

Questions by Tiny Domingos to Sara+André, Berlin, August 5/08/2007

1. Alan Bowness said: "artistic fame is predictable". Do you consider your work in the same way?

We want our art "never to bore us"/ you, therefore we feel that predictability it's not the biggest risk we're taking. However we consider that "in the production of any genius, any great painter or artist, it doesn't take more than four or five things the really count at the end of his life. (the rest is just about living his day to day life.)"

2. Do you want to change the world with your work (or at least contribute to a revolution?) If not, WHY should we be interested in your work?

"You can't really bring anything new with art. We knew that already as Childs. One can try to change the world for oneself, but exhibitions are actually quite superfluous." "How surreal it is now to think that Plato once thought artists were dangerous and should be kept outside the city."

3. Is your work self-explanatory or does it require an explanation? Do you provide an explanation? If so, how?

It depends of which work but we always try hard to make it as clear as possible. We often provide explanations depending of each case, but in the end we often feel that "in communication the most effective is the misunderstanding."

4. Is contemporary art boring?

Sometimes, (but it can also be difficult to understand which is something different.)

5. Is your art work boring?

As we previously said we hope our art "never to bore you". (but sometimes it can also become difficult to understand which is something different.)

6. Does your work seek to be elitist - i.e. limited to an informed and interested public - or is it open for a less specialized audience as well?

It's definitely directed towards a wider public, but you know, "when you have an idea for a work and when you finished your model for it, for the artist it's almost complete, in a way. But then bringing it to the finish is really something you do for the audience and it is always exciting." (And the nice thing is that the spectator always "adds something to the work that the artist never thought of, not only he adds, but also he deforms in his own way".)

7. "What do you think about the system in which art and art galleries work?"

Curators - the dead-eyed, soulless, rent-a-curator exhibitions dominate the art landscape with their socio-political pretensions. The familiar grind of 70's conceptualist retreads, the dry as dust photo and the text panels, the production line of banal and impenetrable installations, the hushed and darkened rooms with their interchangeable flickering videos are the hallmarks of a decade of numbing right on curatorship. Critics - the art critics on some of Portugal's newspapers could as easily have been assigned gardening or travel, and been cheerfully employed for life. Collectors - suspect motivations, social climbing agendas, decorating interests, but maybe without them the art world would be run by the state, in a utopian world of apparatchik-approved, Culture-Ministry-sanctioned art. Dealers - pompous, power-hungry and patronizing, these doyens of good taste would seem to be better suited to manning the door of a night-club, approving who will be allowed through the velvet

ropes. Their behaviour alienates many fledging collectors from any real involvement with the artist's vision. These dealers like to feel that they control the market. For example, one prominent New York dealer recently said that he disapproved of the strong auction market, because it allowed collectors to jump the queue of his waiting list. So instead of celebrating an artist's success, they feel castrated by any loss to their power base."

8. What is the role of an artist?

"To surprise;" "To play forever and ever but not only chess." Or if you prefer "to revolutionize the place where communication takes place," "producing images, sounds, and situations that avoid purely mercantile ends."

9. Besides corrupting the purest souls, it seems that fame also makes people dependent. Have you already considered the possibility of leaving the "world of the celebrities"?

Not yet.

10. Being consensual artists isn't boring for you?

Maybe promiscuous but not boring.

11. Jeff Koons is an example of a famous artist in the world of visual arts. Do you hope to be able to reach this level of international notoriety?

"The idea of success today is related with ideas of celebrity culture, glorification and applause, things that at first sight don't seem appropriate for a terminology of aesthetic issues."

12. Despite Jeff Koons being extremely well known in the artistic world, few people would recognize him in the street. Do you think that you will be able to exceed the degree of everyday fame of this North American artist or (more modestly) of Julião Sarmiento or Pedro Cabrita Reis?

(no answer...)

13. How do you feel about the fact that contemporary artists don't have the same media visibility as football players or TV presenters?

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14. If somebody were to argue that your work is excessively "complicated", what would be your simple but sincere reply?

We think that's a complicated question.

15. If somebody were to argue that your work is "academic" (in the boring sense of the term), and reminiscent of a type of work created by art school students, how would you respond to this type of criticism?

We wouldn't know what to answer.

16. You seem to denounce the mechanisms of the art system. Do you do this in a critical way or only "with a clinical eye"?

To change, "to denounce, to criticize the world? One must previously take the form of what one wants to criticize. Imitation can be quite subversive, much more than certain discourses of frontal opposition that don't do more than gesticulating subversion."

17. You invite other artists to create work which integrates your own work. Is this about a recycling (or appropriation) of existing images under the excuse that there are already too many, a certain “vampirism” with the colleagues, a certain lack of imagination and talent or a simple (strategic) stopping of your own production?

A bit of each, we try to “consider culture as a toolbox more than a univocal narrative” and by considering “art as a way to use the world, we inhabit forms in order to reactivate them, pirating private property and copyright, brands and signatures” along the way.

As we once said “our work attempts to inhabit circumstances that are offered by the present, in order to transform the context of our life and our relationship with the world.”

18. Which conclusions have you drawn from the cooperation that you already have already established with other artists?

It’s been very enriching and then again each artist was different to work with.

“Being a good artist is the toughest job you could pick, and you have to be a little nuts to take it on. We love them all.” (???)

19. Do you have an opinion on the fact that many artists restrict themselves to a logic of production?

Not today.

20. Do you think your concerns about the functioning of the world of art are shared by many other artists?

Yes / Probably

21. The laws of copyrights increasingly restrict the transformation and the re-appropriation of images and sounds. Are these laws potential targets for your work?

“When creativity is the field, copyright is the fence.”

22. Which are your next projects?

As Warhol said “Business Art is the step after Art.”

23. What is the "use-by date" of "Claim to fame"?

“If things survive, not only physically but also in the sense that people pay attention to them they cannot possibly continue playing the same role they did at the time when they were made.” We still don’t know the answer to this question but we will surely find out!

*Quotes by: N. Bourriaud, J.L. Delest, G. Deleuze, M. Duchamp, Eve&Adele, D. Franck, H. Haacke, M. Kippenberger, J. Koons, J. L. Moulene, M. Pean, A. Site, C. Saatchi, A. Warhol