How do we value hospitality today?

Taking hospitality further, based on the examples of Kipras Dubauskas' 'Lost Hour' and Honi Ryan's 'Silent Dinner Party'

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Table of Contents

F O R E W O R D

A gift in law, is the voluntary transfer of property from one person to another without any compensation for it and without any obligation of an agreement or contract. The one who gives is the donor; the one who receives the gift, the donee. *There are two main classes of gifts, gifts inter vivos and gifts causa mortis. The former is an outright transfer of property, the ordinary type of gift. A gift causa mortis, on the other hand, resembles a legacy, or bequest made under a will. It is a gift made by a person in expectation of imminent death and is not complete until the donor dies. The donor in such a situation may make a gift by delivering the goods or note or other form of gift to the donee, but the donor retains full title to the gift and may revoke it at any time before his death. The ordinary gift inter vivos is complete and unconditional as soon as the delivery of the gift is made. The nature of the gift is of considerable importance in taxation. In both types of gifts, it is essential that there be an actual and full delivery of the article given as well as donative intent on the part of the donor. The delivery may be made by handing it to the donee or by giving it to some other person for the donee, but in all cases the delivery must be such as to take the property given out of the hands and the control of the donor. Commonly gifts are spoken of as involving both real estate and personal property. The law does not recognise a true gift of real estate, for real estate can be transferred only by deed or will. Gifts in law are only of personal property. A promise to deliver a gift in the future, or a promise to make a gift, unless under seal or made under very unusual circumstances, cannot be legally enforced. A gift should be distinguished from a barter or exchange, as the element of consideration (a payment of some sort) necessary for the latter two is not present in a gift.*[1]

[1] "gift" The Columbia Encyclopaedia, 6th ed.. 2011. *Encyclopedia.com* http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-gift.html [website entered 12.09.2012].

I N T R O D U C T I O N

What does the gift symbolise today? Do we give so that we can gain afterwards? Or do we lose in order to truly give? When it comes to art, what do we give in order to gain? And what do we gain by having something bestowed upon us?

As either makers or viewers of art, people have long wondered: what does art have to offer? How does art contribute to our lives? What is its use value, and indeed, does it have any? It seems easy to claim: the value of art lies in the very act of the exchange itself. One tends to believe that the exchange going on between the artist and the public is valuable just as any other discussion, which causes one to start thinking, wondering and even to search further. And since we do know that among people such mental exchange happens all of the time, on many different levels, thus art too, it becomes obvious that immaterial exchange needs to have a meaning and a value on its own. Nevertheless, there is an endless struggle between those who wish to share their concerns through art, and those who want to put monetary value to it. And I wonder, where does the market's value of an artwork find its end, and where does the value of the art's 'thoughtfulness' begin? Moreover, does art in general go beyond the idea of a giver and a receiver? And, if so,, where does the exchange begin, and where does it end?

First there was a gift – the gift of art. Able to produce a breath-taking masterpiece, the artist gave this gift to the world. Then there was an immaterial gift – an exchange, between the artist and his/ her audience. Today we may recognise a gift that is neither physical nor immaterial, or rather both at the same time. It is a gift in a form of hospitality, widely discussed in art pieces by many artists, only to mention a few: Marina Abramovic, Dora García, Neil Cummings & Marysia Lewandowska, Dominique Gonzalez-Forester, Jochen Gerz, Vito Acconci, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Joseph Kosuth, Piero Manzoni, Yoko Ono, Rikrit Tiravanija, Gabriel Orozco, Ahmet Öğüt, Elmgreen & Dragset, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Dan Graham, Yael Bartana.[2]' [3] The subject of hospitality as gift has recently manifested itself

[2] Please note since each of the listed artists has been dealing with the subject of hospitality in his/her own way – I have only randomly collected their names here.

[3] Being inspired by Derrida who recognised the gift as strongly related to time, and thus always working it from the punning connection of present-gift and present-time, from here on I will be

in exhibitions across the world too. Among others, *The Gift: Generous Offerings, Threatening Hospitality* in the Art Gallery of Hamilton, in Canada (2003), *Hostipitality. Receiving Strangers* in the ms | Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz, Poland (2010), *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* in the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago, US (2012), and most recently *The Unexpected Guest* at the Liverpool Biennial (2012), together with *Unwanted Visitors* as a part of *City States*, a project presented by the Liverpool Biennial in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University. On the other hand, if we believe that all artists want their works to be received (in one way or another), whereas all curators wish for their exhibitions to be visited, then the conclusion should be as follows: hospitality, no matter what, was, is and will be, an intriguing notion within art-making in its widest sense. However, since my plan is to narrow down the problem, yet my ambition is to, through this text, shed at least some light on the questions stated above, I would like us to focus on the specific aspect of hospitality that has occupied my research for the past two years. Generally speaking, the aim of my thesis is to look at different meanings of the term "gift-giving," as well as to question the idea of the exchange; both in order to define hospitality as a concept, an event, a phenomenon, but most importantly, as a situation within an art project. Last but not least, hospitality not as a subject explored in a single piece, but as its feature, a nature, finally a main characteristic that could be assigned to a particular artwork.

The thesis is divided into two parts with different subsections in each. The first chapter of this paper, called PART I, is a reflection on major theory around the gift of hospitality, from which I am drawing on two particular case studies in the second chapter – PART II. In PART I, there are three subsections i.e. *In Theory*, *In Practice* and *Time*. And since we tend to speak about many different things mostly in the realm of theory, and less frequently in practice, my use of the words *theory* and *practice* are explicit here. By making such a layout I want to create a clear distinction between what is generally proclaimed to be hospitality today, and how hospitality actually should be executed at the end. Recently we hear about the term being coined by media, banks, and the tourist industry, even cultural institutions, whereas these groups never reveal their expectations for profit. Rather they speak through the prism of their friendly environments that appear to us as "institutions of giving," which give to their clients all of the time. Thus in effect, our understanding of hospitality continually is based on something that is given to us unconditionally. This is why

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speaking about the possibility of the immaterial gift – time, being an event of hospitality that indeed offers time as well.

returning to *In Theory,* and departing from the very first thoughts about hospitality by Immanuel Kant and Emmanuel Levinas, might help in clarifying that our contemporary understanding of this term is superficial, and finds no factual meaning in life. Briefly presented, Kant's idea of a cosmopolitan world, and Levinas' concept of ethics, will bring me to Jacques Derrida, for whom these two thinkers were of a great inspiration along the way to his identification of the concepts of unconditional and conditional hospitality. Mainly relying on Derrida's later political writings, in which the author focused on the ethical and political question of alterity, I will explain at this point why the so greatly proclaimed concept of *hospitality* (called by Derrida here unconditional) decisively does not find its reflection in life, and inversely fails, ending as a utopian idea.

In the next subsection titled *In Practice*, I will mainly be drawing from Derrida's "Of hospitality" and "Given Time: Counterfeit Money." Throughout both publications, the author concludes that hospitality must be an agreement of both parties – the giver and the receiver. He also exploits the etymological findings of Benveniste, thanks to whom we now know that the word hospitality has a double meaning. I want to explain to my reader how conditional hospitality – though limited by its own laws – in my opinion, succeeds to be the most equitable gesture within what we call social practice. Here I also wish to prove that practicing hospitality is based on a discussion, and a presentation of different concerns, because hospitality is nothing if not looking together for a shared consensus, applicable to a specific case. Last but not least – *Time* will be an elaboration on the most important aspect taking place within hospitality, i.e. the loss and gaining of time. In this subsection I will elaborate further on Derrida, who at a certain point comes to an agreement. Namely, if the gift must remain unrecognisable, it must then be giving time. As one cannot recognise him/ herself- giving or receiving time, hospitality could then be the gift of time.

In order to conclude PART I, I will be drawing on an essay by Patricia Altenbernd Johnson called "The Practice of Hospitality" (2010). In this work, Altenbernd becomes inspired by Fuyuki Kurasawa's notion about the practice of social justice. Hopefully through Johnson's approach – speaking about a wide range of activities functioning on many different levels, while at the same time, operating within certain fixed strategies – I will be able to explain why in hospitality, the notions of *possibility* and *discussion*, both play such an important role. I also believe that from here making a link to Derrida's major remark on general rights but flexible law can trigger an improved understanding of hospitality as such.

In PART II, I will stretch some of the ideas about the immateriality of the work of art,

about those artistic practices that are not appointed by objects but, rather, through actions. And whereas we associate action with acting, thus performing, or action serving as political activism, still I would rather us to focus on the idea of action that is neither of these two, or lies somewhere in between. Thus I would like us to think of an action that is planned but not staged. An action that comes from an unspoken social demand, and though it does not aim to bring any *change* explicitly, still certainly has a potential to gain indisputable recognition. Finally, I want us to think of an action that always needs the other to unfold, or even simply to happen. Specifically, I will focus on works that offer possibilities, a situation, a setting, within which propositions for subjects are being made. And although both of my case studies do have a participatory (even collaborative) character, I will claim that the situations that they are creating are not communal and/or exclusive.

In PART II, I will reflect upon two – slightly different in terms of execution, but similar in approach – projects of artists (both probably not very well known), who have recently been inspiring to me. Firstly, I will speak about the *Daylight Saving Time* (2012) event of Kipras Dubauskas, accompanied by his video piece titled *Lost Hour* (2011). Secondly, I want to analyse Honi Ryan's *Silent Dinner Party*, which is an on-going project since 2006.[4] Through the entire chapter, different writing styles will be intertwining, i.e. storytelling, fragments of informal e-mail conversations, or plain descriptions. This shift from the academic to rather colloquial writing styles is purposeful, and has to do with the nature of these particular projects, which I believe can be better presented directly through other modes of writing than the formal essay. Each case study will be divided as follows. Firstly, I present the project through memories, personal experiences, newspaper clippings, written interviews, traces found on the Internet, etc. Secondly, in the subsection Conversations, I use sections of e-mail correspondences between the artists and myself. Since both of the projects aim at creating certain human relations, I thought of building such while having a conversation with the artists themselves through the course of my research.

[4] From the beginning, when I started to research the subject and collect the material necessary for this paper, I felt that these two very ambiguous examples of artistic practices have an enormous potential to inspire me. However, since I did not participate in Honi Ryan's *Silent Dinner Party*, writing about it is certainly challenging, and different than in the case of Dubauskas' event, in which I took part. Nevertheless, in the coming months I would like to invite my partner to an informal dinner in silence at our home. This, I guess, would not be a dinner party but just a dinner, and yes, in silence. I am in contact with Ryan and am already planning her trip to The Netherlands so that we can host a *Silent Dinner Party* here in Rotterdam. In this way, I hope to be able to lay to rest at least some of the concerns that such a situation may create.

Many artists nowadays consciously (or not), in one way or another, practice the gesture of hospitality within their projects. Nonetheless, in this chapter I hope to avoid falling into a trap of works that engage with their audience while constructing one fixed body of work, and thus have a certain performative nature implied. To escape such presumption, there will be a realisation that neither in *Silent Dinner Parties* nor in *Daylight Saving Time* is any prediction present. My aim is to prove that the events I am presenting are, rather, lying somewhere in between the ideas of participatory/ collaborative event-based art, and performance-based art. Finally, I wish to show how the projects discussed by me again manage to challenge the meaning of terms such as offering, giving, exchanging, sharing, buying and selling art. Yet, analysing them through the ideas presented by Derrida and his followers may also help in improving our current understanding of the term hospitality, which I believe we could apply as a working model in contemporary society.

Ryan's and Dubauskas' projects imply in their nature a certain element of hospitality too. Although they are two different site-specific events, fixed within their own contexts, still, unconsciously they are creating a certain shared importance. They both invite the participants to a physical place that at first sight does not seem to be specific. Yet a dark, forgotten spot in the harbour of Rotterdam, to which people have to cycle in the middle of a cold night, as in the case of Dubauskas, and in Ryan's case, a cosy home environment where, seated around a table, strangers are asked to remain for two hours in silence. Suddenly these spaces change into the non-physical places where their public is actually being brought. And, as Anne Dufourmantelle, says in her explanation of Derrida's ideas (and I will come to that in PART I), it is exactly why we think of *Daylight Saving Time* and *Silent Dinner Party* as happening in a particular space, and within a particular time, though truly belonging to a specific gesture – the gesture that we call hospitality. [5]

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[5] Although my approach to these projects has been discussed with both of the artists, still I am considering the fact that it might not necessarily correspond with their opinions on the matter, in the end.

In the western world we celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, weddings etc. During these and similar events, within families, groups of friends, or even colleagues, we tend to bestow each other with gifts all of the time. And although presents given on these occasions are not necessarily a contributing factor for a gift one receives in return, still gifts as such entail a sort of obligation, which derives from the traditions we cultivate. On the other hand, we receive "gifts" – in the a form of free product samples, an attractive offer for a credit plan, a refreshing drink in a can, etc. – on the street, at the supermarket counter, in a bank, or even in a doctor's office. However, I wonder, do we really believe that these "gifts" are given to us simply for free? Having said all that, one may still think of the gift as being a spontaneous and generous offer that comes with selflessness and sincere respect shown to the other person. And although most would claim to be glad when they are able to give, yet, it might be difficult to find someone who does not appreciate having a gift bestowed upon them. It is true that the donor's position (just like the one of the donee) often happens to have an equal importance. Again, there is a certain contradiction implied within what one thinks is a gift, and the cruel reality of it. In these times, when things are offered to us constantly, when giving a present to someone means receiving a counter-gift in the future, it seems as if the gift-giving practice has lost its value somewhere on its way. And I wonder, what does the gift stand for today? Can one still think of a gift as being inherently selfless, and what does it actually mean to exchange? In contemporary society, the equivalent of objects is always money, whereas the act of giving money often functions as an act of charity, which makes a distinction between those who are in need of financial help, and those who are able to support them. This in fact also degrades the notion of the gift to the *exchange* – giving in order to receive an equivalent of *what* has been given.[6]

The practice of gift-giving has a rich history in primitive societies found among the tribes of the Massim archipelago, including the Trobriand Islands.[7] In recent decades, it

[6] Luckily, an exchange of unnecessary objects (eg. old or unworn clothes) still exists among communities of friends, or during local swap markets. Within the activity of trading second hand objects it seems like the price and value become less important than the idea of trading itself. Nevertheless, one's experience with second hand markets might be particular in The Netherlands, since here it seems that people are able to sell anything – for any price, in the name of making a profit.

[7] In 1922 Bronislaw Malinowski described a Kula ritual involving thousands of individuals. Travelling hundreds of miles by canoe, Kula's participants exchange valuables, which consist of red shell-disc

became a subject of interest in economics. However, presented at the beginning of the 20th century, the anthropological observation of Marcel Mauss inspired philosophers and other thinkers to seek out more of the humanistic attitudes within the practice of the goods' movement.[8] From his research, Mauss proposed a gift as an alternative to the rationalist calculation of capitalistic exchange, whereof later on, his main interest became the very specific gift-giving festival – potlatch. And because, in the events of potlatch, gift-giving was based mostly on the destruction of luxurious goods, this helped Mauss to take the idea of a gift far beyond the regime of utilitarian exchange. In potlatch, gift-giving relied on expenditure that was privileged over acquisition, which means that there the donee was obliged to come back to his donor, with a bigger gift in return. Nonetheless, Mauss' conclusions lead Georges Bataille to compare potlatch with operations in banking and investments in bourgeois economies. Thus within the potlatch itself, Bataille distinguished two contradictory behaviours, religious and economic. But for him, religious sacrifice did not mean killing but relinquishing, thus giving. Bataille's reflection on the nature of the gift became the exact opposite of an economy being driven by scarcity, so from there on, he started to form his overall conception on *general economy* that was based on a law of surplus (Bataille 1987, 203).

Bataille took the concept of surplus law from his observation of the Sun. According to him, the Sun is the only thing in the world that gives itself without demanding anything in return (Bataille 1987, 21). And just when he said, "[the Sun] constitutes the paradigmatic form of the gift, an expenditure which avoids stagnation and stasis by enabling a general process of growth", he criticised potlatch as an action that should bear on others.[9] By saying

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necklaces (*veigun* or soulava) that are traded to the north (circling the ring in a clockwise direction), and white shell armbands (*mwali*) that are traded in the southern direction (circling counter clockwise). If the opening gift is an armshell, then the closing gift must be a necklace, and vice versa. The terms of participation vary from region to region. Whereas on the Trobriand Islands the exchange is monopolised by the chiefs, in Dobu all men can participate.

[8] In *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* ("An essay on the gift: the form and reason of exchange in archaic societies"), originally published in *L'Année Sociologique* (1925), Mauss described the potlatch festival (practiced in the tribes of Northwest America), based on the display of one's luxury with emphasis on its excess, always ending up with the goods' destruction by the giver, so that they can never be returned. During the potlatch events precious coppers were broken and thrown into the rivers. In extreme cases, entire villages were left destitute afterwards. Through such a destruction of wealth, the individual was to gain status, a certain recognition of superiority from his contemporaries.

[9] *The Bataille Reader* p. 21.

that production is less important than consumption – simply because each production needs consumption in order to be useful – he pointed to the fact that wealth does not exist until the consumer undergoes a certain solitary change, (indeed after his or her consumption). For Bataille, the loss is only superficial at the very moment of giving - at the end, the giver enriches himself by the rejection of his own richness. In this sense, gaining a meaning for one's expenditure happens only through such a loss. Thus the excess expenditure needs to be given (lost or destroyed), but with the meaning of an acquisition (Bataille 1987, 203§3). His idea decidedly makes one think of an artwork, which, as we know already, does not exist without the viewer. In other words, once this is recognised, it affects our thinking and stimulates questioning.[10]

For both Mauss and Bataille, it was possible to achieve a certain solidarity through the social bonds created by gifts' exchange. However, in "Given Time: Counterfeit Money," Derrida recognised the gift as the most paradoxical, perhaps impossible, idea; indeed "the impossible." In contradiction to Mauss and Bataille, in his book he presents the gift as unnamed and unrecognised – both by the giver and by the receiver. The true gift, for Derrida, breaks with the circle of exchange, thus in giving there is never an expectation for any gift in return. But despite this major negation, Derrida still managed to find two intriguing aspects in Mauss' and Bataille's research; namely: time and excess. Thus, when Mauss said that it is rather impolite to offer a counter-gift immediately, this gave an inspiration to Derrida, who later claimed the gift to be *giving time*. Derrida's essential character of the gift – temporality, in fact also denied Bataille's explicit call – to free the gift from a temporal progression. Paradoxically, the gift being offered due to excess almost helped Derrida to free it from the circle of exchange. Derrida's effort however, turned out to be hopeless in the end. And as the main aim for potlatch was to go beyond the actual bet, thus always requiring a greater exchange, its existence was based, precisely, on puncturing the previous one. Yet, as we know, people will never free themselves from time, so as the gift won't ever be able to resign from it either.

When deriving from Derrida's concerns, perhaps the *36 Steps Toward a Gift Economy* by Genevieve Vaughan could serve for another interesting entry. Vaughan's text makes one wonder about, first, the gift – a voluntary offer, the practice of offering something to someone without the interest of having a gift in return. Second, the activity of exchange – from a distance one of the most democratic – in which both parties have the same chance to

[10] Marcel Duchamp said, "It is the spectators who make the pictures".

remain satisfied with their "loss."[11] And since exchange is also always finalised with acquisition, Vaughan says it is not only about "losing," but also about gaining,.[12] This unfortunately creates circular thinking, and I wonder, in exchanges happening nowadays, are we more aware of offering what one desires to receive from us? Or are we focused on the idea of how to enrich ourselves through someone else's offer? Obviously exchange, though not based on money, often makes one think in terms of monetary value.

Through reading Mauss, we come to know that in some tribes, being a donor was beneficial to oneself, in that he/ she could acquire something in the future. Within the donation happening there, the value as such was never assigned to a thing given, but to the symbolic value of expenditure, which was important for his/ her prestige, and in building a master-slave relation. But among the Trobiand Islanders, for example, owning a property was equivalent to sharing, and thus giving away. There the owner of a thing was privileged to distribute it; he was the "trustee and dispenser" among his community (Hyde, 15).

According to Vaughan, the market exchange once and forever created negative relations, and has put people into isolation, competition, war and domination. Despite the fact that exchange somehow derives from the idea of giving, still, things offered are given in order to receive their equivalent in return. On the other hand, Vaughan believes that gift-giving has its own behavioural logic; it "creates positive relations, through direct need satisfaction which creates bonding, communication and community." I wonder, since exchange has been so greatly proclaimed to be the ultimate way for sharing that occurs in art (also elsewhere, like in the sciences for example), and this was brought up precisely to be the alternative for the modernistic claims, which excerpted from the concept of the gift. How can we deal with this knowledge when we might just be realising that Vaughan could actually be right? Moreover, it is the cause of the rational economic approach that influenced the perception of the gift, so that today's societies – being used to the market exchange idea – are not able to imagine different possible models of gift-giving than mothering, charity, and other forms of symbolic gift-exchange. And this scarcity is unnaturally created by the appropriation of the gifts offered to the many by the few, the gifts to poor countries by wealthy countries, the gifts of nature, etc. In effect, nowadays, gift giving and exchange co-exist within two ways of thinking and behaving. For example,

[11] To be clear, I am using the word *loss* here to express the idea that exchange is strongly connected with dedication, and the ability to give something away.

[12] Genevieve Vaughan, *36 Steps Toward a Gift Economy* (year of publication is unknown to me).

exchange and gift-giving constitute two paradigms or worldviews, which compete with and complement each other; as a result, gift-giving logic often remains unconscious (Vaughan). And so "[e]xchange conceals gift giving, competes with it and takes advantage of its gifts. Gift giving gives in to exchange and gives value to it; this is also why gift giving is often recognised as valueless."[13]

No matter how true Vaughan's observations seem to be, I still wish to ask; in contemporary times, what does the gift – particularly so greatly proclaimed by Derrida the gift of time, and thus the gift of hospitality – actually have to offer? Because at present people are constantly having gifts bestowed upon them, which means that gift giving comes with no effort and hospitality somehow loses its meaning – I like to wonder – when speaking about art, is it still possible to value an event of hospitality today? From the 1960's on, artists aimed to create unique experiences while offering hospitable environments for their audience(s). In my thesis, I am deriving from their initial claim, and point towards the following question: are artists of today able to continue this thought, while at the same time taking the idea of hospitality a bit further? Finally, how do we come to value the aspect of hospitality in the work of artists from the succeeding generations?

[13] Ibid.

P A R T I

Where I am helpless, where I decide what I cannot fail to decide, freely, necessarily, receiving me my very life from the other.

Jacques Derrida

Coming from the Outside

To begin speaking about the subject of hospitality, we need to first contextualise the meaning of the word *hospitality* as such. The most accurate understanding of the term is the *relation* that occurs between two parties – the host and the guest. Thus, "what arrives at the borders, in the initial surprise of contact with an other, a stranger, a foreigner" (Lashley et al., 2006, 6).[14] In another way, we could say that it is a *practice* of offering a hospitable environment, "the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers."[15] To help illustrate such *practice*/ *relation* activity, we could take an example of an international organisation called the hospitalityclub.org. At the core of this worldwide network consisting of millions of volunteers, lies the idea of a mutual trust being offered to the unknown traveller.[16] Different from hospitalityclub.org is economic reciprocity, where a major aspect of the *hospitality industry* that occurs within commercial hotels across the entire world, in which the primary concern – to provide a welcoming place – always relies on the traveller's money. Nonetheless, it is important to note that even Kant's emphasis on hospitality – vital for peace – was about free economic exchange, not about providing a haven for those who have no home.[17]

Nowadays, on the other hand, visiting someone's "place" does not necessarily happen via physically crossing their doorstep. In our era the Internet is the most common space for practicing hospitality. However, it is also the Internet which lulled our consciousness to sleep so that we started having guests every day, every hour, and every moment. Leading parallel lives on social media websites forever changed the way we

[14] Conrad Lashley, quoted in "Peace Movements and Pacifism after September 11", p. 61 (2008).

[15] 'Hospitality.' The Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English. 2009. *Encyclopedia.com.* http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O999-hospitality.html [website entered 9.07.2012].

[16] At the core of The Hospitality Club lies a pure willingness to help others during their travel. Available places within private houses are announced on the community website and offered as potential accommodation for thousands of international travellers. In effect, The Hospitality Club enables people to travel on a low budget, but also meet with each other. Nevertheless, the use of one's generosity is always reciprocal and at a certain point the club's practitioners are each obliged to offer their own place in return.

[17] I refer to Kant further in the subsection, *In Theory*.

perceive the *unknown* (the other).[18] And so the border between just a stranger, and already an intruder, became blurred. Through the Internet we let people step into our lives and very quickly we become 'friends' with almost everyone. Although one must be first confirmed as someone's 'friend,' this step merely entails pushing a button that says 'accept.' And since much of the time any stranger is able to go through one's page, this shows that an individual has barely any control over the visitors entering or leaving his/ her domain. In addition, within the Internet realm, the meaning of words – friend, stranger, and intruder – becomes stretched, and I wonder, what does it mean to be 'friends' with someone today?

According to Derrida, a person "meets" oneself through the other. Thus to recognise one's own "otherness" – skin colour, sexuality, mentality, or even faith – is to set oneself apart from the other, and realise the possible contrasts. Further, every such confrontation with the other enables us to formulate who we are ourselves. This makes one think, maybe this constant exposition and exchange of one's thoughts, frustrations, problems, happy moments, etc., incessantly taking place on the Internet is nothing other than the situation that Derrida describes as follows:

> We thus enter from the inside: the master of the house is at home, but nonetheless he comes to enter his home thorough the guest – who comes from outside. The master thus enters from the inside *as if* he came from the outside. He enters his home thanks to his visitor, by the grace of the visitor.[19]

Knowing about the existence of organisations like the hospitalityclub.org, but also being familiar with the relevant Biblical stories and Christian behaviours still practiced today, I could easily assume that hospitality, in general, must be a generous offer.[20] This is also what Derrida writes at the beginning of *On Touching:* "[a] genuine test of hospitality: to receive the others"; thus, a visitation when there has been no prior invitation (Derrida, 1).

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[18] For the most recent study on the subject of Web 2.0 practices i.e. Social Network Sites (SNS) and folksonomies (social bookmarks, video and photo sharing services, blogging sites, etc.), both presenting either user-generated content, or being profile pages maintained by the members, see Alexander Tokar, *Metaphors of the Web 2.0* (2009). In this publication Tokar looks for the Internet' metaphorical expressions of meanings like – *sign up, profile, friend, poke, tag, subscribe* and *channel.*

[19] Derrida 2000, 125

[20] E.g. one of the most important Christian practices of hospitality (as far as I know it from Polish homes) is a tradition celebrated during Christmas dinner. On the evening of the 24th of December there is always extra tableware prepared for the unexpected guest, a lost wanderer.

Nonetheless, although Derrida claims that truely generous hospitality knows no limit, he is also aware of the contradictions that such an understanding implies.

In Theory

For Kant, the realisation that the world as a whole is a common good would be a huge step in the progress of humanity. Within such a global structure, people would be united in forming one community of the world's citizens, rather than remain divided by origin, skin colour, or beliefs (Kant, 99). In *Perpetual Peace* (1795), Kant writes that leading a life within a global community with central governance could protect humans from war. Nevertheless, he is aware of the fact that not all of the States are eager to enter a world republic, yet he looks for the possibility where these states' sovereignty could remain intact. He calls it "the right of the stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory" (ibid, 105). Within Cosmopolitanism's view of Kant, the idea of universal hospitality is born, and turns out to be a perfect compromise to condition the cosmopolitan's rights. On the other side, for Levinas, the foundation of ethics consists of the obligation to respond to the *other*. Moreover, in *being for the other*, there is no "universal moral law," whereas there must be a sense of responsibility (goodness, mercy, charity) that the *other*, in a state of vulnerability, calls forth. In the epigraph to this chapter, Derrida expresses that where one is no longer able to recognise him/ herself, one needs the other in order to do so. It is precisely in the readiness and the inclination to welcome the *other* into one's home, that Derrida recognises the foundation of hospitality; i.e., ethics. From here, Derrida claims ethics as hospitality, and hospitality as ethics.

The modern cosmopolitan thought of Kant, and Levinas' concept of ethics, both inspired Derrida to pick up on the idea of ethics and politics, of and in, hospitality. In his interview given in *Le Monde*, Derrida suggests, alluringly, that hospitality is ultimately "an art and a poetics, yet a whole politics depends on it and a whole ethics is determined through it."[21] However, Derrida's hospitality is definitely not referring to *ethics* in terms of a moral code, as if one had the choice, one way or another; rather, it represents a certain idea of the origin of ethics. And such ethics must appear as a pre-political aspect of the human

[21] Quoted in Gilbert Leung and Matthew Stone, *Otherwise than Hospitality: A Disputation on the Relation of Ethics to Law and Politics*, Law and Critique (2009) vol. 20 no. 2, 193–206, from Derrida, Jacques. 1997a. Il n'y a pas de culture ni de lien social sans un principe d'hospitalité. Le Monde.

condition. Within Derrida's thinking, what became crucial was the recognition that both contradictory realms (unconditional and conditional) simultaneously mark hospitality's existence. Undeniably, these realms seem not only to compete, but to complement each other as well.[22]

The unconditional hospitality (not regulated by any law) is, according to Derrida, the only kind that remains true. Within unconditional hospitality, no questions such as W*ho are you?, Where do you come from?, How long are you planning to stay?,* etc., are posed. Here, the welcoming of the other is absolute. The unlimited acceptance of his/ her guest by the host concerns any "foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is a citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female" (Derrida 2000, 77). However, even within absolute welcoming, certain complications are embedded. If a stranger receives the right to arrive unrecognised (without a name, a place of birth, or a native language), after his entry, does he also have the right to remain a stranger forever? Or, is it the host's right to impose on his guest: a new name, a new citizenship, and a new language? Where does the hospitality begin? Derrida asks, and I after him. Is it already happening before the arrival, when one is neither expecting, nor offering, thus at the moment when the un-named person appears? Or maybe, when he enters and gains a new name? And if I assume that un-reciprocal hospitality is not hospitality at all, then I need to ask from the other side too: is hospitality always reciprocal? A stranger who appears in front of a host's house comes with a reason; he expects to be allowed to enter. He is ready to reciprocate hospitality. But then again, if the law of hospitality is to be reciprocated, and such is inherent, we may ask – how far can a stranger's right to remain the stranger be extended? Obviously, this is an ongoing question about the superior right either to nationality or to citizenship; the right of birth, in some countries connected with blood, and in others, with the land.

Many ideas sound good in our head or at least as we talk about them. Yet sometimes, when we wish to try them out and put them into practice, we may realise that in fact they are impossible to execute. This is also why we may never know to what extent the facilities provided to assist disabled people are indeed helpful for them, until, for example, we ourselves sit in a wheelchair and try to ride up (or down) a ramp. Eventually this also happens in the case of creating (or taking part in) an event like hospitality. We look for the

[22] In this sub-chapter, I write only about unconditional hospitality. In the sub-chapter *In Practice*, I will explain the meaning of conditional hospitality. I will come back to the idea of competition and complementation between the two in my final conclusion.

answers to questions of power: the roles being played out, the proportions of one's freedom towards another, the right to keep sovereignty of one's place, as well as the right to remain within one's own alterity. At a certain point, there is a designated turn from the idea of hospitality that should, or could, be an unlimited gesture. Yet, a thing that has been discussed must finally be enacted too; we cannot keep on theorising the praxis forever. But how do we turn theory into practice, or to put it another way, how do we practice the theory we have already learned?

In Practice

To practice something means *to perform* a certain movement, an action, a habit, a custom, or a labour. Performing a practice, on the other hand, is all about the repeating of a systematic exercise in order to acquire a certain skill or proficiency, such that it leads you to the perfection of an action. Here is where I want to make an attempt to put previously discussed theory into practice.

Through the work of Benveniste, who extensively researched this subject from an etymological angle, we encounter an obvious contradiction within the understanding of the word "hospitality." Coming from the Latin *hospe,* hospitality is a combination of *hostis*, meaning either guest or host, and *postis*, meaning master. Apparently, there is a gift-giving relationship that establishes equality, and so the same word can be used for both host and guest. So *hostis* therefore contains the notion of reciprocity within it. Although the use of one word for completely opposite meanings is extremely confusing, perhaps it might be helpful here to call back on Derrida who said as follows: At the moment of entering one's home – the roles are being changed. Thus the host becomes a guest, and the guest becomes a host (Derrida 2000, 125). On the other hand, in Greek, the word for stranger – *xénos* – also has a double meaning, yet here the sense of reciprocity is carried between the two. Indeed, one Greek word for hospitality, *philoxenia* or love of the stranger, seems to primarily emphasise this aspect of hospitality. *Potis* is the word for the master of a house, the one who makes the rules. The Greek is *despótes*, from which we get despot. This is the person who has power over, and who can make the decisions for the group. Benveniste argues that insofar as hospitality is offered from the position of the master – the only person who really matters at the event – there is no reciprocity. Yet, the tension within the word is between reciprocity and equality, and the domination of exclusive power.[23]

Genuine hospitality exists without a previous scenario; where everything can happen, anything can also be taken away. Yet, altruism (if it indeed exists) brings sacrifice. Nevertheless, when the host rejects his position, and voluntarily devotes his power, the power of the host, it means that he won't be hosting any longer for his guest. In such a situation, who is left to offer hospitality, and to whom? Can one still be offering hospitality

[23] His work is found in *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*. For this summary I am calling on Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and Expropriation of Identity* (2007).

after his/ her position as a host has been rejected? Does hospitality find its presence there? Can hospitality exist beyond those power relations?

There is a constant struggle between how we imagine hospitality, and how it is actually being practiced. Conditional hospitality, waiting to be reciprocated, is actually given because of the idea of a return. In that sense it is also predictable. Within the gesture of a welcome, the host presents to his/ her guest the conditions for his/ her stay, after which, the guest accepts them and enters. Again expectations, with circumstances appointed in advance, for always denying the existence of "true" hospitality. Anyway, in practice one can always be more generous, more welcoming and give more of oneself and one's home, until there is complete self-effacement (Leung and Stone, 3). And since a host needs a guest in order to be hosting for him/ her, the same applies to a guest who needs a host in order to be welcomed. Yet giving up one's own place, unconditionally, does not find its reflection here.

Still, how can we define hospitality? As something reciprocal and complementary, compromising and thus deriving from concepts of love and friendship, or maybe total and ruthless and thus based on an act of violence?

As said before, there is a fine line between the meanings of the words hospitality and hostility. And surprisingly – in practice – hospitality does not fall far from hostility. Hostility might already be recognised at the moment when the host allows his guest to come inside; at once the guest becomes a hostage of his place. On the other hand, the host is always waiting, he expects the guest to arrive, which makes him a hostage of his own thoughts. Yet, while the former hostage (i.e. the guest) becomes the host, the former host gains the status of a stranger too. The situation repeats itself and particular roles are exchanged back and forth between the two. From here on, everyone becomes everyone's hostage (Derrida 2000, 124). This recognition gives the right to assume that unconditional hospitality, though impossible, brings hospitality as such to life. Thus mutually exclusive opposites of both conditional and unconditional hospitality carry a certain paradox. It appears that the two hospitalities gradually exclude each other; yet, neither can exist without the other. Engaged in the economy of exchange, hospitality has a reciprocal nature. In offering hospitality, in the act of welcoming the other, the host does impose certain conditions upon his guest. In fact, within the exchange that takes place between the host and the guest, a certain association with law is impossible to avoid.

Although Kant claimed the universalism of the law in which rules would be applied to each situation of one's arrival, the guests, for him, were still always foreigners. And this is

why he also believed that the practice of universal hospitality would increase political conflicts, thus, the refugee would always be seeking an asylum. And just when he contradicted himself (at once trying to speak about something extremely free and open, but at the same time, explicitly drawing its borders), Derrida dared to pull his idea further. Thus, when Kant imposed that the surface of the earth must be held in common possession, since its space is also limited, Derrida agreed: certain law should always be implicated; however, it must be fluid, each time adjustable to new circumstances. Further, he said, stating one general law that would relate to any hospitality event is useless, and simply finds no relation to our life. Hospitality's law should always be free to evolve – particularly according to the situation where it occurs (Derrida 1999, 90).

In practicing hospitality, I imagine a constant negotiation happening between universal law and particular demands. Although an enforcement of a power is onrush, hospitality should still be based on an agreement which strives to conclude with a compatible law – what to exclude and what to include. However, it is important to remember that negotiation does not always provide solutions; more likely, it may bring people closer to certain outcomes. Classically defined, hospitality is a right that is regulated by law, such as it becomes the law of justice. And if people's rights may remain stable within hospitality, then never should the law, which must be adjustable – whenever it is needed – according to different contexts. Yet, hospitality as a matter of fact can be issue-specific, because stories have the right to be repeated. Nevertheless, even telling the same story will always take place in a different location, and certainly at a different time. Time, on the other hand, cannot be reconstructed, whereas reconstructing the place means its deconstruction, thus building a new place. All of these factors explain why hospitality cannot be assigned to one specific place forever. Yet, it is a place, of sorts, in itself, each time created over again. And as Anne Dufourmantelle remarks in her explanation of Derrida, the place is best understood as belonging to neither host nor guest, "but to the *gesture* by which one of them welcomes the other" (Derrida 2000, 62) [italics added]. Thus a place associated with such a gesture must be then a non-physical place, which only happens in time. And although within the event of hospitality, time and place are indicated upfront, still they are both suggested — introduced — as possibilities towards which the guest and the host need to make an effort and step out. Moreover, to offer a possibility, or to present itself as one, I believe is a specific duty that hospitality needs to fulfil.

Time

Time is all, and nothing. You cannot smell it or touch it, still, you feel it passing, walking by, and making circles – the same but different. Time, the invisible factor, as opposed to a gift, neither gives nor reveals anything visibly. And there is a tension between this possibility / impossibility of time that everyone has heard of, but no one has ever seen. How can it be that something that does not exist physically is so present in our lives every single day? How is it that time tends to be such a dominating feature, from which no one can be free?

Yet, in the end, this nothing turns out to be *not*-nothing at all, "since it is beyond everything" (Derrida 1992, 3).

Time – one of the most important issues of conditional hospitality – seems to be inseparable from any kind of hospitality event. For example, would we still call it hospitality, an event that lasts forever? Moreover, the events of hospitality are never timeless – they have a clear beginning (the welcoming), and an end (the goodbye). To discuss duration in a particular occasion of hospitality is, again, to set up a rule according to which guest and host proceed with their work. Nevertheless, there is something about time that cannot be controlled, something that escapes the boundaries of time, the event durability. Hospitality certainly takes place on two surfaces of *time*, thus there is the *spending of time* – the factual time when event takes place – and the memory of it that one carries with them. And since each person has his or her own way of dealing with hospitality's remembrance, it seems pointless to even try to regulate it.

To "invite" someone in Hebrew is equivalent to the meaning of "making time." Within such an understanding, making time does not happen on an individual level; thus, in order to produce time, there has to be another person. Having said that, one needs to realise that before spending time together one has to first *create time* too. He or she has to think of a particular moment, a gap, when he/ she is available for the other. On the other hand, creating, having, and offering *time* becomes a moral issue when we realise that what we wish to give, we actually do not posses. But how is that possible? Not possessed by anyone in particular, *time* is in the possession of everyone in general. In the realm of hospitality – time – impossible to be given or received, eventually undoes the distinction of giving and

receiving. This is also why one may ask, in the hospitality event, who is actually offering what, and to whom?

Derrida claims the impossibility of a gift, which lies exactly in what the gift is not.[24] First of all, the gift itself must remain unrecognised (both in the act of offering and in the act of accepting), because it should not be paid back, or expected to be in any way exchanged. Only such a gift, "if there is any," is able to function beyond the ideas of use values and exchange values, and remain as a true gift which, according to Derrida, could exist outside the circle of economy (Derrida 1991, 7). I wonder, maybe the gift of time as such is the absolute gift that we are looking for? Once we give attention to another, without realising either the fact of receiving and reciprocating – or losing and sacrificing – time, we might be giving already.[25] But how can the gift of time escape the circle of exchange? The clock hands pass number twelve on the clock's face twenty-four times a day; certainly in time a circular movement is implied. A different aspect comes to mind when we follow Heidegger's thought from *Being and Time;* time is not necessarily circular because time means now (Derrida 1992, 8). Thus if we think about giving, such that it always happens in the now, then *now* – the moment itself, indeed does escape the circle of time. But in the end, thinking that the now is only what takes place *now*, collapses too. Because, if we take our being (our presence) as a possible gift to another, we might then realise that *being* is not only in the now (as Heidegger wanted us to think), because *being*, in a complete sense, happens through time and thus gives itself, over and over again.

Going back to Derrida, an absolute gift stays unrecognised – both by the donor and the donee. It also brings no gratitude in the form of a counter gift, because in the end, giving should not be about subjects exchanging objects. Apparently absolute giving (maybe the gift of time, thus the gift of hospitality) also depends upon forgetting that the act of giving ever took place. We know this already: in order to speak about hospitality there has to be an acceptance, a reciprocation coming from the other. And how does one not anticipate an event like hospitality? And yet, to forget is a desire that brings hope. Otherwise, can we forget about something that we have never thought about before? Can we forget about something that never happened, or that was never given to us? Finally, how to forget about

[24] Derrida denies that most of Mauss' conception of the gift is embedded in the exchange of economy. The possibility of the gift presented by Mauss as A gives B to C - for Derrida does not testify as an event where the gift would be given at all (Derrida 1992, 12).

[25] I would like to make it clear that although I use the word sacrifice, which obviously has a strong connotation with religion, here I am using it rather in the context of being generous disinterestedly.

no one who had never offered himself or herself to us? The gift that gives while not taking place – must be a mad idea then. And for Derrida this is madness too:

> How does one desire not to keep? How does one desire forgetting? How does one desire mourning […]? [26]

This entire situation looks suspiciously similar to the paradox of conditional and non-conditional hospitality discussed already. Nevertheless, it feels that I am again not able to embrace it, though all this is very inspiring and won't allow me to let it go. So far we have established: time as such is *nothing,* and it is *without being*, "that is not what it is and that it is what it is not" (Derrida 1992, 28). Certainly, the *impossibility* of time being without being, and the *impossibility* of the gift, without its occurrence to be the gift – is obviously what they both share in essence. While the possible gift cannot give time because time is simply nothing, on the other hand, "[i]f there is something that can in no case be given, it is time, since it is nothing and since in any case it does not properly belong to anyone […]" (Derrida 1992, 28). But then again, time recognised, as nothing might not correspond with the gift recognised as: *not* a symbol, *not* an object, *not* a thing.[27] Because to recognise nothingness is to recognise time. And how can one give nothing (time) that, while remaining unrecognisable, would actually be a gift of something? I guess, then, that to give time does not necessarily mean – "to give time."

The gift gives time. A moment. A gap. A pause. The gift gives the in-between time. But the gift of time demands time as well, because it is also "determined by a term, a rhythm, a rhythm that does not befall a homogenous time but that structures it originally" (Derrida 1992, 41). So, somewhere between the gift and the counterfeit gift, there is an ultimate gift – the gift of time. Thus the gift of hospitality is *not* the gift of hospitality; rather it is the gift of the possibility that such a gift may bring (and brings). Yet it is the potentiality which is represented and manifested in a space. And since the possibility is not what it *is* but what it *becomes* – and by becoming I include adding, developing, improving, etc. –, I believe these stimuli are happening in a linear progression rather than in a circle that repeats itself over and over again.

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[26] Derrida 1992, 36

[27] The assumptions with the gift are mostly symbol, object, thing etc., still, as we know already, the gift needs not to be recognised at all.

Challenging hospitality.

Summing up.

Recently I came across "The Practice of Hospitality" (2010), an essay by Patricia Altenbernd Johnson. Through the reading of Fuyuki Kurasawa's *The Work of Global Justice: Human Rights as Practices* (2007), Johnson suggests a new understanding for hospitality; i.e., the practice of social justice. In her work she recognises the practice of social justice as a wide-ranging activity functioning on many different levels, be it local or global, institutional or communal, etc. However, she says, since most of these activities are dealing with the same issues in terms of labour and involved risks, applying general strategies to all of them, as well as maintaining their various levels, is still possible (Johnson 2010, 8). Nevertheless, Johnson does not only favour the universal law proposed by Kant, but, respectively, turns to Kurasawa's critical substantivism thought too. Kurasawa's approach, the "double movement" (as Johnson calls it), first departs from the specific micro aspects (how an individual's labour is meaningful within a community, historical contexts, human rights) then follows macro aspects, like forming ethical and political norms, applicable to global justice. Though I believe that Kurasawa did not aim to connect the social justice that he speaks about with the hospitality that Johnson (and I after her) discusses; nonetheless, this does not change the fact that his remarks are somehow undoubtedly inspiring. For example, Kurasawa mentions that thinking about the practice of social justice as something rigid, and thus imagining how certain tasks need to be executed or not, is simply wrong. He proposes the idea that practices of social justice need to be shaped, each time according to their particular context; and no matter how many different contexts there might be, "the creation of place, welcoming, befriending, fusion of horizons, and translation" are present, across all of them (Johnson 2010, 8). And from here we can look back to what was described just a few paragraphs before. That is, Derrida's idea for general rights but flexible law; the relationship between hospitality law, being case-specific, and people's rights within it that most likely remain universal.

Thinking of hospitality in terms of practicing social justice, on the other hand, becomes problematic when we realise that, from the political angle, this concept has remained unresolved for decades. For some, people's equal right to freedom manifests itself in one's liberty to decide about his or her way of living. Within such an understanding, one

believes in having full responsibility for taking one's own position in the world. For others, this idea of freedom – creating freedom of the market at the end – is simply untrue or even unfair. Giving people freedom, according to the latter individuals, should originate from the state that is supposed to offer equal access to services like health care, education, and social help.[28]

Which of these two aspects of social justice should we consider when referring to hospitality? Is selecting and making divisions the basis for hospitality? Or maybe it is a continuous process of connecting to one another? I believe – just as in the perfect democratic state – hospitality should be able to provide possibilities, and then equally spread them among those who are willing to receive them. As the society alleging social justice, hospitality has to arise from mutual efforts; only in this way does it have the potential to become a common good that relies on shared rights. In order to become so, however, hospitality needs to resist as a practice of free will. A practice in which everyone can take part but that no one is privileged to impose on the other.

Going back to what was said before, the Latin roots of hospitality lie in the meaning of the words *host* and *guest*. And, indeed, the practice of hospitality always involves the labour of both – one that hosts and another who is hosted. Moreover, it is based on the recognition that good is something we can hold in common, and share (at least insofar as we wish it for each other), rather than the idea of good being a matter of self-interest. Thus hospitality is a relation, a bond, and a sort of friendship; finally it is an obligation to one another. Hospitality creates places where people together determine goodness, and where they work together to realise that goodness. Yet places of hospitality do not aim to create personal human relationships per se – they merely provide the possibility for such to occur. This is inverse to our contemporary understanding of friendship, where building a friendship is never preceded by an invitation but happens imperceptibly and forms itself through time that involves getting to know the other. Within hospitality, friendship has the connotation of something public, not private, which means that establishing the relationship always takes place, avowedly. However, although places of hospitality do provide welcome, in case of specific demands, they still give a chance for friendship to arise. So the importance of the welcoming gesture comes with the realisation that actually, the creation of intentional

[28] The state's responsibility for providing general help for its society, thus supporting all the citizens, no matter their financial status, is one of the main claims of Christianity too.

space happens only through the official welcoming, which at the end, also explains how our idea of private friendship, shifts towards something that is owned publicly.

A PLACE WITHOUT AN OWNER

A PLACE THAT DOES NOT EXIST UNTIL TWO PEOPLE (AT LEAST)
MEET AND SHAKE HANDS

A PLACE THAT STARTS LIVING ONCE THEY BOTH BEGIN
TO COMMUNICATE

A NON-PHYSICAL PLACE

(THE MOMENT, THE GESTURE, THE EVENT)
BROUGHT TO LIFE ONCE CERTAIN RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES OCCUR

A PLACE THAT BEFORE
WAS ACTUALLY NEVER THERE
A PLACE THAT USED TO BE A NON-PLACE

THE CREATION OF TIME THAT SHAPES AND BECOMES A PLACE

WHEN IT IS ALREADY THERE
– THE PLACE

P A R T II

Perhaps most important, Conceptualists indicated that the most exciting "art" might still be buried in social energies not yet recognised as art. The process of extending the boundaries didn't stop with Conceptual art: These energies are still out there waiting for artists to plug into them, potential fuel for the expansion of what "art" can mean. The escape was temporary. Art was recaptured and sent out to its white cell, but parole is always a possibility.

Lucy Lippard

Prologue

From the moment when the idea became the medium and often the form of art itself, things changed so that making, communicating, and finally receiving art have never been the same again. Between the 1960's and the 1970's, a small group of young artists made, once and forever, a big step in art history. The joint act of escaping the frame-and-pedestal – an obvious syndrome of art by mid-1960s – evoked an internationally shared desire for art free from the market's commodification (Lippard, viii). One of the most important features of Conceptual art – un-objectness, or un-physicalness – forever designated a new challenge for artists. In 1968, in their shared text "The Dematerialization of Art," John Chandler and Lucy Lippard made the association of Conceptual art with the term dematerialisation for the first time. In this article – published in *Art International* – the authors recognised Conceptual art as "ultra-conceptual art" that emerged "from two directions: art as idea and art as action."[29] Within the approach of "art as idea," artists started using minimal sources to transmit their concerns. "Art as action," on the other hand, focussed more on its own medium – performance, which, inverse to pure entertainment with linear narrative known previously from theatre, proposed to its audience a content-based experience. Within the understanding of "art as action" next to performance art, we also recognise: environment art, happening art, body art, fluxus performance and action poetry.

Problematic in terms of capturing and documenting, Conceptual art was shared and spread directly with, and among, its public, outside of institutional buildings and beyond the boundaries of economics or political play. Because the main attempt of the practice of Conceptual art was to remain understandable – thus as Lippard notes "[c]ommunication (but not community) and distribution (but not accessibility)" – conceptualists claimed that their works have an open-end, free for individual interpretation.[30]

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[29] In order to make a clear distinction between Minimal art, earthworks, and "other grand–scale endeavours, which appeared in the early sixties as abnormally cerebral" Lippard once called Conceptual art "ultra-conceptual" (Lippard, vii).

[30] "The Dematerialization of art object from the 1966 to 1972: […]" was published in 1973. In the editorial footer of the copy I have at home (published in 1997), it says that ever since its first print, the publication has only been renewed in 2001. All this is very confusing, so I still do not know when the preface was written from which I am borrowing Lippard's quote. Anyway, I assume it must have

Unfortunately, such an open approach did not result in a more engaged audience, and ultimately critics called Conceptual art another "movement." Thus Conceptual art, just as any other "tendency" in art history, became a victim of aesthetics after all. Nevertheless, in spite of all contradictory shifts, turns, and struggles back and forth, the works of Conceptual art somehow succeeded in disappearing from the gallery rooms, to finally (de)materialise in different spaces and times. In fact, this escape from object-related art was a direct turn from the previous claims for art's autonomy. Yet, non-object art designated a new way for understanding art as a gift for the public, and obviously criticised the modern approach that saw only commodity in it. From the 1960's onwards, Conceptualists began to create works that offered neither more (nor less) than the *idea* itself. Through their gifts of immaterial nature, the artists finally managed to bestow something upon their audience, not by offering things they could admire and wish to posses, but by giving them a means within which they could operate.

Among numerous artistic practices of today, there seems to be a great continuation of the non-object "art as action" approach, whether it is a performance presented before an audience, or an event based on their participation. However, since it is not my ambition to investigate this approach at large here, I will allow myself to narrow the field according to the specific focus of my research. Through Jacques Derrida, and the concept of the immaterial gift (i.e. hospitality), I wish to propose my own reading of the dematerialised form of art. However, I would like to note that, because my research still seems to me rather experimental, I am not quite sure if it will lead us to new findings by the end. Certainly hospitality is not a new notion in the art realm, but in the contemporary world the discussion around it is rarely associated with concrete examples in art; instead the topic is mainly reduced to the concerns of art's institutions and their daily functioning. On the other hand, I am aware of the fact that we could also view the notion of hospitality in art as stemming from participatory events, known to us as Relational art that emerged in the 1990's and followed onwards.[31] However, I want to avoid the possible problem of aestheticisation of events, which in fact has happened in the case of, for example, Rikrit Tiravanija's work.[32]

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been somewhere between 1997-2001, which makes it already 11 years. Still, it remains an inspiring read so I hope to take her thought a bit further in the following chapter.

[31] Nicolas Bourriaud developed the term "Relational Aesthetics" (otherwise called Relational art) and described it in his book *Esthétique relationnelle* (*Relational Aesthetics,* 1998).

By the same token, already in the 1970's we could recognise certain artistic practices – among others, for example, the Russian group Kollektivneye Deystviya (Collective Actions) – for which the main attempt was to engage and connect with the audience in, and through, the direct experience of one's concept. However, Collective Actions' events always relied on prepared instructions (even rules) according to which the public was asked *to perform* the entire happening. I hope to be able to explain why such an understanding is not applicable in the case of the projects proposed here, although it might still seem somehow closely related.

* * *

In his essay "Art after Philosophy" (1969), Joseph Kosuth wrote, "All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually." Following Kosuth's statement, I allow myself to note that, indeed, within contemporary artistic practices the phenomenon of Conceptual art seems to be the most influential. Despite that, Conceptual art knows no limit and we must only be able to realise how big the space that it opened up is.

On the other hand, in one of his lecture performances, John Cage asks us rhetorically: "What is the nature of art if it reaches the sea?"

And I say, art probably will never reach the bottom, run aground, exhaust, and/or end. With each day, its space becomes wider and richer. Thus Lippards' quote at the beginning of this chapter certainly designates an aim, but it also calls for further re-examination of the already existing potentialities.

[32] The dishes, cutlery, pans, etc. used at Tiravanija's dinner parties, held in numerous galleries and art institutions, ended up being exhibited in galleries afterwards.

Case Study I

On the night of 29th/30th October in 2011, Kipras Dubauskas, a Lithuanian artist living and working in Rotterdam took his video camera and went towards the Lekstraat – a blind alley within the city's harbour area. Precisely on this night (when most of us were already sleeping), in Europe there was a changing of time from summer to winter.[33] *Being fascinated by the idea of gaining one extra hour for the next day, Dubauskas decided to film the entire moment – starting from 3am in Central Europe when the clocks' hands are being shifted back from the number 3 to 2. He set up his equipment and began filming the spot where he stood, alone, in the middle of the night. At that moment nothing really happened at the Lekstraat in Rotterdam, the street was totally empty and no cars or people passed in front of Dubauskas' camera. After one hour spent on documenting this situation the artist packed his bags and went back home...*

Half a year later I received this e-mail:

> 25 March 2012, from 2 am (sharp), at the end of blind alley of Lekstraat (Rotterdam) there will be Daylight Saving Time event and screening of Kipras Dubauskas video *Lost Hour*. We look forward to celebrate the official beginning of summer time with you![34]

Without a doubt, I knew 'I have to join this event.' I did my best to stay awake until I left my home on March 25th at 1:30am. On my way to Lekstraat I met M-S. and Kipras' girlfriend R. We cycled together and chitchatted about our lives. After wandering around a bit, we finally arrived at the right spot; I guess it must have been around

[33] Though the practice of changing time is also present in other countries (North America, Brazil, Chile, and some parts of Australia), it differs from the shifting of time here in Europe. In the aforementioned countries, the change of time happens on different days. In America there is a two-hour shift, and in Western Australia only a half-hour shift.

[34] I met Kipras around March, during one of the first events that I organised in Upominki. Our first conversation was very general, we mostly talked about our past projects and future desires. However, already back then I quickly got the feeling that Kipras' ideas about art and life, might correspond to mine, somewhere.

1:45am. The artist and his brother (whom I hadn't met before) were already there installing a screen and a stand for it.
Soon, I started to feel a bit impatient and cold, but then I lit my cigarette and began observing; Dubauskas' bike (a Dutch bakfiets) on which he brought all the necessary equipment – his bag with a laptop, video and photo cameras, a beamer, an aggregate, wires, and bottles of champagne… (In the meantime another three guests arrived.)
The time was nearly 2am and the most important element – the aggregate – seemed to be not working. At this very last moment, the artist made a crucial decision and decided to leave it as it was, and nervously rushed on with the rest of his plan. He exchanged the beamer standing on a high table for his laptop, placed the computer screen directly in front of the image we were just about to see in the video. He pushed the play button and quickly went to his bags. Then grabbed a bottle of champagne and said something like:
"Thank you all for coming. The reason I have invited you to join this event was to celebrate together the lost hour. I have been interested in the practice of changing time for some time. Now I wanted to share with you my thoughts on this subject, as well as the knowledge I have gained through the course of my research."
He opened a bottle and poured everyone a glass of sparkling wine.
"Happy lost hour", he said.
"Happy lost hour!" the guests repeated.

(The clocks' hands shifted from 2 am to 3 am.)

Dubauskas documented the entire event on 25th March 2012 between 2 and 3 am. The frame that he captured included exactly the same angle of Lekstraat as in the video Lost Hour made on 30.10.2011. A half-year later, in the middle of a cold night in March, at the same spot in Rotterdam, the light, just as the situation, seemed to be the same. Yet now there was also some movement, as if there were more things happening too. And indeed you could even hear voices of people talking…

Conversations I

> Kipras Dubauskas: *There were just few people who I knew in Rotterdam. I liked that event wasn't promoted in main channels of communication and was organised autonomously. That gave* (it a) *more intimate and discreet sense, which will remain in the memories of the participants.*[35]

Through the *Lost Hour* (2011) video piece and the *Daylight Saving Time* (2012) event, Dubauskas speaks about his concerns, and yet his focus here is particular – the changing of time. Being fascinated by the idea of losing and gaining time, when every half a year a man manipulates the clock's hands, Dubauskas invites his audience to a direct confrontation with the problem. By situating people at the exact moment when the time is being changed, he incorporates the subject and the object of his research at once. During the *Daylight Saving Time* event, as a sort of background, Dubauskas' video – *Lost Hour* was played on the spot. Nevertheless, *Lost Hour* presented itself as an "image to be looked at." Because of what it shows – the moment when time is gained – not only does it create the event's frame, but finds itself entirely within this frame as well. The video, then, is a reference to something that once attracted the artist's interest and what, in the end, becomes an inseparable part of the entire happening at present.

Within Dubauskas' video work, the subject of losing and gaining time is explicit, but it is also implied within the *Daylight Saving Time* event too. Although we could agree that, in any participation, the audience either dedicates or loses their time, always. Still, since Dubauskas himself was not very well informed on the Derridian concept of hospitality and the aspect of offering and losing time, I decided to ask him first.[36]

> Dubauskas: *I became fascinated by the idea of certain moments in life when people think they had lost time. I thought about curve of lifetime that could be drawn in various shapes and wouldn't have beginning or end, but it would be speaking about the idea of wholeness, where all elements are equal.*

[35] All quotations written in Conversations I, come from email conversations with Dubauskas, held between April/June 2012.

[36] Asking questions and having e-mail conversations helped me to build a certain relationship with both artists; in the end our dialogue became an important aspect of the entire thinking process.

As I said in the previous chapter, time is obviously a matter of nothing, and still this nothing can be examined as either a gain or a loss. Hospitality is an invitation, a proposition to take part in "something." It is then an offer of time, within which one may gain, but also one may lose. But this simple gesture of one proposing to the other a particular experience becomes a complex issue when we remind ourselves: time as such does not belong to anyone. And even if we tend to think that some people have more time than us, then definitely, this does not mean that they are in any way possessing time. Moreover, taking something that does not really belong to us, and giving it to another person appears to be a matter of an individual's ethics. This is why I wonder, how is it that we still speak of someone offering time, since he/ she does not (nor will) own the time in the end?

There is a sort of unwritten pact, a mutual investment of one's time that comes with the idea of participation, which means that taking part in an event is equal to investing one's own time. On the other hand, the event organiser prepares the event, and so he or she invests his/ her own time too. I wish to ask, what has one gained and what has one lost in the case of Dubauskas' event, when all that we could lose, or gain, was – literally and figuratively – time? We lost one hour of our sleep, indeed, however this would have happened on the same night to every other person living in Europe, North America, Brazil, Chile, and Western_Australia. And if it was so that in preparation for the *Daylight Saving Time* event, the artist lost his time, whereas we, the audience, did not lose a thing, then all we had to lose on that night was *time,* either way.

We agreed on the idea that hospitality is a gift in itself. It is the gift of a place but also the gift of time. And if we follow the track of Derrida, who told us about the host always offering time to his guest, we might conclude: when taking part in the *Daylight Saving Time* event, not only did I not lose what I could lose, but I also have gained what was meant to be lost by me, anyway. Certainly I have been endowed with something. But should we think of hospitality – a gift in itself, one's offer of something we never expected to receive – simply as a tribute to the nineteenth century bohemian slogan ''*l'art pour l'art*''? I believe not, and because the host's time means nothing else but the devotion of his/ her guest, the gift of hospitality then, must be reciprocal. Yet, the host and the guest, both possessing equal power, need this relation between them. Because, in hospitality, there is a constant flow of gifts offered back and forth to each other.

> Dubauskas: *I gave an idea to the audience, a chance to think about things that they might be missing.* [...]

> Dubauskas: *I got positive feedback, which raised more ideas and feeling of confidence between each other.*

Where there is an event, there is hospitality, happening in a place or being a place itself. Because hospitality is a platform, a table, a square, a piece of paper we pass to another person; it is an idea we want to share. Be it physical or not, it is a common ground ideally accessible from all sorts of directions and yet it is a moment created for different approaches to meet. Nevertheless, one should be aware that hospitality offers "only" a possibility to exchange any particular concerns. At the same time, it always enables the establishment of common conditions within which we can operate. The fact that hospitality is *only* or more than *enough* – *the possibility*, proves that no matter how strict and fixed the boundaries of the event are, still, one's freedom, lies at the bottom of his or her own memories and things that are carried out from it. Hospitality then, is offering us a place to meet. Yet this place is not created at the very moment of one meeting the other, but it *becomes one*, just when they might be saying: 'see you next time'.

> Dubauskas: *I chose to capture particular time in a non-particular place and within the organised event, time suddenly changed positions – place (event) became active part, and captured hour became passive part – like memories which all are part of this wholeness, but which you don't remember, because they lack specific evidence. I guess Moondog was thinking about it in his song – Each Today is Yesterday's Tomorrow, which is now.*

Case Study II

Most of us remember our own parents asking us to eat in silence. I myself perfectly understand this situation now, when every evening I have to correct my three-year-old son, so he will stop talking and finally start eating. But since we are not told from an early age that family and friends' table gatherings are one of the most important social engagements that we can experience, every now and then it is a struggle. Across different cultures, the ritual of a shared meal carries the same importance, and in fact is the most recognisable daily tradition. Moreover, we know from the Bible that sharing food is a token of friendship, because to offer someone food is a way of protecting the traveller. Whereas receiving such hospitality means honouring and refraining from any hostile action that could be imposed on the host.

Feasts, celebrations, business or political meetings, charity meals, or casual home dinners during which we make a summary of the day: these moments are rooted in our cultures – either religious or atheist – and all shape our social lives. Speaking of the social, isn't it silence that forms the awkward moment that invades a conversation, an unpleasant interruption that speakers always try to avoid by pouring a sea of words on one another? Further, if a shared meal and a conversation that accompanies it are both at the core of having dinners (and other meals) together, then why does one have to eat in silence?

Table gatherings and the social engagements that literally (and as a figure of speech) are happening around them, in the last few decades, have been a fascinating medium for many artists across the globe. Initiated by emerging or prominent artist figures, organised in private houses, public domains or even well established art institutions – all arriving from an endless desire to connect art with life. Since 2006, Australian artist Honi Ryan has been hosting dinner parties in private houses across many different countries. Finally, the *Silent Dinner Party* project also became the case study for her academic dissertation, written in 2007. Years ago back when Ryan studied art in Germany, due to the language limitations, for her, many wining and dining moments meant sitting in silence. Being never fully present in the conversations happening among her dinner companions, and also away from her regular friends and not able to speak to them, made her wonder about the hostility of such experiences. And so the idea to organise dinners, during which the guests would not be allowed to

communicate with each other in a verbal manner, came directly from the artist's personal experience.

> *"Silent Dinner Parties have been held across 5 countries and 7 cities since late 2006. They have been hosted as festival events, for radio, as social sculptures and private performances. Each SDP is a unique experience, but one thing seems to be consistent – they are always a grand silent giggle. People usually communicate and the dinners rarely feel particularly quiet."*[37]

Honi Ryan's dinners are like any other dinner parties; held in private homes with food and wine being served. And perhaps there would be nothing more or less ambiguous about her dinners and the dinners most of us regularly attend, beside the artist's four simple requests, which make the event outstanding:

1) Please do not use words or voice.
2) Please don't read or write.
3) Try to make as little noise as possible.
4) Stay with it for at least two hours.[38]

> *"It [Silent Dinner Party] challenges the routines and rituals embedded in sociability and domestic space, at least in Western culture. It shuffles social hierarchies as 'the gift of the gab' no longer gives you social standing as it so often does. Silent Dinner Parties propel you into the moment, into a silent surrender that whatever you feel, is."*[39]

Certainly her concept twists and shakes a very common situation that most of us are able to recognise as a daily routine. And although the moment of silence occurring at the table should not be rare, in *Silent Dinner Parties* the phenomenon of silence, as Ryan says, "is more about having no words as means of communication."[40]

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[37] From http://silentdinnerparty.com [website entered 10.06.2012].

[38] ibid.

[39] Honi Ryan quoted from Danika Houghton, *In the pursuit of silence*. Published on 30, 2010 http://www.reportageonline.com/2010/10/in-the-pursuit-of-silence/ [website entered 12.06.2012].

Nonetheless, since some of us have difficulties keeping our mouths shut and not talking for a while, it is interesting to realise how these kinds of moments may simply function as exercises for self-discipline as well. While the artist explains her events as an experiment in social behaviour, a social interaction in a certain environment where one element is missing from what would otherwise be considered normal, I claim them to be an attempt for establishing a new social encounter. Yet, some people have their way with words; others may suffer from them. This gives a thought: *Silent Dinner Party* brings a shift within the social hierarchy, and helps everyone become equal. I wonder, then, could dinners held in silence serve as always-peaceful gatherings? And, if so, could they restrain a negative atmosphere, and thus be an alternative to all these situations when different statements are being confronted?

In Ryan's set up, there is no place for language as such, yet this makes her guests think about other possibilities of communication. Establishing a common language (in this case, a common way for communicating) is one of the first agreements within the conditional hospitality event. Following the same thought, maybe silence then is the unspoken language, which should be practiced at every hospitality event?

> *"One girl toward the end of the night told Ryan that she is usually a very shy person, and often times in big groups, she feels like an outsider. However at the silent dinner party, she said she was able to be herself and she felt like she belonged. To her, the silent dinner party experience gave her the chance to shine."*[41]

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[40] Honi Ryan quoted in Nadine Elali, *What is a silent dinner party? Honi Ryan teaches Beirut how to eat in a silence.* Published on January 20, 2012 http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=354914 [website entered 12.06.2012].

[41] Nadine Elali, *What is a silent dinner party? Honi Ryan teaches Beirut how to eat in a silence.*

Conversations II

Dear Honi,

I'm very much impressed by your Silent Dinner Party project. This is why I would love to host one of your dinners here in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Do you think it is possible to organise one outside of a private house while still keeping with its informal nature, (I have here in mind a particular location: a non-profit artist run space, which I will be opening soon)?

Looking forward to hear your opinion. Please don't hesitate to ask questions considering my proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Weronika Zielinska[42]

[42] From my email to Ryan, sent on April 10, 2012 11:29:07PM.

Hi Weronika,

[…] It's a good question, as the space that you hold the dinner party in is crucial to the overall event. The SDPs draw directly on the routines and rituals set in domestic space as the expanded arena for the work. They then play on social protocols within it and the space between people becomes the medium of the work. Private houses are by far the best place to host as they are the native place for the actions and allow the participative guests to be as close to the an idea of their 'normality' as possible. Without re-contextualising too many other things, you hold a stronger focus on communication and sound.

[…]

Let me know how you go with it.

Cheers

Honi Ryan[43]

[43] From Ryan's email, received on April 11, 2012 2:22:10PM.

Dear Honi,

Thank you for your e-mail, I also appreciate that you took time to look at my work.

I realised that my particular interest towards your Silent Dinner Party project came more from the subject's problematic site, and in the end I was looking at it form the perspective of an event as such, rather than wondering about the physical space where it actually takes place. However I may just contradict my own words - since indeed we are not used to not *speaking at dinners when gathered around a shared table, especially the one at our own home.*

What fascinates me in your project still, is the way that such an event gains its meaning afterwards. When it becomes a subject which is to be discussed either with those who, as you, took part in it, or heard about it for the first time. So, how can its duration be extended and how does it start to exist beyond its factual presence. […]

All the best, Weronika[44]

[44] From my email to Ryan, sent on April 17, 2012 11:31:21PM.

Hi Weronika,

Yes the aftermath is a pertinent part of the work. What it creates critically, discursively and all it's cognitive ripples are a fascinating element. All stages of these performances excite me. From first encounter with the concept, people project themselves into the experience, and even if they choose not to come, they have been a living embodiment of the piece. One of the things I like about it the most is that while it holds a strong standpoint in critical discourse, it is also accessible to everyone whose ever eaten a meal, and the appreciation and understanding of the work is therefore multi faceted and disperse.

I'm glad you want to hold one in your house. I encourage everyone to do so and am really glad you've contacted to be in touch about it. I plan to tour the Silent Dinners later this year, and have a couple of European destinations, so perhaps if you can wait until then, I could come to your Silent Dinner, or we could collaborate and host one together?

Either way let's stay in touch.

Cheers

Honi Ryan[45]

[45] From Ryan's email received on April 30, 2012 6:18:20AM.

What has happened here?

According to Boris Groys, in our digital era, artists' approaches may no longer seem to be exclusive (Groys 2010, 15). Because nowadays everyone not only produces images on a daily basis, but also constantly exposes them to the pubic gathered around the Internet, Groys proposes for us to focus on art's potentiality: the poetic meaning within a particular artwork, and the reasons for its occurrence as such. As he notes in *Poetics vs. Aesthetics* (2010), the artist wondering about *how to make a work*, quickly meets the potential danger for his art to gain a function as a "political advertisement." In effect, such artistic expression does not connect with things that bother contemporary society; instead, it illustrates certain political issues. And, although the content of such work might be "attractive and appealing," at the end it is only being judged through one's aesthetic taste (Groys 2010, 12). Thinking of creativity as a special realm reserved solely for artists, on the other hand, no longer appears satisfying either. Moreover, we do agree with Joseph Beuys' slogan: "Everyone is an Artist." However, a quick realisation here is necessary too, and since his utopian message has made obsolete its own meaning entirely, this has become now a dystopic statement, or even, as Groys calls it, "a complete nightmare" (Groys, 2010, 104).[46]

The modern audience's prominent position in a work of art was an anticipated matter; i.e., his or her role was to give an aesthetic judgment. Today the public's participation is the most remarkable reaction towards the state of the art. This escape from the strict division of the maker and the receiver inevitably relinquished authorship, and marked the moment of the author's death.[47] Within the practice of contemporary art the

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[46] Several times Beuys repeated this statement. Here he speaks about the idea on the occasion of his exhibition *Plight* in 1986**.** Found on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IokboM4wqIw [website entered 7.06.2012].

* Beuys did not mean to suggest that all people should or could be creators of traditional art works, rather that everyone should be able to apply creative thinking in their own areas of specialisation. And since he imagined that an expanded application of human creativity—and the broader definition of "art" that would follow—would result in something he called "social sculpture," for Beuys the term encompassed many things. It was a conscious act of shaping, of bringing some aspect of the environment—whether the political system, the economy, or a classroom—from a chaotic state into a state of form, or structure.

Beuys' maxim has quickly become recognised as a Romantic, utopian statement. Whereas the idea of social sculpture that could only be accomplished cooperatively, creatively, and across disciplines – nowadays a uniform practice in art education – inevitably began to be nothing other than a continuation of the avant-garde tradition.

passive onlooker becomes challenged through the direct involvement of his or her person in the work development itself. And whereas such an art practice rejects the "unconditional offering" of *something* to *someone,* it also becomes strongly dependent on one another.[48] In the end it is a creation of certain conditions that are being proposed, accepted, and hopefully reciprocated.[49]

In the case studies I have presented, we recognise a certain crux. On the one hand, within both the *Daylight Saving Time* and *Silent Dinner Party* events, the artists do appear as the makers whereas the participants somehow manage to remain the audience. On the other, the artists propose *only* a meeting focussed around a specific subject of their interest; they do need collaborators in order to make their events happen. Moreover, because the events' real discursive space exists only within the time in which they occur, they are therefore limited by their own duration. This means that here the commitment of both - the audience and the artist - must be exposed from the very beginning. An interesting aspect comes to mind when I think of Ryan's words: "Any encounter with the concept is, for me, a living part of the work. From people initially projecting themselves into what the event would be like and choosing whether to come or not, […]". Maybe Ryan's claim about not

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[47] Roland Barthes, in his 1967 essay, "The Death of the Author," argued against the classical way of reading and criticism that relies on aspects of the author's identity — his political views, historical context, religion, ethnicity, psychology, or other biographical or personal attributes — to distill meaning from the author's work. In this type of criticism, the experiences and biases of the author are served as a definitive "explanation" of the text. He claimed that writing and creator are unrelated, whereas the reading, which is always involving the other, should happen independently too. In this sense the author is only the producer who delivers the text for his public and has no control over how his work is being interpreted. By coining the term, death of the author, Barthes denied the overwhelming position of the writer and the inviolability of his work.

[48] In her dissertation *Participation and Collaboration in Contemporary Art. A Game Without Borders Between Art and 'Real' Life* (2009), Eva Fotiadi notes: "participatory is a framed activity within which other people (than the initiating agency) are activated, [...] it indicates a framing format, as well as the precondition of some hierarchy of authorship." In her writing Fotiadi makes a clear division between the terms *participatory* and *collaboration*. For her, participatory is aligned with the processes of democracy and representation (she links it with questions gathered around "art being collectively authored"). Collaboration, on the other hand, has obvious connotations of labour and production and is linked with concerns of economy, "when art is being produced collectively" (Fotiadi, 29).

[49] Here I am referring back again to Mauss' "Gift" that became extremely influential for the modern artists who started to claim their works to be the gifts offered to their public. In particular, Mauss' description of the "potlatch" became a key reference in the refashioning of the artistic practice in the second half of the 20th century, when some contemporary art movements started to redefine artistic practice from the production of artistic objects to the mediation of situations of social encounter and exchange. In most of these cases, Mauss' arguments were used to criticise capitalism, the market economy and commodification in ways more radical, and perhaps simplistic, than Mauss himself would have done.

joining the event being almost equal with the fact of one's participation in it is, in this case, extremely relevant, as is the problem of authorship.

Certainly, Dubauskas' and Ryan's projects both have a purpose; however, neither follow a strict line, nor contain clear content. What happens during them is unknown because here everything depends on people's behaviour and their attitude towards a specific shared concern. In *Daylight Saving Time* and *Silent Dinner Party* the subject is the only thing given directly. And yes, it is true, that although Honi Ryan offers dinners to her guests, the fact that they are served in silence – indeed the event's main feature – is inseparable. Otherwise, they would remain as gifts in the form of a meal, which at the end they are not. Thus it is the ideas that occur on the occasion of these events – the things that are picked up and carried further – that are the content of Dubauskas' and Ryan's projects. Obviously, people have been consuming meals throughout their entire lives, and they have been dealing with time as well, and still, there seems to be a certain unspoken tension in both Dubauskas' and Ryan's projects, which becomes activated once the invited people find themselves within the situation that is set up. And, I wonder, what is it?

Title: DSC 0060
Type: JPEG
Created: 25 March 2012 03:37
Album: Camera
Location: Unknown

Imagine the following scène: you are trying to build a bridge over rather a tumultuous river. Let's say that one bank of this river is the "social" and the other, far away, inaccessible separated by violent current, by many eddies and dangerous rapids, is the "natural". Now suppose that, instead of trying to cross this river and build this bridge, you decide instead to go with the flow, that is, to get involved in a bit of canoeing, kayaking and rafting. Then the absence of a bridge is not such a problem. What counts is your ability to equip yourself with the right paraphernalia so that you can go down the river without drowning yourself. You might be scared going into the turbulent river, you might regret the task of bridge building, but you will probably agree that the two riverbanks are bound to look rather different once you apprehend both of them from the point of view from such a kayaking movement forward. This flowing lateral direction, turned at 90° from the obsessive question of bridge building, is, if I am not mistaken, what William James has called "pure experience".

Bruno Latour

CONCLUSION

The expectations from a hospitality event are rather clear. We mainly associate it with a friendly and cosy environment: a talkative person who offers a place with a roof, central heating (or at least a blanket), something to eat and something to drink. Perhaps one wonders, then, how can a cold night bike ride, or dinner with a group of strangers, conducted entirely in silence, then be considered hospitable environments? And since Dubauskas' and Ryan's projects more likely appear as rather inhospitable, one may also ask: where is the hospitality, or, what is hospitable about (and within) *Daylight Saving Time* and *Silent Dinner Party*?

But let us first put some things straight here. Did anyone ever say that friendship (or love) does not hurt? Or that this journey with which we proceed, every single day, will never demand compromise? Well, I guess this is part of the deal that we signed: the contract titled *Life*. And yes, Dubauskas' and Ryan's events are full of dedications coming from both sides too. Yet, only due to those are we able to recognise the true idea that is hidden beneath. Moreover, one should be able to value hospitality events on the basis of what they may bring, what sort of possibilities they shape. Not on the basis of what they offer at the very moment; thus, not how hospitality is being presented, but what it represents.

Once in a while, one might have the thought, 'fascinating, this has never happened to me before.' Cliché or not, there are indeed still many things to be discovered, many ways to walk, hills to climb and waters to cross. And instead of wondering if there is something left, waiting to be explored, we should rather consider the question: 'will we have enough time in our life to do all of that?'

Dubauskas and Ryan each propose to their audience a participatory experience that is both ordinary and one of a kind. On the one hand, what is so special about gathering at an afore-announced spot, *even if* it happens in the middle of a cold night? Or what makes a shared three-course meal outstanding, *even if* the meal in question is held in silence? However, one should be aware, it is not without reason that Dubauskas wants people to cycle in the cold dark night to the unknown, while Ryan requests her guests to remain at the table in complete silence. Yet, the *even ifs* proposed by the artists here finally de-familiarise, de-contextualise, and de-construct – what we recognise from our daily practices. And I wonder,

within this endless struggle: where is life? And where is art? Are Dubauskas' and Ryan's projects failing or succeeding in this discussion?

I cannot think of one single thing that puzzled me when taking part in *Daylight Saving Time*, or after, and even just now when writing these words. Actually, I can only remember being excited by the idea of going somewhere that late, to a place that on a clear day I would consider simply as nowhere. I guess I saw it as a sort of adventure, and indeed such it was. Not to disappoint you, my dear reader, but today I am still thinking about it, only in superlatives. Why? To me, Dubauskas' role as a creator was more or less finished somewhere in-between the time when I received his invite and the moment that he opened the bottle of champagne. And so, at most, I appreciate the fact that there was no space for speculation or play. While the gathering derived from a single proposition, it reached its own importance only through the determination of all of its participants. This eventually gave me a hope of some sort which I cannot deny.

In one of our conversations Honi Ryan said: "I aim to create an environment conductive to experiences outside of the throws of everyday life that provoke reflection on our daily routines and habitual behaviours." Her statement made me wonder, how come Ryan almost never really speaks about the meaning of the silence that she proposes? That is, the value of the experience of being in a group that decides to remain in silence. And, whereas she *does* speak about her dinners as being an experiment about social interaction in a certain environment, a test of social behaviour, she does not touch upon the opposite aspect of it, i.e. the idea that silence might be a generator for new encounters.[50] This is why, although Ryan speaks deliberately about her dinners making guests equal, it is not exactly clear to me whether she favours the phenomenon of silence per se or not. Moreover, the complexity of silence, being the core aspect of *Silent Dinner Party*, does not appear entirely explored either. On the other hand, maybe there is nothing else to be said; yet we do know already, that there is no such thing as silence.

[50] While silence is already an interesting issue within the idea of knowledge production, I believe we could find also other social values within it.

> "There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot. Sounds occur whether intended or not; the psychological turning in direction of those not intended seems at first to be a giving up of everything that belongs to humanity. But one must see that humanity and nature, not separate, are in this world together, that nothing was lost when everything was given away."[51]

Cage's quote, and especially his last words "nothing was lost when everything was given away" made me want to come back to the last paragraph on page 20. There I write: "Genuine hospitality exists without a previous scenario; where everything can happen, anything can also be taken away." In the course of my writing, we established that unconditional hospitality, not regulated by any law, does not exist. And, most probably, one could connect these threads as follows: Maybe these examples of art somehow indeed do go beyond the idea of a giver and a receiver. Yet when you do not lose, you do not give, or, when you do not receive you are not actually being bestowed upon. Thus, Dubauskas' and Ryan's projects perhaps should not be exemplified through the simple gestures of offering or losing, enriching or bestowing. Coming to this point, I need to turn to page 23 where I speak about the unrecognisable gift – *time*, i.e. a matter that is impossible to give or to receive, which eventually undoes the distinction between giving and receiving too.

Thinking of Bruno Latour's quote that I used as an epigraph for this conclusion: ages back, constructing bridges became the solution for efficient transport of goods and citizens. Ever since, the distances between the two opposite banks along one river are somehow shortened. And as long as this architectural discovery was, and is, irreplaceable in many life situations, it is worth noting. There are still many people in the world suffering from not having access to a bridge near their home, or the possibility to build one in the future. Nevertheless, Latour does not deny the importance of a bridge as such; rather he proposes a different way of getting to the same place. In his short publication consisting of two lectures under the shared title "What is the style of matters of concern? Two lectures in empirical philosophy." (2008), Latour calls back on the problem that arose throughout modern philosophy of the seventieth- and eighteenth- century, i.e. the idea of bifurcated nature.[52] According to him, sciences presenting rigid facts that leave no space for questions

[51] John Cage, *Lectures and Writings by John Cage* | *Silence*, p. 8.

and experiments, should no longer serve individually on the way to our better understanding of the world. Thus primary qualities (matters of fact), and secondary qualities (empirical – matters of concern) should not be separated anymore, but forever explored together. He writes, "I believe it is the responsibility of Europeans to refuse to live in the ruins of the modernist scenography and to have the courage, once again, to put their skills to work in devising for matters of concern a style that does justice to what is given in experience."[53] I read the bridge in Latour's writing as a beautiful metaphor, at once being an obstacle that stops us from taking an effort, and simultaneously calling for a reunion and fusion. Again, perhaps it is a matter of finding a balancing point in between the advantages and disadvantages of certain practices.

Dubauskas and Ryan both invite their public onto a boat. They ask them to help with the rowing. In this way, they all share the same effort – reaching the other side. However, they do not provide the volunteers with any specific instructions; instead they trust their skills and abilities to work together and improvise. On the dinghies there is not much space to move, though every person is seated and may enjoy the view. The unpredictable weather sometimes creates short showers, while at other times the sun gently glows. A pleasant breeze can be felt too. The observer on the coast sees the boat from afar. And although he might not wait until the rowers arrive on the other riverbank, he knows that this can happen at any moment.

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[52] The bifurcation of nature into a physical and a mental domain, quickly extended beyond appearances and reality to bifurcations of bodies and minds, matter and spirit, efficient and final causes, and even the relation of God and the world. Alfred North Whitehead, and his follower Maurice Merleau-Ponty, both played an important role in the discussion that penetrated into the twentieth century.

[53] Latour, p.51

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