

Nika: Do you read biographies in exhibition catalogues?

Marina: Well, yes, I always read the bio first, then the edition notice, or perhaps the other way around, but that's what I try to get as soon as I get the chance, that's why I like biographies as wall-texts, too!?

Nika: Well? You do work in a large institution. But why? I usually want to see how old the artist is, to understand the context in which I look at a work... What do you see in a bio?

Marina: Well, I want to know who did it! I'm interested in people, not in objects, I'm interested in works only as an eloquent continuation of a thinking creature, I'm interested in the place where the work attaches to the man.

Nika: That's fine; I'm just wondering how much you can see the man, that thinking creature, from a list of exhibitions. It seems to me that it's a pattern which we do read somehow, but the interesting bits are not actually written. You can see something from the matrix of year of birth, education and where people have exhibited, but it's all some kind of aftertext. I want to know what you see from it, or which element you use to project something of your own into it. Or is it not a projection?

Marina: It's true that reading a bio in a catalogue is often similar to that feeling when you're in an unknown country and trying to figure out what's in some vacuum-pack, and when you fail in it, and you don't understand the language, in the end, there's always the conditioned reflex, and you try to smell it. But you try to figure out what can be figured out through information on offer.

Nika: Like for instance?

Marina: Well, is it a man or a woman, how old they are, where they were born, and even what and where they studied, it's still very interesting to me. Where they live and where they exhibited, I try to find out something from the titles of the exhibitions and the places where they exhibited. Of course, it's interesting to know who they worked with, especially here, where I know the curators, so it tells me something important. It's somehow fun to put together some sort of a puzzle from all those incoherent bits and pieces. There's some purely intellectual pleasure in it, but primary it's about curiosity.

When it comes to complete unknowns from unknown environments, I immediately start with very strong images, what life could be like for the artist who does such and such work, and look where they've exhibited before. I don't know how other people do it?

Nika: Perhaps that's why, sometimes, they let the artist talk about her work, or at least they show the author off at the opening. Is talk (maybe something like this) some sort of further reading instruction?

Marina: Well, it seems to me that there's nothing universal to be said about that. My reading instruction is your desire to talk about it. Some artists speak the most through their inability or lack of will and desire to talk about their work. And that's the most eloquent thing, the one that probably helps the most. There are no rules. This relationship towards their work is part of the work, but often people don't take it into account.

I don't know why, or perhaps I don't want to talk about why that's not respected, because then I would go to some spheres of material-spiritual relations, ha... So, in my mind, it's really not particularly important what we're going to say about it, we only create a road sign through our talk, and that road sign can be more or less beautiful, depending on how good we are in being smart. But beauty isn't really important here ...

Nika: When we only understand the things we already know anyway

Marina: Of course! But sometimes we forget that one can look the other way, too, that could bear some work..

Nika: I always quote Luhman, that communication is only an allocation of surprise within the known. The question is, then, how one can arrive to the known in the first place. Perhaps not in communication? Or in some other communication? Inarticulate?

Marina: Communication would mean here that we exchange something?

Nika: Yes. In principle, I disagree with the theory in which communication is a process in which one side is sending a message while others receive the same message with more or less interference. I think that communication is primarily the setting of the commune. Here, biography seems to me, no matter how discreetly, to be put into the area in the hopes that someone will come along who can share the experience, or at least who is familiar with the experience. A person like that is then capable of seeing where that "surprise" of Luhman's is, which can be interesting as an element of work.

Marina: Yes. And this talk is, I think, just such an institution of a recognizable field where then one could notice that small, surprising move of yours.

The problem is that work is still today read as "object", as a consistent unity, while I feel that 99.9 percent of many good works consists exactly of that well-constructed basis, on which there is this one little surprise (which we also share with the author as an experience, because otherwise we wouldn't be able to see it)

I'm afraid that this is already hard to understand.