

SCRIOBH 7 - CONFINEMENT DOSSIER - 2020

"The artist always precedes the psychoanalyst" J. Lacan

In times of confinement and restriction of social interaction, we invited several artists from a diversity of fields to tell us about their experiences during the confinement measures at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We put to them the following questions:

Q1 - *What is your experience, as an artist, of the impossibility to carry out cultural and artistic events 'in the flesh'? What is different when the audience / spectator is 'virtual'?*

Q2 - *In your particular form of art, what are the effects of the exclusion of the body in the encounter with the body of the other, i.e. what is different / new?
Can you relate this to the notion of 'presence' (can you -as an artist- do without physical presence?)*

We aim at learning from them, since we believe that their experiences and know-how can contribute to our thinking about subjectivity and about the analytic encounter.

P A B L O R E I N O S O

Pablo Reinoso is a Franco-Argentine artist and designer. He was born in Buenos Aires and has lived and worked in Paris since 1978. Originally a sculptor, but fundamentally an artist, he has practiced his art in various ways from an early age. He created his first sculpture at 13 and his first bench-sculpture at 15, but already at the age of 6 he had made chairs and bookcases.

Pablo Reinoso works in series that he browses, grinds, searches, exploring different universes and materials. Like potentially all series, those of Pablo Reinoso are not closed, but always open, reflecting the permanent *work in progress* which is his way of thinking.

His public art has been displayed in France, Argentina, Japan, UK, South Korea. His public collections include: Musée d'Art Moderne in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Société des Amis du MNAM, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France; Fondation Daniel et Florence Guerlain, Les Mesnuls, France; Musée d'Art Moderne, Sao Paulo, Brasil; Museum of Modern Art of Bahia, Salvador da Bahia, Brésil; MACRO, Rosario, Argentina; MUSAC, Castilla y Leon, Spain; Malba, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France; Fondation Clément, Martinique, France; Musée de Cluny, Paris, France and others.

You can read more about Pablo's solo exhibitions, collective exhibitions and other works on his website.

www.pabloreinoso.com

Q1

Concerning the question of the impossibility of holding *live* cultural events, I would say this is something that artists have been confronted with many times -at least that has been my case-, because we are always thinking about a project that we want to carry out, that we want to be able to present, and on many occasions -for one reason or another- that project is diverted, or the work of art is finished and ends up not



being displayed, or it is shown later on... Or even, it has happened to me (thankfully not many times) that I've exhibited some works -solo exhibitions- that I could not attend, due to a schedule clash, and which I could not see. In my case, I am not an artist who does *performance*, and therefore I am not amputated from the audience; that's not a problem I encounter. On the other hand, the building of the kind of work I do requires a significant amount of confinement; When I was younger and I worked with very hard materials and with no assistants, when I had to do everything myself, I could spend a whole week without leaving the workshop, going up the road to get some food and coming back straight away to continue working. So, I do have this experience of isolation, of confinement, and also there's been occasions when I could not show my work. It is something that is always present, this impossibility; but it is never an obstacle to production. Perhaps that is the point you may be more interested in.

With regards to the question as to whether there is a difference when the public or the audience is *virtual*, well I can say that in the past few years many artists have been able to work before a virtual audience, and to exchange with that virtual audience, because the virtual audience too has a response. One sees this in relation to communication through social media: when there is an idea that works, and it is received. I, for example, have photographs of some of my sculptures which I know will generate audience, and others which I know will produce indifference. There is something about the attraction towards an art piece, or an artistic action, that implies that one elicits empathy; but in my case, this is something I observe, it might even please me, but it's not a decisive or determining element in my relationship with my audience.



Q2

Concerning the next question “*in your particular form of art, what are the effects of the exclusion of the body in the encounter with the body of the other, that is to say, what is different or new?*”

Well, here I think I am a good example, precisely because, in my work, I often play with the inclusion or the exclusion of the body, one’s own and the other’s; since many of my artwork are pieces to sit on or to share while sitting. Sometimes I use chairs and I remove the function, I take away the function ‘to sit on’, I take away the possibility that the body uses them as one would have



expected to, because precisely I play with frustration, with the ‘barring’ of that possibility, so that somehow the whole object, the entire *demarche*, can be better seen. And, to cite an artist as an example, when Christo wraps up a building, he covers it in order to show it; and somehow I could say that when I work with the function, with the use where the body enters in a resonance with what I am doing, I go in the opposite direction -than Christo- as I am not showing something; one understands what the function is, but when I remove it, when I don’t allow that someone can sit down -for instance I install a chair in the middle of a lake, where you can’t reach it in order to sit on it- then I am effectively playing with that exclusion.

Regarding your last question, *Can you relate this to the notion of ‘presence’, can you -as an artist- do without physical presence?* Yes, it is possible. I think you must have another question in your head about this question, which is not exactly reaching me. I am going to connect this with the notion of presence. Let’s see... I am going to answer from a different angle. I make sculptures which, many of them, can be used by others; obviously I don’t see it when others use them; maybe I see it for a brief moment during an exhibition; or when I walk through a park and there is a piece that is installed there and I can see how people inhabit it, or own it. What I do when I make them, when I execute the piece, when they come to my mind, is to calculate the possibilities that it can awaken in the audience, in a user; I anticipate. In this sense, I am very close the path of design, which is precisely to anticipate the ergonomics of the object, the use of the object, the presence of an object in a public space. I am constantly playing with that fantasmatic or real presence, with which I don’t really have contact, or with which I have very little contact. Perhaps I have contact with it through what comes back to me afterwards: “Ah! I sat down in one of your artwork in such and such place, and I felt this or that...”; “Yes, I saw such and such piece in X and I would have liked to...” What I observe is that, generally speaking, what comes back to me, what returns, is quite close to what I had emitted. I emit a signal, and the signal comes back. And usually I don’t see much distortion between the toing and froing of the object.

There is a specific point, linked to the pandemic and to social confinement, which refers to the fact that there are certain types of artwork where I propose a certain promiscuity, let's say, where a space of physical contact is generated, in a very big piece of work but with a very small place where one concentrates and can sit down with someone. What surprises me about this pandemic is that there are certain kinds of pieces which I could not exhibit today in a museum. There is one in particular, titled **La Parole** [*Speech*], which I presented at a Congress of the *World Association of Psychoanalysis*, in 1998, which consists of a big zeppelin where two people introduce their heads, and what remains is speech as the element for contact; when they stick their heads into this balloon, the two people see their heads but no longer see their bodies, so what I am doing is to remove the body, the bodily expression, leaving only the facial and vocal expression. Even though the distance between the two holes is about six feet, and it would not be a problem in terms of *social distancing*, it's when one passes one's head through the hole that could be leaving viruses on that surface and the following spectator or user could come in contact with the illness. That artwork is right now closed to me. In this case I've been left out, excluded. I never thought that this piece, which is called 'Speech', could be dissociated from its user; but today this artwork will struggle to exist, due to the hygienist culture in which we live and in which we will continue to be. However, I exhibited this piece for example in Japan, a country where hygiene is very important, in the late 90s and early 2000, and I never had any problems or difficulty with a Japanese person not wanting to introduce his head through that hole in order to see the person in front of him or her.



Art: *La Parole* / Canvas and fans.1998. Photograph: Luis Ros.