slide projections.
11. **The Eyes of Tom Jobim, 2011**
Audio cd with 2 songs by Antonio Carlos Jobim, portable battery-operated cd player, headphones.

Temporary soundtrack for three videos and other kinetic elements, including: the fountain in the garden; the floating videotape fragments; the changing sunlight in the space; the sparkling surfaces of the liquid sculptures when freshly refilled.
Tracks on cd:
1: Luiza, 2 mins 30 secs
2: Querida, 3 mins 31 secs
12. **Jeu De Balle, 2011**
Video, 30 mins, silent.
Flat screen TV, 47 cm x 27 cm.

Recording of objects laying in the gaps between the cobble stones of a daily flea market.
13. **Chair Fountain, 2011**
Fountain, 85 cm x 40 cm x 45 cm.
Marcel Breuer chair in natural wood/ chrome, garden hose, plumbing connections.
14. **Glue Bags, 2011**
Wall text 120 cm x 150 cm.
Permanent black marker on exterior wall.

Found text. A photocopy of a page from the book 'Serpico' distributed by artist Tommy Lanigan-Schmidt to his students at sva school in New York.
The text features hand drawn boxes around sections of the text in which specific evocative textures of a rooftop are described as a New York detective works a case.