



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.

L I S I P R A D A

Lisi Prada is a visual artist based in Madrid, who combines her creative work with her work as a teacher training consultant at a Ministry of Education centre. A graduate in Psychology from the *Complutense University of Madrid*, she has trained in various fields, such as music [Royal Conservatory of Music of Madrid and Provincial of León], and psychoanalysis [practiced as an analyst for twenty years]. Self-taught in the artistic field, she has participated in events of painting, mail art, electronic art, multimedia, photography, visual poetry, actions, etc., finding her best mode of expression in video art.

In her creative work, Lisi prefers minimal resources over the empowerment of machines and from a position close to Arte Povera, experiments in the search for a balance between the conceptual and the sensory, between ethics and aesthetics. Likewise, she uses linguistic versatility as a resource since the use of superimposed significant layers opens up a multiplicity of meanings, allowing a conceptual reading from complexity, double meaning or irony and a sensitive one, which leaves room for emotions and sensory enjoyment.

Her last group exhibitions have taken place from July to October 2019, at the Zapadores Museum in Madrid, at the National Centre for Contemporary Art's Baltic Branch in Kaliningrad and at the City Centre of Fine Arts in Novosibirsk [both in collaboration with the National Centre for Contemporary Art], Russia and at the Museum of the Moving Image, in New York, USA.

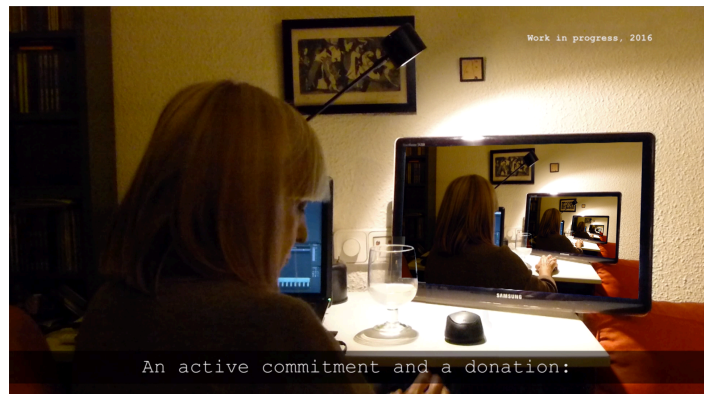
<http://www.produccionesinmateriales.com/>

<http://www.vimeo.com/lisiprada>

Q1 - What is your experience, as an artist, of the impossibility of carrying out cultural and art events "live"? What is different when the audience or viewer is "virtual"?

From the perspective of creation, the confinement has led me to a much higher than usual production. On the one hand, because I needed to express what I had experienced in such an exceptional situation as this and, on the other, to have some time at last, something that I missed because my personal circumstances prevent me from dedicating all that I would like to creating. During confinement, I have faced very opposing and even paradoxical feelings, because instead of feeling locked up, my feeling has been one of freedom to create in addition to attending to basic everyday issues: it's been a long time since I've found time to take care of myself, exercise, or make my own food.

This stop, amid the acceleration of our time and the constant demand for productivity, has allowed me to reflect on my way of life and the disastrous effects of neo-capitalism; I have read many helpful articles about the pandemic argued by philosophers, thinkers and psychoanalysts, and some poetry. As for the narrative, "reality surpasses fiction." I've even gone back to playing the piano a bit.



Instead of thinking about what I lack (going out, seeing my family or friends, contact with nature...) I have rekindled gratitude for feeling privileged; for being able to telework instead of being on the front line; for having food and shelter, for having a huge window from which I can applaud the health workers who are putting their body and their efforts; look at the trees and clouds or see swifts flying by oblivious to our alienation. At the same time, there is the suffering of so many people - some close to me - or concern for my own symptoms which, although mild, extend too long in time.

I miss the physical presence of my loved ones, but I have not lived 'social isolation' - on the contrary, my social life has multiplied exponentially. I have received calls and messages from people I have not been in contact with for many years; I have daily video conferences with three friends who also live alone; I have another group of timeless friends with whom I meet virtually on Saturdays and still others to drink Vermouth with on Sundays, in addition to the very frequent coordination meetings with my co-workers. The only thing that saturates me to the point of excess are the videos, memes and non-sense received via WhatsApp.

As for events, my works are immaterial productions and, in this sense, it could be thought that nothing changes in a virtual projection, however, this is not the case for me. In these two months, I have participated for the first time in some invitations to show works online because the exhibitions I had planned have been either suspended or extended *sine die*. I have also collaborated with other artists of different nationalities in common works, at a time when almost all of us are trying to reinforce social cohesion, the common and the collective.

However, virtual events have emerged from the need to look for alternative options to face-to-face, because there is something lost without that physical presence. Let's say that it is a lesser evil to alleviate the suspension of activities: better something than nothing, even if it is not the desirable situation.

My perception is that watching a video creation on the computer or on the mobile phone predisposes towards passive consumption, lack of concentration, the anxiety of moving quickly from one thing to another, to confuse free time with filling leisure time with anything that obscures the void. My works seek the opposite, they do not want to numb the subject but to awaken him.

We are so saturated with images and screens that this mode of visualisation acquires a status far removed from lived time. While approaching 'on purpose' to see a certain exhibition or projection in an art centre or on the big screen of a movie theatre optimizes conditions, so that an active viewing can take place in response to the questions posed by the edited images, in a non-narrative discourse that seeks to challenge you in some way. Here the subject is expectant and that is the difference between a position of *jouissance* and a desiring position. Basically, it is a question of attitude but there are conditions that facilitate it and others less so.



On the other hand, I would like to rescue the word *impossibility* from the statement to state that both psychoanalysts and artists are faced with the desire to carry out an impossible task. There is an end to the analysis if we can get the analysand to change one symptom for another that's less suffering... and in the same way, it is necessary to end each creative work that we undertake without ever reaching the perfection that we would like to achieve.

Likewise, we share the ethical purpose of doing something with 'that' and, in both cases, something remains as the rest of the operation, the creative act, the analytical act, both lead to a detachment. The artist must detach from the work in an exercise that I perceive as a donation and there is something loving in that transferring. And the love of the analyst? It is not a love that satisfies the imaginary of those who demand the ideal of being loved, that

would not go beyond narcissism; it is a selfless love, an operation of detachment that points to the truth of oneself and of the other, otherwise there is neither art nor analysis. On the contrary, if that happens, what remains as rest is the analyst signifier, it is the artist signifier and both exist only during the course of their exercise, in which they operate with that which is not intended for oneself as a person but to produce a subject in the other, in the others. In the same way that there is no analyst without analysand, there is no artist without spectator or audience to perceive his/her creation. Otherwise, it loses its meaning and the function to which it is destined, because one does not create for oneself, nor to be loved, one creates out of love - at least from my experience.

Analysis is also an art; one can speak of the art of listening and interpretation, in the direction of the treatment and transference. Can a love relationship be established electronically, can movement be generated, can there be construction, revelation, event? I await the interesting debate that will undoubtedly provoke analytical practice in the absence of the body during the current confinement, in which a session can be held using technical and electronic means. We will only know it through what analysts tell us about this experience, there is no other way of knowing it than through its exercise. Who knows if we are facing a revolutionary process of updating what, in Agamben's words, would mean "separating the past from its context, destroying it in order to return it, transfigured, to its origin."¹

Q2 - *In your particular art form, what are the effects of the exclusion of the body in the encounter with the body of the other? I mean, is there something new or different? Could you relate this to the notion of "presence" (can you as an artist dispense with physical presence for your art?)*

We live in a world in which social identities have been dissolved and we are pushed into isolation and individualism. From my point of view, physical presence affects all the arts, certainly some more than others - the theatre, dance or performance cannot be compared with the contemplation of a painting, the reading of a literary work or the viewing of a film - but from the order of the 'event,' of the aesthetic experience or perception of the aura, I think it affects each and every one. While creation requires concentration, solitude and silence, the work requires the presence of the other, an other who thinks about it or is moved in some way before it, either with its rejection, its enjoyment or with the questions it may provoke.



You cannot compare knowing a work by its reproduction on an internet page to standing in front of it, checking its dimensions, its textures, its colours, its materiality. The same happens with digital reading. It is a substitute compared to the pleasure of holding a book in your

¹Giorgio Agamben. "Walter Benjamin and the demonic: happiness and historical redemption". *Potentialities*. Stanford University Press, 1999.

hands, its touch, its weight, even the smell of paper. In both of these two examples and in my particular form of art, there is no encounter with the other's body but the other with the work, although something is added when I am present at a projection of my works. Do you experience the same watching a movie on television, computer or mobile phone as in a cinema accompanied by other people?

The presence of the other and the shared sensations provide a 'something more' difficult to describe because it is something that is experienced more than a thought, a perception, that in some way, passes through the body, as happens with non-phallic jouissance. Who has not participated in that almost mystical experience that involves attending for example, a concert in which the performance reaches such excellence that the communion between spectators and performers is such that one hardly dares to breathe so as not to break that 'I don't know what' as real as it is difficult to describe.

And it is that what we think being sustained in significant slides, that leaves room for doubt due to the structure of language itself, while what we feel is of an order closer to certainty: there, doubt enters when thinking about what is experienced.
