

# 'Informational Performance', Off-site Show by Ricardo Trigo at a private garage, Palafrugell - Tzvetnik

## Informational Performance

**Summary:** This text is not properly a press release. Despite the citations, references, and format, this also does not pretend to be an academic paper or an interview. This is simply a formalised action with images and text, this is a dose of directed energy, with the will to move a little, just a little bit, the standard communication limits of artistic knowledge. This can be read as an impulsive and subsequently rational gesture to propose a kind of informational performance.

**Keywords:** visual arts, artistic research, cognitive capitalism, soot, electricity, energy, bite, discordance.

## In the conversation: X, Y, and Z

**Z- Generically, could you briefly define what is the speculative field of your research and, and based on this, how to define your artistic practice?**

**X-** My field of interest focuses on exploring how technical and informational progress unfolds as a germinal element within the notion of artistic research (Kaufmann, 2011 and Steyerl, 2010). My task is focused on collecting samples and connecting data about how Western technocognitive magma becomes naturalised within artistic knowledge. In this sense, the process of colonisation of human knowledge through science and technology has not only ingested the way art materialises, but also

its discursive, disciplinary, economic and ideological genesis.

In this way, on the one hand, my work is based on articulating evidence to make clear that process of subordination between progress and art, and on the other hand, I concentrate on making small fissures and relocations in that correspondence. In order to confront forces such as human animality, emotions or impulsivity on this normative system that is executed under the sign of progress (Braidotti, 2005). In short, my goal is to propose another type of non-binary reciprocity between technology and nature (Haraway, 1991), between idea and form, between software and hardware (Alsina, 2014), modifying their densities and changing its measures of value.

**Z- More specifically, could you tell us in which artistic process or line of research *Oriented Combustions* is developed *Oriented Combustions (Sketch Research No. 2. Feedback)*, in 2018. How is it connected with the series *Oriented Combustions*, 2015?**

**X-** With the series *Oriented Combustions* (2015) I carried out a visual archeology around the representation of smoke in the Bayer company. The value of smoke is used by the company differently in successive times, from its use as a representation of industrial productivity to its absence as a sign of environmental respect. This investigation was consolidated with a file of forms of smoke, which reproduced with the help of a robotic arm that held a burning candle.

On the other hand, part of the work *Oriented Combustions (Sketch Research No. 2. Feedback)* (2018) is composed of two images on A4 paper inside a PVC bucket. One of the images consists of a scribble made with natural charcoal, while the second image is a black laser photocopy of the first. In this sense, both images are conceived as the registration of one material in different states and formulations: from natural charcoal to toner for laser printers. Throughout history, both smoke and toner are agencies subject to a force of concealment. The

smoke is disappearing and hiding strategically over time, and both charcoal and toner are omitted as potentially discursive materials in the visual arts and in the machinery of knowledge reproduction.

Thereby and returning to the work, with the contraposition of the two images I try to bring together the social history, the cultural history and the material history of smoke and soot, read here as symbiotic processes of technical domestication of the natural.

**Z- Excuse me for joining the conversation, can you also tell us about the meaning of the electric device present in the piece *Oriented Combustions (Sketch Research No. 2. Feedback)*, 2018?**

**X-** Yes, I am currently exploring the effect of electricity in the configuration of the industrial and informational world. Electricity helped develop the industrial revolution and subsequently led to the interconnection of data connecting knowledge motorways (Castells, 2004), homogenising in its deployment of human knowledge itself, thus enabling new ways of interaction between previously unrelated knowledge. Electricity understood as a transforming force and as a fuel for progress. Electricity, like fire, smoke or soot, place them as natural elements subject to high doses of technical domestication, a crucial process in the crystallisation of the informational paradigm and in the development of cognitive capitalism. Think that during the nineteenth and twentieth century the techno-progressive project of the West replaced the human muscle with mechanical prostheses, while today we are replacing mental processes with machines that think for and with us, and in turn, our most trivial mental processes become energy for the production system.

That concrete research on electricity helps me to work directly with it. Specifically, this translates into introducing different high-voltage transformers that produce electric discharges from different kV, artificially creating small lightning bolts. In that sense, the electricity is

placed within my works in the same plan that occupies the automatic gesture of making a scribble *Oriented Combustions (Sketch Research No. 2. Feedback, 1/2)* (2018), or bites on a PVC panel and Fischer wall plugs *When Animal Impulses Produce Cultural Objects No. 1. Feedback, 2/2* (2018), or in making my dog bite different elements in some works *When Animal Impulses Produce Cultural Objects No. 1. Feedback, 1/2* (2018), or even, in the gesture of erasing an element from the photographic documentation of this exhibition: *When Animal Impulse Produces Cultural Objects No. 1. Feedback, 2/2 + Eraser Work Addition No. 1* (2018). All these are actions of force on conceptual structures and material surfaces that resonate as forms of a terribly programmed and standardised world.

In that same direction, for example, in a month I will give a conference in an improvised way, without preparing it, in an academic event that aims to reflect on the notion of «artistic research». Or without going any further, the fact of mounting a closed-doors exhibition in the garage of my house and writing this text in the form of a self-destructive interview is a part of the same operation which I use trying to infer about the standard and clear forms of communication of certain artistic contents. Literally, my goal here is to charge a greater amount of energy to the different objects and ideas that are exposed.

**Y- Sorry for the interruption, but I'm listening to what you're explaining and I honestly think that I do not understand you very well. You talk a lot and not properly ...**

**X-** Yes, you're probably right, I'm sorry, I try to do it the best way I can. My intention is not to look like a good artist, I assumed my own limitations and abilities long time ago

**Y- I did not want to offend you ...**

**X-** Do not worry, in the world of art talk we speak a lot and do not say

anything concrete.

**Z- Can I continue with the interview? Thank you. In your doctoral thesis «Informationalism» you talk about recovering a certain autonomy of the artistic object. Can you explain that?**

**X-** Yes, in a very synthetic way and ignoring many nuances and correlations between some artistic period of the past. I mean that throughout the twentieth century to reach the postmodern narrative art we will leave behind several dominant trends, one; -the claim of autonomous work in terms of Clement Greenberg. Two, -the constant renewal of the ideology expressed through the artistic movements. And three, — the adherence of art in the social space and its agency as a tautological discipline. Thus, entering into the twentieth century, art as a normative discipline will be deployed through the standard circuits of knowledge (the university) and the global economy of capitalism (the art market and the cultural policies of the state). Here it is important to remember that in parallel with the latter described process, the development and integration of the electronic media in social run a very powerful operation in cognitive terms; -the possibility of thinking of the human being as a hybrid agency.

Computerisation first promotes the use of new terms, and second, the possibility of modifying binary systems strengthened during modernity. So, in my opinion it is important to place artistic practice under that magma that promotes computerisation and at the same time recover some aspects previously attributed to art, such as the notion of experimentation, of problem, of doubt, of contradiction, of emotion, in summary; the essential idea is to try to reduce to art a certain degree of meaning and normality, and place it in a more indefinite space. Obviously, this does not mean just recovering the known autonomy of the artistic object of Greenberg, but it means more specifically disengaging it from its disciplinary agency through informational semantics and circulating it

with other parameters.

## **Z- How would you like to close this interview?**

**X-** I would like to close this interview clarifying several ideas that have floated in several questions above. I would like to express that my position is not to place nature and technology as two opposing elements, but contrarily as inseparable parts, technology is nature. Technology as well as nature are usually executed separately and socially under very pre-established frameworks. However, we live immersed in the constant incursion of nature through technology, being aware of that equation is where possible movements of many binary categories learned and are replicated through the culture.

Today we are built through many electric data flows, and that data allows us to build ourselves being incessantly traversed, we retain some data, we discard other, we mix it, we filter it, we share it again, and we even contribute new data that will be put again into orbit in its different forms of alteration. All that energy flows quickly and demands only more and more activity. Let us think for a moment about how some platforms such as Contemporary Art Daily, Artviewer, KubaParis, DailyLazy, aqnb, Artsy, etc., affect the whole of artistic production. I want to say that these new systems of cognitive production are a faithful example of how artistic discourse obeys inertias fostered by the logic of electronic media. In other words, the artistic discourse is not modeled only by the artistic content itself, but also by its own means of communication (McLuhan, 2013). It is an old idea of McLuhan that we sometimes forget, and somehow this proposal is presented as an awareness of it.

That said, now I would like to end with a small point, a field outside the framework of this interview, recommended an incredible calzone pizza being served at La Pizza restaurant Palafrugell (Spain).

**Y- Sorry for interrupting you again, but I think that this is simply an**

**act of egocentricity , a farce If you allow me to say this. I have the impression that all this shows, that you do not have much success as an artist. I perceive in this proposal a certain desire to get visibility, it sounds a bit suspicious to me that you cite all those Web pages ... and by the way, the recommendation of the pizza is neither funny nor witty.**

**X-** Yes, the certain thing is that surely you have got a point here. This can also be read from that perspective, simply as a visibility strategy. As an attempt of singularity, at the same time as an act of total cession to the logic of the production apparatus of the visual arts. «Like making your fissures a virtue» (Llavaneras, 2018).

**Y-** I do not know ... I think what I do not like is your way of saying things... Good luck.

**Z-** If you would allow me a little more, let me comment that the images of the exhibition are of very poor quality ...

**X-** I have to say that the images are made consciously with my phone and its flash. I made this decision because I am interested in pointing out a piece of information; Artur Fischer, the inventor of the Fischer wall plugs was also responsible for inventing the first synchronised electric flash in 1949 («Artur Fischer», 2018). That connection seems very beautiful to me. Both elements remain neutral in the visual arts representation apparatus (the wall plugs help to hold the works and the flash helps to present the images sharper), moving these invaluable elements to the foreground is part of my work.

As in the work *Oriented Combustions (Sketch Research No. 2. Feedback, 1/2)* (2018), that its photographic documentation with a blue light cut corresponds to the technical nature of digital cameras; The electrical discharge presented in the work causes a stroboscopic effect in the documentary image of the work, that is, the image that you see in the

work is actually pointing to the technical artefact with which this image is produced.

**Z- Changing the topic, I understand that the fact of presenting this interview unfolding in Y, Z and myself (X) is also part of your work. With which of these voices do you converge more?**

**X-** The truth is that it is very strange to ask myself about what opinion of the three I find most plausible, when it is obvious that all this is part of the same fiction. I have always been attracted by the idea of presenting the works along with some of their blind spots, which are commonly present in our thoughts and then, at the moment of cementing the works, those tensions disappear. This strategy I have been practicing in videographic works. In fact, -you, **Z**, I do not know why you play the fool with this question, you know that making the contradictions of the works visible give more complexity to the work and puts into crisis the myth of the self-realization of the artist as a unique, monotonous and stable individual.

**Y- Well, having said that, now I see myself with the authority to say that this text is a waste of time. It only serves to ramble. What's more, -this X that you mention so much to put in tension and make fissure, sincerely, your schizophrenic form of presenting ourselves is nothing more than the replication of a subject without defined parameters, big topic in the post-truth era. If all this is part of myself, I would like to make it clear that the one who thinks in the first place is me (Y). Throughout the text it seems that X thinks like Ricardo Trigo, nothing, X occupies 35% of that thought, Z maybe 10% and I 55% or more. Having said that, I apologise to the reader and send X and Z publicly to hell, which is the same as doing the haraquiri to the audience and attending as a spectator of the show.**

Ricardo Trigo. Palafrugell, July 2018

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