

R: Would you like to have a dialogue about Ola's work with me?

A: Yeah sure. Can't say I totally get it though.

R: Whose work do you feel you get entirely?

A: Don't know. Can't say for sure. One common thing I notice amongst artists I like is that they have this ability to speak directly to me. It is hard to explain.
Affect - that's another thing. Ola has a definite affect, a specific gestalt.

R: If it affects you in a specific way would you be able to transmit that effect to me? What would convey it best?

A: A miasma of some sort.

Ola is a friend. A close one. I think of her as a storyteller. She will tell you of these fantastic dreams she had with exploding pills in her ear, or the fairytales of her childhood, those of the lives of stones in forests and exotic horses that sweat blood and tornados that hum. I find all of this very much a part of her practice. I told her this and she just smiled.

As Kees (van Gelder) was telling me the other day, Ola loses interest when something made by her is put on a plinth - or on a carpet. This nebulousness is the affect.

R: Before we go to the plinth can we check the meaning of miasma? If it is something that generates itself independently of a source and spreads through the air then I can think of Ola's dreams as something independent of Ola. Like a dream that can unfold without a dreamer? Has it ever happened to you? Have you ever experienced one of Ola's dreams?

A: Its not all air is it?

Have you ever lived in a small town? It is very much like a dream isn't it.

You turn a corner and there's the librarian...

And then the barber's at your pub...

and this cook who once made kimchi for you rides by...

Wasn't it Sigi (Sigurdur Gudmundsson) who said something like the others had ideas as straight as bananas and here was Ola, a translucent white cabbage.

We should make *golumpki*. Do you know that? Steamed cabbage leaves with rice and meat inside them? Do you have it in the Baltics? The Greeks have it too, dolma in the summer and I don't know what in the winter.

R: *Tīteņi* in Latvian, *Balandeliai* in Lithuanian which would be "little pigeons", if one would translate it literally. Do you think the notion of translation applies to Ola's work?...

A: Well you know pigeons are quite in these days. Which reminds me I wanted to tell you about this new thing I'm doing. I ask my friends what's in right now and put it all on one page.

For example I asked Ola today and we came up with:

neon shoelaces, hands are in, mustard yellow yeah? Oh you know what will be in? patterned trousers, also I think mace is back, and synthpop made by pretty people is somewhat respectable now isn't it?

R: What about translation?

A: I think Ola said it best a while back, that that which is supposedly about the unsaid or the unseen should perhaps remain so in form as well.

R: I wonder, whether the unsaid and the unseen are what happens before the work ends up on a plinth. I find it interesting to imagine how all the potentialities of her thinking could be amplified by the public display ('putting it on a plinth') rather than suspended. A public exposure as more art, not less art.

A: Is that what happens though? One rarely has control over what is perceived, or what can be perceived, especially once on display. Sometimes this leads to happy accidents, but oftentimes it leads to misinterpretation - disinformation, even.

R: Is it that different from what artists do at a first place? Take things, interpret them, misinterpret them, circulate them in unfamiliar domains, etc. Now I feel that Ola should be take the display apparatus (whether it is a museum or an online platform) as an element of her work, not as something external to it, in order to keep the dream unwritten so to say.

A: To be honest I don't know what you're talking about really. You are an artist aren't you?

R: I don't see a necessity to consider myself as one.

A: What do you say when people say so what do you do?

R: Curate.

A: Would you say the things you just said apply to you?

R: I think they apply to anyone who deals with information or other matter: you use it, you circulate, you transform it, you reflect upon it, etc. I remember you wanted to compare Ola to Brancusi and who was it... Miro? I liked it. Why not? Is she Miro and Brancusi?

A: I wasn't comparing her with anyone. I was telling you about *vorm*, or gestalt - and how certain gestalts impress more. Brancusi has affected me deeply. The first time I saw a daguerrotype it shook me up real good. When I landed in Sabiha Gokcen my second time in Istanbul, I took a bus and saw Topkapi Palace covered in snow. By the side of the road was a red electronic signboard that said "Dikkat". It gave me goosebumps.

Ola: I don't know whether I should try to place this talk in any relation to my practice or whether I should just laugh about it.

R: Laugh is good. Do you think of the affects your work may produce on other people? Would you like them to laugh?

O: The kind of laugh you get at the end of *Chinese whispers*, yes I would love people to laugh in that way.

R: What is different about the laugh produced by *Chinese whispers* and a laugh produced by

a punchline?

O: Chinese whispers are made of sweet ridicule, they dismantle the common sense in a joyful way and the recognition of the distortion on the other end of the "line" is expected but always full of surprise. Punchlines are maybe answers to the questions no one has been asking. Whispers by definition run away from formulations, yet they create a new form.

R: They do. But would you apply 'chinese whispers' methodically in order to generate new forms?

O: I haven't done it before "methodically", but I am curious about the form.

R: Is there anything you have been doing methodically?

O: Hmm.. method implies some sort of intention. I think with me it might happen more spontaneously. Maybe I have but I've never noticed. But I would love to try some methods. With children maybe...

R: Do you learn from them?

O: Yes, I think children are only some transitory state, they are almost virtual. Like illusions.

R: What does illusion do?

O: Teaches, I guess.

R: I often feel a need to remove illusion from servitude for "revealing the truth". Have you been thinking about this in relation to truth?

O: Well, let's say I see language as an illusion. In that way I do believe it needs to be stripped down sometimes. Words often offer false definitions....

R: And when you strip it down where do you get to?

O: To the truth beyond the words, to some holy nonsense I guess.

R: Does this truth look closer to an image or a different type of thought? Images that one see through and find other images in them?

O: " through" is not there any more maybe. So that's why it's nice when both illusion and truth are married.

R: In your phenomeno-dynamic passages images often come as transparent screens cut along the lines of a garment.

When something can be a sculpture and a drapery at once, without having to decide what exactly. Without having to decide whether it's an illusion or a truth. Perhaps 'and' is more appropriate than 'or', no?

O: Yes!

R: Do you first presume and then cut? Or first cut and then presume? Or perhaps it happens at the same time with some latency. I mean it literally - when you cut a fabric. but of course, we can play on metaphorical meaning too, no?

O: I was thinking about hair.

I have been cutting stuff all my life. I have cut up so much goods when I was small: carpets, winter coats and hair. I was always advised to leave it to the professionals, but I keep on cutting I guess.

R: Your own hair?

O: Yes

R: I was telling Adi you were not a protagonist of your own dreams. But you cut your own hair, right?

O: I like the character Adi made too.

R: Is it an illusionary character?

O: Maybe Adi knows.

R: If cutting is one of your key operations do you feel close to a film editor?

O: I do love the medium, but I think in video I'm more interested in layering than cutting somehow. I'm quite bad at cutting in video.

R: Because it is about cutting time?

O: Maybe. I like it more when things happen simultaneously, parallel, with more degrees of freedom.

R: Does this simultaneity allow to emerge for images you've never seen before?

O: Maybe seen but in some sort of invisible ink. Video allows more gradation, fragmentation but at the same time it unifies the idea, shapes it.

R: When do you know it is a moment to finish?

O: I never know, I think most of my videos are unfinished, just looping somewhere. I actually wish I had that quality to all the other works too. Just loops here and there.

R: Why did Dikkat give goose bumps to you?

A: I am done here. Cheers.

Participants of the conversation are Raimundas Raimundas Malasauskas, born in Vilnius, curates in the world, writes occasionally www.rai.lt, Aditya Mandayam - a travel writer living in Amsterdam

(cixa.org) and Ola Vasiljeva - an artist from Ventspils, who lives and works in Amsterdam. This year she has been shortlisted for the prestigious *Prix de Rome* prize in the Netherlands.

The conversation references gallerist Kees van Gelder and artist Sigurdur Gudmundsson (Sigi).

The conversation background is Ola Vasiljevas exhibition *Cinq á Sept*, which can be seen at kim? Contemporary Art Centre August 16-September 29 of this year.