

**WHEN ART
BECOMES
POLITICAL,**

CAN

WENDY NOUSE

IT STILL

BE ART?

(PROPAGANDA)

INTRODUCTION

Drastic changes are currently taking place within our societies, changing from a democratic to a capitalistic society, the pressure of being watched, judged and suppressed. Knowledge seems no longer the foundation of our thoughts, but rather discrimination and fear are clearly the motivation for moving ourselves within the states that we live in.

Living in France changed my perspective. The war with the IS, the realistic fear of dying or being suppressed by government's ideas makes you lose yourself in love, for yourself and others. 'Liberté,' 'égalité' et 'fraternité,' is still the ground, where people move on.

Being raised in the ideology of 'Act normal, then you're already crazy enough'. Donating to charities to clear my mind gives me the feeling of being active in society. It seemed useless for me to even bother thinking about problems that I can't change anyway. I am from a generation that does not get confronted with borders in Europe. Everyone can vote who is over 18 years old. Women act as superhero's, even feminism is not on the table anymore. Colour and gender should not be a problem and nobody needs to die of hunger. Most importantly we have not seen any kind of war since WW2.

Poverty is coming back, racism is a daily practice and happy families do not seem to exist. The fact is we are at war, we just do not care about it. Enterprises have the biggest call. Schools are being too expansive. Work is exhausting, you do not earn more than you get by social care. No privacy, is the safest form of living and old people need to find their own care takers. Retirement is only for the rich. People only follow the loudest voices. Information that is objective gets lost within the platform of media. Being bored and having no passion is the new form of living, with anti-depressants in our pockets.

Museums became like tombs for contemporary art that we can reflect on as a passed event. Art is only for the hopeful dreams of abstract images that nobody truly understands. They only exist for their aesthetics, even when they are ugly.

Not even trying to critic society or to make people feel inspired and empowered, by making them think and position themselves.

This raises the question how can I, as an artist, can play a role in society? How did others approach these topics? How can I position myself to make art for people? Starting my research, I encountered the situation, that the subject becomes too big and even ends within a black hole question; When does art becomes art? And when is it political or social?

Art and politics seem like they would be opposites, politics addresses itself to the daily truth and the art refers to the possibility of dreams despite these worlds constantly working close with each other. Dispatching the fact that art can be just art.

One of the factors is the finance system (art can't be made without money) which is mostly funded by governments or private institutions with, most of the time, a hidden agenda. Also within the political art, you have the pure essence of creating image for motivating change or even empowering revolution, so called the activism art, ends being form of activism that considered as a piece of art. On the other hand, you have the commercialised political art. Artists who use the strong sense of activism only in order to make money from it. Nobody will be honest about their agendas within the art. As a focus point, I started searching the zone between the above opposites to find my own understanding and position as an artist. During this research I also will guide you through the terms below by giving examples of good and bad political art.

The main terms; Propaganda, art and symbols, (Republique) PROVO, post propaganda and cultural change.

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WHEN DOES IT BECOME ART?

In this chapter, I focus on the main misunderstandings within the arts. What makes you an artist? What is an art piece? And why these specific ideas about art are confusing for society for the ones that are not educated or connected to art. This is based on the information that I received by this group of people who referred a lot to this misconception and that do not understand and see the importance of art.

‘Everyone is an artist’

For me it is a statement with a base of truth, I think the French made a nice change to the meaning of understanding this idea. ‘Artisan’ - A person/company that is truly passionate about creating their product. They are a true artist in creating their service, so well that you can enjoy the service fully as that you can enjoy an art piece. So yes, anyone who is passionate can be an artist.

In the form that we talk about creating art, we need to change this definition. If you take a picture, you are not a photographer. Do you need to be educated to call yourself an artist? Yes. But this does not mean by a degree. We are talking about a sense of creating an image that can challenge you to understand, experience and question yourself or society, as well as emotionally and on intellectual levels. This can be in many different ways and even within the recognition or in abstract forms.

‘Art is there to create dreams and hopes.’ - According to Alain de Botton. To show pretty and nice things to normalise the pain. Showing the pain, as a part of the human condition rehabilitates us. Simply said the art we love is the one that balances our emotions, the things we miss in our life.

For example; Within the media the world is glamourized and gives importance to our social status, a dream, that is almost impossible to achieve. Propaganda that has been shown to us by the government is a visualisation of their hopes. This is different in art, that glamourizes daily situations and objects in highlighted form, things that are worth appreciating and we all experience ‘on daily basis’, that is why art just wants to create a platform in a noisy, distracted and lonely world.

‘L’art pour L’art’

A French slogan created by Immanuel Kant in the nineteenth century, which refers to the meaning that art pieces can support themselves by being autonomous and have no moral, didactic or utilitarian function. The artist is no longer obligated to create a piece rather than making the piece. Its only purpose can be the creation of beauty. The only qualification of the work is formalistic, such as the technical aspects. Contemporary art should be not bound by language or borders; it should create a universal understanding, even though the creation is connected to the location, belief and society that it is created in.

Within the political theory of Rousseau, this becomes a problem for society. By only of purifying the morals, it will lead to the destructive influence of civilisations. The discourse of origins and foundations, by state of nature - empathy of others, it will only create a self-love. A vanity of losing sight of our own sensations, instead of intriguing the provocative thinker. This is what we experience daily, art is boring, lazy and too complicated to understand or activate.

Contemporary art has always been made up of good and bad art. During the time, we forget the bad ones and celebrate the good ones. That’s why a work should be timeless and eternal. The social function, work aesthetics, relation to culture and history, purpose, the motivations and position, embody a rigorous engagement in the piece. In a culture that both produces and consumes. To change a life completely, transported to another level. That’s why, I believe, *art should wake you up and motivate change.*

POLITICS. ART & PROPAGANDA?

At first, we need to understand how it works and how it is possible to spread ideas and interfere within the current politics (appendix 11). Even in Greek times, the people already would use theaters, festivals and other creative acts in order to discuss and persuade, to create change within the local society.

They figured out, it can be used to tell you something, to make you think, influence the current opinion, but therefore it does not need to be true or even realistic. In this chapter, I am focusing on understanding what is propaganda? How to use it? To explain this, I am referring to different examples through history.

- Oxford dictionary definition of politics:

‘The activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power.’

- Oxford dictionary definition of art:

‘The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.’

- Oxford dictionary definition of propaganda:

‘Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view. The dissemination of propaganda as a political strategy’

Governments, royals, nobles, institutions, opposites and cultural resistance used this to assign artists to create the symbols for their ideas and powers, gave value to the work and by that influence the current thoughts about the politics. Showing their power, to activate or even dominate. Currently everyone is using internet to propagate, to convince one another of their idea, some of them even threatening a nation or society, this leads to censorship. This is not only used in dictatorships, but also by democratic governments, everything that would be considered good for the national cause is being accepted, with censorship being placed, to not raise hate. The knowledge of understanding of the definition; what is politics? Becomes more important to understand.

“While politics is the action of changing things in society, in art there are many artists working with images from the media and from politics, but not interested in the consequences of their work.” - Tania Bruguera

To make a difference within public minds, it is all about exploiting symbols. Behind all interventions in the street lies the work of creative minds. The only difference is that one is financed by corporations primarily aimed at selling. This is allowed by and payed for the government, placed and controlled by the government in order to create a feeling or enhance the attraction to a public situation. An institution who gives power to the commissions in order to place public art, to support and propagate their ideas.

Communication techniques

Propaganda can be enhanced by three principals. The first is logical fallacies. These are faults in argumentation aimed at persuading individual. This considers a message that makes you think about propaganda to create a doubt, even a lie. It is mostly not in a factual way presented but it gives you the freedom to combine multiple lines of reasoning about subjects that are difficult to back up with facts and shown in slogans, in a folksy way, testimonials or by using a participator/believer to make the idea more believable, mostly based on communicating strategies.

The second principal; persuasion or central fallacies, the receiver has the opportunity to consider it. Mostly used within health commercials and focuses on the emotion of fear. You can consider the message but the receiver does not need to think about it. It is more emotional, with almost no text. (Within this principle, you can place subliminal messaging, the interference of image showing within 1\300 of a second. It has been proven that it does not work in the way to make it useful to persuade.) Only reaction to it is emotional but it makes too little impact because it is too quick. The third is to use the idea of the bandwagon, simply put a band on a cart and find drunk people to follow you into an idea. A good easy commercialised example of these fallacies is the song of KIDS UNITED - 'On Écrit Sur Les Murs' - 2015 (appendix 2). Children with innocent faces singing about writing on the walls that you would love to say.

Placing the message

A location is defined by multiple principles; such as time and movement which are directly connected to the body and the (psychological) knowledge of a space/location, this understanding is found mostly in storytelling and mythologies, created by natural events or manmade situations and are very important within understanding the so called "spirit of a place", the knowledge of observing and understanding the use of a place is important in creating an intervention within that location, keeping in mind the history, present and even placing this in future perspectives. To understand if the location is a symbol or a field of care, that have a very specific meaning in our conditioned minds.

Symbols and fields of care, who are the foundation of recognition in understanding the genius loci. Placing an interference in both locations, will determine and perhaps even alternate the ghost of the place. It has been known that people have been using these places for creating their voice within time and creating the motivation of support by locating it in public space. It is important to realise, that nothing is placed or built without thought. Considered and constructed to build an experience from the spirit of that location. In history, for example, the Romans decided to construct holy places on every ground touched by the gods (Thunderstorms, etc) to keep the energy of this location alive. This created a landscape full of symbols, that we can even appreciate today.

On écrit sur les murs le nom de ceux qu'on aime Des messages pour les jours à venir On écrit sur les murs à l'encre de nos veines On dessine tout c'que l'on voudrait dire Partout, autour de nous Y a des signes d'espoir dans les regards Donnons leur écrits Car dans la nuit Tout s'efface Même leurs traces On écrit sur les murs le nom de ceux qu'on aime Des messages pour les jours à venir On écrit sur les murs à l'encre de nos veines On dessine tout c'que l'on voudrait dire On écrit sur les murs la force de nos rêves Nos espoirs, en forme de graffitis On écrit sur les murs pour que l'amour se lève Un beau jour, sur le monde endormi Des mots, seulement gravés Pour ne pas oublier, pour tout changer Mélangeons demain, dans un refrain Nos visages Métissage On écrit sur les murs le nom de ceux qu'on aime Des messages pour les jours à venir On écrit sur les murs à l'encre de nos veines On dessine tout c'que l'on voudrait dire On écrit sur les murs la force de nos rêves Nos espoirs, en forme de graffitis On écrit sur les murs pour que l'amour se lève Un beau jour, sur le monde endormi On écrit sur les murs le nom de ceux qu'on aime Des messages, pour les jours à venir On écrit sur les murs à l'encre de nos veines On dessine, tout c'que l'on voudrait dire On écrit sur les murs le nom de ceux qu'on aime Des messages, pour les jours à venir On écrit sur les murs à l'encre de nos veines On dessine, tout c'que l'on voudrait dire On écrit sur les murs la force de nos rêves Nos espoirs, en forme de graffitis On écrit sur les murs pour que l'amour se lève Un beau jour, sur le monde endormi Un beau jour, sur le monde endormi	The names of those we love are written on the walls Messages for the coming days We write on the walls in ink of our veins We draw everything that we would like to say Everywhere, around us There are signs of hope in the eyes Let us give their writings Because in the night Everything disappears Even their traces The names of those we love are written on the walls Messages for the coming days We write on the walls in ink of our veins We draw everything that we would like to say We write on the walls the strength of our dreams Our hopes, in the form of graffiti We write on the walls so that love rises One fine day, on the sleeping world Words, only engraved Not to forget, to change everything Let's mix tomorrow, in a chorus Our faces Mixed The names of those we love are written on the walls Messages for the coming days We write on the walls in ink of our veins We draw everything that we would like to say We write on the walls the strength of our dreams Our hopes, in the form of graffiti We write on the walls so that love rises One fine day, on the sleeping world The names of those we love are written on the walls Messages for the coming days We write on the walls in ink of our veins We draw, everything that we would like to say The names of those we love are written on the walls Messages for the coming days We write on the walls in ink of our veins We draw, everything that we would like to say We write on the walls the strength of our dreams Our hopes, in the form of graffiti We write on the walls so that love rises One fine day, on the sleeping world One fine day, on the sleeping world
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The Intervention

As an artist, we get trained in realising the importance of an act even though most interventions are only of short existence. Public art is known for resting in a location for a long time, most of the time created by the wealthy or governments, to show their influence, agenda's and even their power.

Since the nineteenth century it has not been very common to create new public art as it used to be. Most public art is monumental, to remember the fallen, to celebrate our heroes (people of importance) and to give honour to our victories as a nation. This used to be the way to influence the thought of the people, to propagate, as we now daily experience on TV. Within the recent (last 300 years) revolutions, we see that the importance of these old symbols, they alternated from they're meaning in order to create a new message.

To advance the cause

To persuade the public opinion, to gain the support of the people. Advertisement, the music industry and even some modern art are still working with this technique. The art that is interfering within politics does not need the money to build something big. The autonomous artist/activist who is using these platforms to create their own free way of speaking. The true act of passionate artists is considered vandalism or activism. All these groups (artists, companies and governments) have a very clear idea of what art their position is within public space. To use it and abuse it for their own imagination, in the form of propaganda. Like pamphlets, newspapers, posters, music. Also in alternating the currant symbols, by vandalising the art forms, re-using the visual images, addressing the national colours or using our heroes, a famous/important person that becomes a symbol showing their ideas. Persuading to activate or follow, to strengthen their position. To make it possible *that art can wake up people* again. To show a message from history, that believed in something, a change, a better future, a lost promise. Instead of just having it, they are alternating and supporting the idea that was placed and *activates people to think*.

CENSURE.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ART & SYMBOLS

In order to see the importance of different political artworks and decide rather they are good or bad, we need to go back in time to understand when propaganda got to its strongest influence. By activating the people, by giving them her power of influence and what this resulted in and how this is currently approached by governments in order to control the activation of the people.

'The art of creation is at first and foremost the act of destruction'. - Picasso.



Appendix 3 - Eugene Delacroix - 'La Liberté guidance le peuple' - 1830

The French revolution started years before the real hunger became the problem. Being the only taxed group within France, the people were abused, used and played around with by the royals, nobles and even the religions. It was one of the first uprisings that progressed quickly within Europe to other cities and countries.

During the first uprising, it was mainly about showing their complaints, their dissatisfactions and need for bread. The Bourgeoisie ignored the situation and because of this, they started to organise themselves. Slowly with the assigned paintings, made for the art intellectuals, to change the message within the work, it changed their experience and it even became a threat for them. These messages were shown small in the beginning, but became bigger during the revolution.

Interventions within the public symbols, art that was created by the upper-class, to show their power, knowledge and influence, it did now show the opposite and gave those aspects to the people. Soon songs, clothing, jewellery, pamphlets, posters, festivals, paintings and drawings were created that are only meant for the people of the revolution. To inform, activate and connect, to create a sense of unity. Easy to understand with a clear message. New politics were created to guide the form of the revolution, to give the new vision of the people. All to gain power for the tax paying population. The representative government, created by the people, had a knowledge of aesthetics, which was for most people considered a luxury. Because of this they could also influence the usage of art, to propagate their own agenda. Previously, the only way the population received art was through religious images and within public art created by the Bourgeoisie. This is how destruction of art gained its power and became a weapon. By decapitating the statues of power and belief, it changed the meaning and by this also the influence on the people. At first, that has been seen as an act of cruelty (vandalism) but becomes quickly a protest signal of freedom.

Paris has seen five big revolutions after the above written revolution, which are still clearly visible. The direct interventions in the streets, as the usage of graffiti, removing symbols, placing new ones, it makes the walls speak and you become

activated within every sense. The understanding of the art and alternation of the current street scene makes vandals considered as artists. Back then this is what changed Europe, the nations, religion and the bourgeoisie, even now within the current politics and our governments are still aware of this power.

Eugene Delacroix - 'La Liberté guidance le peuple' - 1830 (appendix 3, page 6). Created by his own motivations, inspired by the Paris uprising called the 'Trois Glorieuses'. He felt his patriotic duty had come. He wrote to his nephew. *'Three days amid gunfire and bullets, as there was fighting all around. A simple stroller like myself ran the same risk for stopping a bullet as the impromptu heroes who advanced on the enemy with pieces of iron fixed to broom handles.'* -The french government bought the painting in 1831 for 3,000 francs, with the intention of displaying it in the throne room of the Palais du Luxembourg. It was returned to the artist in 1832. Champleury - august 1848 wrote, *'Hidden in an attic for being too revolutionary'*.

'We must accept the responsibility of producing an art which has more than art as its content.' - Victor Burgin

The Palestinian conceptual artist Emily Jacir, works with the unstable political situation in her country, this makes it hard for her to take a position on political problems and raise a wide variety of political issues. In 2001, she created a refugee tent as 'Memorial to 418 Palestinian Villages which were Destroyed, Depopulated, and occupied by Israel in 1948' (appendix 4). A beautifully conceptual artwork celebrated by the Palestinian government, for very good reasons. The context is essential in the political environment, acting as a trigger in favour of her creation, as a viewer you are expected to relate. According to her; *'Conceptual Art is made to engage the mind of the viewer rather than his eye or emotions.'*

Even though the contrary also happened, during the biennale in Venice, 'Significant by its absence' 2008-2009 (appendix 5). She made an artistic research about the Arabic influence in Venice for 2 years, creating Arabic translations for all the boat stops. The local government decided they did not wanted this to happen, to show the direct connection in culture with the Arabic culture, for the current political state. As far as I could find, this fact did not lead to any protests.

Appendix 4 - Emily Jacir, - 'Memorial to 418 Palestinian villages which were destroyed, depopulated and occupied by Israel in 1848' - 2001 (Right Top Image).

Appendix 5 - Emily Jacir, - 'Stazione' - 2008-2009 (Right Down Image).





Appendix 6 - Pussy Riot - Christ the Saviour Chathedral - Moscow, Russia - 2012. (Left Top Image)
 Appendix 7 - Pussy Riot - Trials - Russia - 2012. (Left Down Image)

Another more famous and historical example is the work of Francisco de Goya - 'El tres de mayo' - 1808 (Appendix 8). In 1807, Napoleon made an alliance with the Spanish king. It soon became clear that it was a trick. The French were taking over and Napoleon named his brother the new king of Spain. On the 2nd May, hundreds of Spanish rebelled, the freedom fighters were rounded up and massacred by the French. It was commissioned by the provisional government of Spain at Goya's suggestion.

Within this principal of propaganda control, it is important to create an idea of a group, a so called common sense. People within their nature like to be a part of something larger, to create within this their own position. You can clearly see in the above examples how these art works, collaborated with the ideas of the ruling government and, as soon that it was not needed anymore, was subsequently taken away from the public.

This example is different for "Pussy Riot" a Russian, feministic, political rock band. At first, it seemed just like funny, small performances with a political/cultural message, in various non-obvious public spaces. However, it became a big public disruption when they entered the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, with the intention of performing. In seconds they got arrested, a chain reaction world-wide, resulted in protests to get them out of prison (appendix 6, 7). By arresting them, the government actually helped them, by giving power to their message. The negative energy towards the Russian government, for its conservative behaviour, strengthened the position of the performers.



Appendix 8 - Francisco de Goya - 'El tres de mayo' - 1808.

PROVOcation

Having so many different examples of artists that worked all in favour of the current government. It is quite hard to see why some work is accused of being negative in one society but can be celebrated in another. To see how cultural differences affect the acceptance of an art piece, I studied the movement PROVO, with a focus on the differences between Dutch and French culture. That as you will see, worked out differently.

Provo is a movement known for provoking violent responses from authorities using non-violent bait and promoted the idea of Anarchism. A group mainly existing by having creative members (artists, philosophers and *nozems), showing new social questions with no obvious solutions, called the white plans. The actions not only had results on local or smaller movements, such as women's emancipation, for the neighbourhood, the environment movement, etc.), they were the engine of the cultural, political innovations, even within international societies as seen in the student demonstration Paris 1968. It reached its goal, the authorities were confused and people started to think for themselves. At the time that Provo started to become an institute, it collapsed, violating its beliefs.

Van Heutsz - Monument

As you can see on the pictures of the Monument of The Netherlands-Indonesia (appendix 9, page 10), in its origin is a monument for General van Heutsz, a commander within the army. He died in 1924. Money was raised for his funeral and the money that was left over was used to create a Monument for him by the local government of Amsterdam. Already from the first moment, there have been protest about this monument by communists and social democrats. It was a memory of a controversial, political and military idea. Already at this moment some people have a different agenda for building this monument. The protests kept going even after it was built; Provo Interventions, 2 bombing attacks and the 'plaquette' getting stolen, currently being replaced by an empty version. As you can see, this is still a memory of a controversial idea, even after they changed it to the monument of

The Netherlands-Indonesia, celebrating the idea of the relation between the Netherlands and the colonies in Indonesia.

The interesting fact is, that for me this is not vandalism, but an art intervention in public space within active mode and a political background in motivations. As you can see, the PROVO even did a sound performance during the act of intervention. The beauty of the anarchist movement is that it is not meant to last in history, it is just combinations of different interventions to raise awareness.

'Replace the words with, Freedom, Merdeka or Indonesia, and you have a statue of liberty' - Jan Meefout

Republique Provo

The work of 'Atelier Populaire', a collective of college students from ENSBA, ENSAD and Sorbonne in Paris, created the 'Republique Provo' at the Sorbonne (appendix 10, page12). Interventions created by art students were mostly forming the silk screen posters. Clear messages to activate the citizens, with anonymous graphical creations with a specific signature of the creator only within the design. By hanging and handing them out in the street, they raised the attention for the current problems that need to be understood.

Even though this was created in a time of prosperity, a democratic and affluent society that has never been so rich and prosperous as before, this material affluence seems to be the ultimate cause of this movement. It brought about a deep and lasting change of value systems. They created a post-materialist attitude. This does not mean that this specific generation rejected the consumption society, but instead means that they took the satisfaction of their material needs for granted.

* Nozem was the earliest modern Dutch subculture, related to the Teddy Boy movement in the UK and the greasers in the United States. - Ijnoon.com



Appendix 9 - different interventions at the 'Van Heutsz' monument in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Cultural differences

The funny fact is that within history, the Dutch initiated the French Revolution, starting within our own country years before with a group called the 'Patriots'. About 180 years later, this student revolt was again initiated by Provo, a Dutch movement. What is different is that this actually had an effect in daily French life but created so little change in the Dutch one. As we look at just the political time at that moment, already many student revolts within countries were going on around the world. May, 1968 was a special event. It was comparatively late and it has an extremely explosive character and the only one that developed into generalised revolt. Students, Factory workers and new professionals joined.

The students additionally created a new model of action: the occupation of buildings. The buildings were not privately owned. They were built for the general public and financed by the state. A reason for which the occupants claimed, if not a legal right, then at least a moral right to occupy these locations. The importance of it all; it had not politics but motivation, not the economy, but society. This created a cultural revolution. The same motivations as the Provo created years before.

One specific intervention that Provo created is now seen all around the world except in the Netherlands called the White Bike plan. Why, even after all these years, it is normal in other countries to pick up a bike on the street and leave it for someone else when the main form of transportation in the Netherlands is biking and we do not have it in this form? Why is it so 'easy' to activate change in other countries?

'It is the power of the state and Bourgeois conservatism, joining forces as so often, which usually give social movements in France an explosive character. You have to shout very loud in order to be heard, kick in the doors to be received.' - Alain Touraine.

We are currently focusing on France. It has a delayed character. Being constantly confronted with movements in other countries, the frustration has time to build up, this creates the so-called Champagne effect: a sudden outburst of all the repressed energy, strengthening the readiness for action. There also exists a French tradition of popular upheavals, caused by the lack of flexibility in French political systems. Modernising and adapting itself is normally a long way of changing circumstances. When we look at the activist characteristics in Dutch culture, we can easily notice this is not as much on our mind even though the Netherlands does have a long history of having leftist social justice movements

and organising them, as mentioned before, despite the fact that Dutch activism is less aggressive, less street-based and more regulated than anywhere else in the world.

'Activism as I have experienced it in France, or the United States, or the United Kingdom, that calibre of activism you don't see here.' - Ruud Tevreden

The Dutch government shows interest and involvement. Because of this, Dutch movements are not given the time or space to mature before being taken up as an issue of importance by the welfare of the state. The government is known for quickly addressing the concerns of the activist groups and reacts on this by adopting these ideas into their political agendas. This makes it lose its original sentiment and drive. A weak version of the original solution created by activists. This promotes only the culture of expertise and flexibility of the government.

'The benevolent state takes care of its citizens, and that the state knows best and has our best interest in mind.' - Hodan Warsame

The results are a state of confirmation activist climate, non-permitted civic engagement, such as protesting, strikes and civil disobedience, they are considered drastic, radical and become subsequently stigmatised. 'Being normal is already crazy enough'; this implies that there is no need to be crazy, radical, or vocal. Being outspoken, you are considered in this society as a person from another planet. Resulting in only a certain sort of people, like 'communists or anarchists' that are brave enough to still speak. The Netherlands is also suffering from a principle called 'colour-blindness and power blindness'; there is a lack of acknowledgement for racism and this creates a false sense of 'anti-racism'. This denial and having less intercultural inhabitants creates a sea of 'white privilege'. We don't use white, dark, yellow or anything else as an identity marker and by having them as a minority in our society.

Of course, there is also the aspect of language and communication, a preference for 'Dutch directness' in contrast to 'out-dated' political correctness. A lack of self-reflection about how the activists use their language to position how they are considering the subject. They blame it on the fact that the Dutch are unwilling to critique themselves. By not collaborating with other organisations with similar beliefs, they are not forming and grouping themselves, or even creating an interest for the housewives to speak. It creates a sense that no-body cares about these subjects, by making them too complicated and having just a few voices. The use

of words from other languages also makes it clear that this meaning or idea is not developed in Dutch society. It gives the notion that this is not applicable for our nation. People use it to create distance and 'to tune out' from the problem.



Appendix 10 - 'Atelier populaire' - ENSBA Paris, 1968

THE PLACE OF POLITICS & SOCIETY

I am trying to understand if it is possible to make engaged art and how you can give a clear message, to find a way how post-propaganda would look like. How propaganda can help to create a cultural change to change the perspectives of and on society.

'There is a form of injustice (hermeneutical injustice) that occurs when a society lacks a conceptual framework for understanding the experiences of those it has been treating inhumanly.' - Egbert Alejandro Martina, cultural critique

Politics in Art

Across history, we can see that art has battled the church, the state and the wealthy. To make itself free from the religious, political, or economic agenda. After WWII, it has been art's purpose to be free. Direct ideological commitment has become suspicious to be used as propaganda. It gives the sense that being engaged with the art world is a dangerous ground to move on, it becomes better to not move on this ground at all, even when the political and cultural landscapes are shifting. To not be used for the wrong motives.

What can be the role of art within this political movement? To become of social significance if it dares to make the freedom to create an ideological projection, not as intention to brand the freedom achieved in the 20th century, but confront the speculative economics for the world of art consumption. As a movement service of the fundamental democracy, in a visual language. Where art can demonstrate, by creating discussion, it reaches power in its imagination. To contextualise the act of artistic imagination in that of concrete political actions. Even though we tried desperately to stay away from this conflict, by making art for art, to have no engagement with any of our political idea's. Art became the propaganda for governments as a visualisation of freedom. This is the starting point of the shifting perspectives of propaganda; in the way we culturally receive propaganda.

Participatory Methods

To create change in society, you first need to change minds. The article of [Molly Melching](#) is about providing a framework of human rights, to discuss new information and issues that are important to them. An open dialogue around topics that would have been previously regarded as taboo. This is a different approach to achieve development (appendix 11). It is about the social change that can happen when people get access to good information using engaging and participatory methods. In their own language, signed for people and with people who have never been to school. That facilitates their potential to shape a more promising future for their community. To make a successful and sustainable development initiative, you need a foundation of education that should be delivered in a manner that is inclusive and leads to dialogue, ideas for taking action for change and positive outcomes. It is all about empathy.

According to Molly Melching this is the formula:

1. Begin with Human rights - empower people to claim their rights to health and well-being with confidence.
2. Start where people are - have empathy and respect while you understand the history, language and culture and their priorities.
3. Do not try to force to change - lay out the groundwork for dialogue, introduce people to ideas, identify shared values and allow them to decide what the change will be and when they will make it.

When you start fighting what they are doing, you are going to get resistance.
Solutions already exist within the communities with you working with.

Shifting perspectives

Education aims at independence of judgement. Propaganda offers readymade opinions for the unthinking herd. They are directly opposites in goals and methods. A slow process of development, reaching quick results. The educator and propagandist, tries to tell people how to think and what to think. Individuals are controlled by the idea of suggestion. The control of opinion by significant symbols, used to speak, more concretely and less accurately; like stories, rumours, reports, pictures and other forms of social communication. During WWII, propaganda was mostly used to make shifting perspectives in political ideas. In the mid-century, they propagated the persuasive characteristics of culture and society. Used for spreading a certain style of life. The persuasive and potent use of propaganda is that it creates a world of fantasy, myth and delusion. This existence of power, destroys a sense of history, continuity and philosophy so necessarily for a moral life. By the search for truth with imposed truth, the basis for mutual, thoughtful and interpersonal communication for an ethical existence is destroyed.

Propaganda is related to an attempt to manipulate somebody else. In the meaning of controlling, the attitudes of others and their actions, in the past half century concert the assumption of encouraging an open minded citizen, as a democratic responsible media system. People who are curious, questioning, unwilling to accept simple answers to complex situations. A fake form of mental freedom, the argument comes and goes. For political, personal and economic questions to weigh numerous sides of controversies and making rational decisions. The various truth claims are crucial to the public welfare. The conscious propagandists can operate most successfully by raising themselves above their messages and goals.

When people are not undergoing any mental stress, it might be that they are not opening their minds long enough to allow themselves to disbelieve the information, to fully enter a situation and question it. They create a clear message to spread confusion. It lacks people in time, opportunity and information to become fully acquainted with one another and with their environment. It is easier to be close minded media consumers. Whenever the creative communication accepts pluralism and displays the expectations that its receivers should conduct for further investigations of its observations, allegations and conclusions, propaganda does not appear inside the work. A fully functioning democratic society needs pluralism in its persuasion and information, not the narrow-minded, self-serving propaganda, it makes the audience unconscious, uncritical consumers.

Post-propaganda

The separation between art institution and politics and the role of the artists as outsider is wasted; political art is not the registration of political events. The artist should position himself, by achieving an attitude in which he does not deny being a part of the world. You have a choice; flee the world, or confront it. If you close yourself off, it will affect you eventually.

In an attempt to be moralistic, art tries to stay in clichés or to offer clear solutions. The discussion about political or engaged art is in a deadlock because of that very situation. The proposals of political thinkers or theorists describes these works as critical, artistic practices that are not about criticism but about being critical. The attitudes towards becoming conscious of our place in the public sphere. It is about appropriating a problem, relating to it, instead of analysing it from a distance. An acknowledgement should form the essence of a revision of the meaning of institutional critique.

Facing the greatest taboo is the dominating relationship between the art institution and the state who takes on the role of a landlords, not unlike the former role of the church, nobles and rich bourgeoisie. It gained a substantial distance by indulging the positive and elevating the ideal that art supposedly has for average citizens, it is inevitable that this discourse takes place. This conclusion has far reaching consequences for our thinking about the sovereignty of art and its position.

The unwritten rules dictate that art is supposed to reflect society, to raise questions about the world around us, to be ambiguous and layered, to depict the world as being diverse. A place of where we speak of not a single truth, but of a plurality of realities. It is expected to be open and tolerant, and resist dogmatism and ideological deployments, to avoid making mistakes. This is the embodied image of democratic ideology, when it is self-critical, questioning, tolerant, continuously developing, and displays a deep interest in others. The artist has rediscovered the desire to participate in the life of the people. They want to be a part of their battle, their pain and troubles. People are no longer free, but to serve a node, a state, a church or community. Directed by the ideal of distributed power, in which people control politics, as suggested in democracy. The relationship between power and art, has undergone a fundamental turn when compared to dictatorial power. This embodies the application of the concept propaganda. The condition of post propaganda, is governed by different power relations, in concept

of negotiation. It assumes the equality of art and politics, in which they share responsibility for designing democratic society.

Cultural change

Personally, I believe that Tanja Bruguera is a good example of an artist who applies art to approach the everyday political life. Not only as a side positive for self-reflection, but as a way to generate and install models for social interactions. This could provide new ways to engage within the utopia. She calls her art contextual, a preconceived notion of aesthetic or artistic strategies. A weight and impact of events in relationship with specific moments of history and audience. The goal of her work is not only to provoke different ways of thinking, to spark a rejection or create a public form to debate ideas that have been shown in their state of contradictions. To realise a possibility of working with useful art. The art is mostly accepted in its contemplative function; even when the work itself is presented in an active way, that is demanded in the end form. The audience is mostly activating the work in the mind. She believes in art as one of the possible ways to input motion into the social engine, she strongly advocates for its self-sabotage.

She is interested in exploring ways in which things become artistic, to present models of negotiation for the visibility in art world. The condition of the artist, by delaying its moment of awareness as such from the audience a denominative

function, is transfigured into a participative one. Therefore, she divides her work between long and short-term projects. The duration is the practical use of time to accomplish a specific goal. The time between the presence of the work as an event and its delimitation or recognition as an artwork, these decisions are taken in relationship with the way in which the work embarks upon the social realm and its expectations with the state of the political.

Tanja's work deals with the concept of political representation and its relationship with direct access to establish structures of power. Political art is the one that works on the consequences of its existence, of its interactions and does not remain in the level of association or graphic memory. It is intervening in the process that is created after people think the art experience is over. Political art is the one transcending fields of art, entering the daily nature of people, an art that makes them think (appendix 12).



Appendix 12, -Tania Bruguera - 'Tatlins whisper' - 2009.

NO MORE POLITICAL ART

It still feels like political art seems to be a term that is not completely correct with its meaning and the intentions it holds. By giving returning its power to the people, a sense of awareness is created. It feels like it needs a different approach and understanding. To empower themselves in language and nationality.



Appendix 13 - Sharin Neshat - 'Rebellious Silence' - 1994.

Art can also be used with political purposes, but that is not political art, it is art-propaganda. Political art has doubts, not certainties; it has intentions, not programs; it shares with those who find it, not imposes on them. It is defined while it is done; it is an experience, not an image; it is something entering the field of emotions and that is more complex than a unit of thought. Political art is the one that is made when it is unfashionable and when it is uncomfortable knowing. One of the historical problems of political art is being out of phase with artistic

vanguards when we are talking about popular political art, as if there were a sort of patronising attitude with the audience, as if there were only one language to represent what is political, a language that does not intend to make people think, but that unifies them. Politics is not a service; it is a way to think about the future. We can't be confused with the administrative dimension of utopia.

Political art must resist the erosion of incredulity, cynics, banalising and indifference of those who have interests within art and the pressure for it having continuance after its political need to exist has expired. It should not consider itself important because it does not know beforehand what its impact will be and because its impact will inevitably expire. That is a type of art that cannot fear to be destroyed and disappear. Artists today know of those historical political art pieces through documentation, missing the urgency that made it necessary and the anger that made it be rejected and effective. Much political art today is more a quote than a political gesture.

The appropriation of the aesthetics of revolt by the advertising system is a symptom of backwardness in the development of a new people's political language and the need to renew it. However, somehow it is also a game of invalidating, banalising the potentiality of things by the establishment, something already so common and expected. That something is a sort of generalised agreement does not mean that it has lost its potential effectiveness. If you enter into the area of political art, you must understand that this is not a transitory position in which you only are against power until it absorbs you or on the contrary, if you are not absorbed, you will become a wretched resentful person. Being a political artist has nothing to do with being accepted or with consensus.

E m p o w e r m e n t

Sharin Neshat is an Iranian artist whose works shows the empowerment of the female population in Islamic culture. In the works that she makes, she is trying to break the controversial ideas about the female position in her culture (appendix 13). In a way, she is showing that women are mostly covered in veils, with only

their eyes visible. This began as a cultural protest against their president and as a religious devotion, this became an empowering for Iranian women.

Each of her images are an intense paradoxical identity, constructed to magnify contradiction. Seeing only a part of the body it actually makes their message stronger, the power they show by showing so little, gives them in a strong position. She plays with the role of men and women and their covered bodies. This visualising of cultural history in her work makes her work deeply political, cultural and is giving by this the power back to the people, who's culture is not celebrated around the world. For treating women as the domestic, personal domain of men, she creates a disruption in the social order.

Power to the people

'Art is seen as one of democracy's most essential pillars: it is the space par excellence for the free expression of ideas, the experimentation with new models of society. However, when an artist takes this role too seriously and becomes too straightforwardly political, they are cursed with demagoguery or simply discarded as bad art' - Jonas Staal

Another example is the Dutch artist Jonas Staal, searching for ways to combine art, democratic and propaganda in his works. Writing essays and publications about art and politics. Criticising the current way of using the democratic system in all his works. His focus in art seems to confront the current political situations with its ignorance. This is also where it seems to find its power. Starting with the memorial for the cabinet (appendix 17, page 2), to the voting stations to create a alternative parliaments (appendix 15, 16, page 19). It shows the democratic idea in a different form then we are used to.

Language

Writer, poet, director, photographer, journalist and a visual artist, Marcel Broodthears is a professional in deconstructing given facts and putting them together in a new image system. By taking daily objects out of their context, he creates a new situation of connections and structures. It is critical, poetic and contains humour. Economics, social, cultural and political are all aspects he incorporates into his works (appendix 14). By using mainly language in his works and not choosing one but multiple languages, he makes it easier for society to understand, just the fact that the meaning is not lost in translation. For fully understanding a word in different languages, you need to experience the situation that it refers to. Speech distinguishes humans from animals. It creates nations and

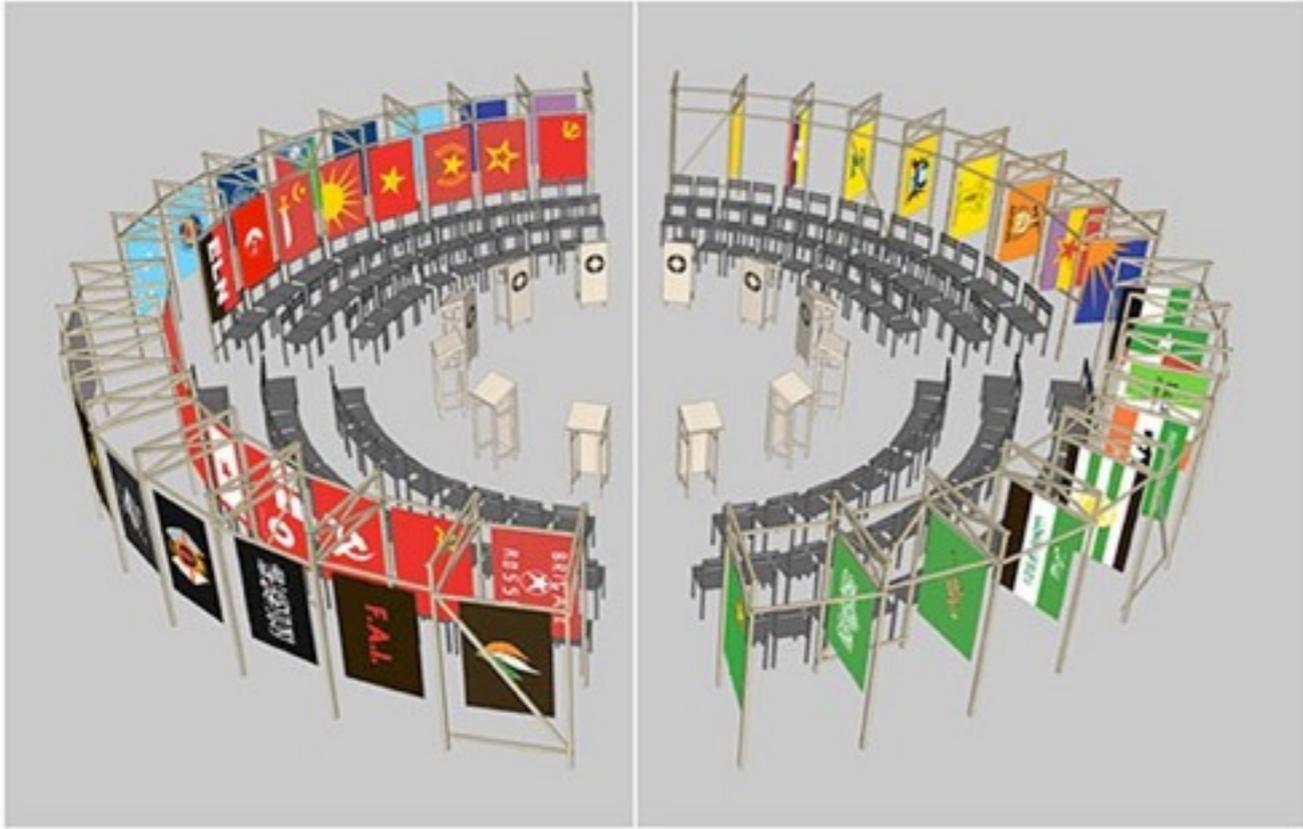
gives away the origins of the body. It is important to understand that the vocabulary a person has is also the frontier of his/her understanding, it refers to locality, morals and creates the first social institution, based on natural origins, as soon as a person is recognised by another, thinking of being similar, the desire is created to communicate.

The movement of gesture is important to understand and create the vocals. This makes it possible that only a simple touch, or the fact of a near touch can say more than the actual words can express. The way your body moves in order to say something can also motivate or calm people when they hear certain news. According to Alain Button, it is why news presentations always speak without emotion.

When you study the history and progress of language, you can see that the voice becomes monotone, a multiplication, accents are eliminated and quantities are equalised. Structured by grammatical sequences and articulations. Language needs to grow. As more affairs happen during time, language needs to find a form to be precise and become less passionate. It substitutes ideas for feelings, not from the heart but from logic. During time language gets more exact and clear, but more mutated and colder.



Appendix 14, Marcel Broodthears, 'The Conquest of Space Atlas' - 1975



Appendix 15 - Jonas Staal - 'New World Summit' - 2012
Appendix 16 - Jonas Staal - Parliament for autonomous Kurdish government - 2015

CONCLUSION

*How can I as an artist play a role in society and can this still be in the form of art?
How can I protect my ideas from being used to advance the wrong causes?
What did I learn from researching this and how do I research this in my work?
These are some of the questions that I had in mind researching this topic.*

By first understanding what it means to be an artist and the current role of art, it gives us as artists the freedom to make art for the fact of making it. An object in a universal language that can just be made for the aesthetics of being. This movement in art is highly appreciated by the politics in the current governments. By making political art it is only allowed to propagate a certain idea, to support political ideas or reflecting on a historical event, even though when this does not fit into political agendas, it might be that the art piece even becomes censored. Destroying and creating symbols in society can motivate the citizens to change the roles of power and to activate them. Understanding the state, governments, corporations and the rich bourgeoisie, advances the cause to create change of a political idea. This is enhanced by using communication techniques that we see on daily basis in different media. Placing a political message is important in understanding the location of a place. In history, present and in future sense. Even so, these art interventions can be considered as activism or vandalism.

This also depends on the cultural understanding of the importance of activism. As we look at the movement PROVO and the Republic Provo, we can see clearly that the acceptance and involvement is completely different to the outcome. These cultural movements created cultural change all over the world, with minimal results in the hosting country, the Netherlands. The place of politics in society, which comes to a different complexity in our society, it is alienated by the nation. Governments flexibility take up a situation before a movement can achieve an agenda. Because of this, all discussible problems get adopted into political agendas of the ruling parties which can only raise power by voting. This creates a laid back attitude within the Dutch culture.

In my understanding, this is also the main reason for a cultural disaffection for political art. The art world has been trying to avoid the field of politics and when it does confront it, it loses its power by being criticised as an object in itself. Demanding a concrete solution or just an overview of a situation; this demands for shifting perspectives, as we already see happening in the approach we have towards propaganda. The term post-propaganda is therefore in its full right. The political art piece is only of temporary existence, because of its fluctuating importance. Therefore, it can only be accepted as art, when the outcome of the art piece, creates a change in the cultural mindset. By only studying old political art, we do not see the necessity and importance that any piece has outside of that moment of time. The main goal by creating political or social engaged art, is to achieve an empowerment, acceptance or better understanding.

Ideal position in creation

We must focus on a critical self-reflection and radical changes, ranging from simple questions of accessibility, to language depth analyses and power relations. To fight against the oppression. This demands you to educate yourself. It demands more than communication and interactions, to create civic engagement. As artists, we have to rethink how to establish our relationship with powers. Not by becoming a politician, our position should be of the dissatisfaction. This creates the position on moving between both, art and politics.

Also we need to create an awareness for our language, that this is not our reality, but an abstraction. By giving the description of reality as we observe it or dream about it, the awareness of our projections, people and situations have unlimited characteristics. This means the world is in a constant process of change, there is always more to be seen and observed than we are capable of seeing, observing and describing. A value of judgement, a subsequent awareness that receivers of our communications need to be told the difference of perception. We should accept authority figures, sources and witnesses being the result of an imperfect

human perceptual process, but not as an absolute truth. People and situations are rarely to be valued, propositions do not have to be either true or false.

It is also important to keep in mind that it must be objective, (socio psychological), including all the cases without it becoming too broad or unclear. Differentiate the phenomenon from similar and related. To throw new light on it, making a new understanding and systematisation, suggesting new problems for investigation. By redefining language within our communication values, in our understanding vocally, universally and in the arts.

‘Het komt allemaal terug op 9/11 - It all goes back to 9-11’.
- Willem-Alexander van Oranje-Nassau, King of the Netherlands

Social questions

The Berlin wall fell in 1989, 9-11 this changed our idea of liberty and freedom, this created a change within the western-world. Until 2001, 9-11 New York, the feeling of fear became a part of our foundation. An attack so well organised and considered, we all felt like we had seen it in the movies before. Until today, these images are still haunting our dreams.

What fascinates me is how society reacts to the situations in the media. What is in our minds is in our hearts. This means history is not what happened, it is what we remember. Not written in the history books, but the shoe boxes that normal people collect in their attics. The situations that made a concrete change in our lives, from the ultimate happiness to the worries we experience about our beloved ones, is our history.

What inspires me are events in history and present times. How the social motivations and beliefs can change by small or big interventions, that prospers the greater cause. So called propaganda, I believe in this century, we have never been so active in spreading, creating and sharing content of the idea's we believe in. On social media, in the bakery and at the kitchen table. Convincing each other of, which voices we should follow, to motivate ourselves without knowing if it contains any truth or objectiveness. In the age of post-propaganda, we think we can choose, who we want to be influenced by and which idea or believe to support our own motivations. But what happens when all these different angles, motivations and logics are put together in the same message?

This raises the question how can I, as an artist, can play a role in society? How did others approach these topics? How can I position myself to make art for people? And even how to use the idea of propaganda?

My practice

On a daily basis, we get confronted with various political situations concerning basic human rights. This is the unclear position of power, which makes everybody a person of authority. Referring to social control becomes, in the Netherlands, of proportions that placing a counter reaction is almost impossible without it resulting in an experience of injustice, without encountering the social correction first, in name of the state or the institution. Out of fear that we are watched and judged on what we do, creates a fear of being punished in our freedom. This creates a common sense of not making interventions because you support it, but in name of the idea that you should do it. Without thinking whether this is in order or not.

Before applying my artistic practice it is truly important, to research and to inform myself as objectively as I can, with many different angles and that are found in society. At a certain point I feel confident enough, within my knowledge to create a work that just gives the receiver an overview of a specific topic. With the intention to give the opportunity to doubt and rethink their position in this society. Because it can create a moment of change in their personal history, not out of comfort, but out of awareness.

In my artistic research, I'm trying to understand how the visualisation of a shifting political landscape can be captured in image. Not to observe it or to understand the political situation but in a way to create an open discussion about the situation that the work itself is referring to. For this moment I prefer to use performance to research these situations. Having a direct connection with the audience, I create a position of participation. To not only to participate, but to also think about their social position. These artistic interventions are sometimes assisted by art pieces and will be documented, which will be a work. The participant also remains anonymous and becomes a part of the artwork.

Also it is for me important to research my visualisation by looking at historical, social and political oriented art. Transforming them into drawings, sculptures, installations and other media, to see how it still can relate to society. In the near future, I hope to find ways and to develop myself as an artist, to use more concrete materials to make interaction with the spectator and to learn how to

improve the context of my image. With this intention in my mind, I want to keep creating situations that create an open discussion about a subject that is proposed. By using paradoxes, documentation and absurd social solutions, to keep the dialogue open. As an artist I believe it is important to visualise a situation, within that it is not my goal to solve a problem, but to create a discussion.

For me it is important that I as an artist, work with different social situations and give them a different language that the receiver can identify with and might understand its motivations more clearly, to think about the future, the present and the past. To take this knowledge and change it in an active position, without being forced to think in a certain way. When the receiver can understand this experience at any moment in its life. That will be the moment I believe my contribution as an artist to society is successful.

My art is not meant to be only for the art context. What I am trying to create is a connection between the artist, viewer, participant (and art context). By not glamourizing the piece, but to make society a part of my piece. By which I empower the people, by giving them to opportunity to be at the same level as the creator and the institution, to give them a part of art her freedom of speech.

My work is therefor conceptual and contextual of nature. By which the context of the location or situation, physically and mentally, is extremely important in order to create my work. It even has the upper hand in the work. The concept is rather within the creation method, within the work itself, it is important to see a clear concept of thought, referring to the context of an idea and it has the ability to adapt to different situations of presentation.

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