

Images of Time

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Contents

Introduction	3
Background	4
Change	4
The Inherent Nature of the Material	7
Intuition	10
Between Contradictions	12
Images of Time	14
Happening	16
Conclusion	21

Introduction

Reflections and thoughts about time and materialization is my main theme in this essay. I start with introducing my background as a musician and how I moved from there into art. My search in wanting to build a bridge between these two art forms and discussing the differences between the nature of music and art. Since music is a time-based art- form I compare it with the nature of my works being also time-based, but unlike music, dealing with space. How I moved into making art with impermanent materials such as food and the influence I have from John Cage and his philosophy of silence or nothingness and chance. I discuss Fluxus-art in order to connect my work to the fact that often it has leads into no-products and being event-based.

The influence I have had from the artist Andy Goldsworthy which has led me even further into thoughts about the inherent nature of the material, dealing with the concept of time and nature. From Goldsworthy I move into discussions about the method of using intuition as a tool, and how that has led me into creating works like my Bachelor graduation piece, allowing myself to take risks and not always be in control of the result.

Between contradictions in material and thought, letting it go as it will, these are all facts about the art of Eva Hesse, who's works I discovered in Konstfack and how that was like finding my parent within art.

The coating, surrounding and wrapping have repeatedly appeared in my art, I discuss this way of expression as a metaphor of different images of time, connecting to the Icelandic artist Sigurdur Gudmundsson and his lecture held in 1969 about time.

The environment has become my platform in the masters project. There I have created both visual and aural works that are circling in one way or the other, around the subject of time and materialization. I ask myself, if I will be able to gather the result of that work in a space and create a certain balance between these different elements? I point out the fact that centuries ago music mixed with art in the church. From there I move into discussing a sound performance I made that had no visual contact and was made instantly in one hour. In the context of working instantly I discuss the chaotic order in Jessica Stockholder's works and how she allows chance and dreamlike ideas to exist in her installations. Finally I move into the part of my present work, where I am using sound. The reflections about creation with hardly any involvement of myself, partly letting the result solve itself.

Background

Before I entered art school I studied classical music. My instrument was guitar and after many years of practice I decided to quit. The reason was simply because I found it hard to find my own place within the strict classical world of music. I come from Iceland and in that time there weren't many opportunities for classical guitar players or departments that I could apply for to explore new music like electronic music for example.

I entered the Iceland Academy of Arts in the year 2001 and finished my bachelor degree in Fine Arts in the year 2005. My intention for studying Fine Arts was to explore the dialog between sound and visual arts. But instead of throwing myself into making sound art I stumbled on questions about the nature of sound or music, and visual arts that made it difficult for me to blend it together. The reason why I didn't just 'mix and blend' music and art was because I thought that it just didn't. Instead I spent these years exploring different materials in dialog with space and time. I made few sound pieces which almost didn't have any visual aspects, apart from the sound/video works I made. By the end of my studies I wrote a Bachelor degree essay, about my search for answers in this field, and why I had difficulties with finding balance between sound and visual arts. My result was, that music happens in real time or has duration, but art happens or is dealing with space. Time-based art like video art or performance has a duration but is always dealing with a space, unlike music. The nature of these two elements are different, depending on time and space.

This became an answer to many of my questions but it did not cure my thirst in wanting to merge both elements into some sort of balance. I don't believe in total contradictions, saying that some things do not mix at all. I would rather say that it is a matter of how it is mixed. Having that belief, I can continue my search in finding a balance between music and art.

Change

I am interested in change or time, and to visualize it. Probably it has to do with the fact that I want to be surprised. I remember having the thought as a kid, of wanting to live in a castle, where the rooms in it were endless and I would constantly be discovering a new one. Similar as being able to always having a new secret to open.

For me, time in an artwork means how a work can change, depending on the interaction and

nature of its material. In most of my works the material has played a key role. And often my method has been first the material, and from there move into the next stage of form and expression. I have often used materials that visualize some kind of a duration. In the beginning I started out with making art that you could eat. I wasn't aware that I was making a time-based art and my intention was that I wanted to see the work disappear, or at least a part of it. I liked the thought of people eating my work, and to have an ongoing event of change and happening. I wasn't interested in making a performance myself, it was more the surprise of seeing something change without my control. I called these works "eatable art" and the materials were mostly sugary substances for example: Candy, melted sugar, marzipan and cake.

In one of my first eatable pieces I made an installation of cake (cream, marzipan and berries), and wallpaper that I printed. The print on the wallpaper was installed together with a cake, that had matching print on a cote of marzipan. Both these elements made one whole, installed in a corner. I offered the cake to eat and the basis of my idea was to have people eating through the work and changing it.

In the year 2003, I made another eatable work by gluing, with melted sugar, around 3000 pieces of candy, forming a laze in the scale of 120cm x 120cm. Again I allowed people to eat the work. When visitors started taking away the candy pieces, the sugar-glue, was left on the wall. The gradual vanishing of it was my point of departure as well as thoughts about control and no-control. When I think about control I am referring to the act of letting go of the result. The work is partly in my control, since I set the ground by putting up in this example the candies in a certain form, but to then allow it to be eaten, makes the result out of my control. The contradiction between the beauty of a perfectly made, giant laze, and being able to take a piece and eat, was something that many visitors felt uncomfortable with. It was too beautiful to destroy, but at the same time it was the curiosity of seeing what would happen, that made them act. I remember getting a remark from another student, saying that the work reminded of music, since it had a duration. And how at that time, it had not even occur to me that it was time-based. I just saw this as the act, and the feeling of making sweets to eat!

When I was studying music I got to know about the works of John Cage and the legendary composition 4'33", written and performed in 1952. The work was divided into three movements called 33", 2' 40" and 1' 20" which all indicate the time the pianist opened the piano lid at the beginning of a movement and closed it again at the end.¹ The 'music' that the audience came to

1 Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke, Honnef, Walther, Ingo F. (eds.): *Art of the 20th Century*, Köln: Taschen, 2000,

listen to was not piano music but noise in the auditorium. People standing up, leaving, talking etc.

After Cage came to contact with Zen-Buddhism, in 1947 he discovered the 'silence' as a musical equivalent of 'nothingness', which means that all aspects of creation is equal and therefore he saw all sounds as equal. He discovered that silence didn't exist. He made a test to go into a soundproof room at Harvard,² and found out that he would always hear something, for example his heartbeat, breath etc.

John Cage “redefined music as an “organization of sound” rather than a composition of melody and harmony, but what is more important is his contention that music is everywhere, in all sounds- that all sound can be music. His statement can be taken two ways- that all sounds can be listen to as music or that they can be used as musical material by composers”³

By using chance in writing music he freed himself from the human obligation of choice (between what's good and bad). He organized events and sounds and became very influential source of the many different 'action arts' that went down in history as 'Happenings' and 'Fluxus'.⁴

The fact that my eatable works were time-based, has a strong connection to Fluxus-art. The work moves away from the product based by disappearing, it's form is based on an happening and action. And it has an function of being partly an event, by inviting the viewer to eat the work. The phenomena of Fluxus-art consisted mostly on 'events' or acts both acoustic and visual. It very seldom offered a product or an object and was first and foremost a state of mind⁵. Yoko Ono was one of the key artists of Flux-art. In the piece *Self Portrait* she invited the viewer to open up an envelope with a mirror to see the reflection of oneself.⁶ The work is only finished when the person looks into the mirror. The artist sends outs a message but the art work is completed in the mind of the audience. Flux-art was an experience, for the artist and audience but it also had an indeterminate position amongst the other arts, and opened up the possibility to be an inter-medial art form.⁷ Because of its time-based nature it could more easily open up for being a platform for all arts.

p.582

2 Ibid., p. 582

3 Licht, Alan: *Sound Art*. New York: Rizzoli International Publ., 2007, p. 12

4 Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke, Honnef, Walther, Ingo F. (eds.), 2000, p. 582-83

5 Ibid., p. 585-87

6 Yoshimoto, Midori: *Into Perfomance*, New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2005, p. 103

7 Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke, Honnef, Walther (eds.), 2000, p. 584-5

The Inherent Nature of the Material

I have created a method for myself. To let the nature of the material control how the work is formed or shaped. This means that when I have decided to work with a particular material, the next step is to use my feeling and intuition to find out the nature of it, and from there I can start forming it. Sometimes I have had a strong idea of how it should be formed in the beginning, but the result can be left for outside elements to take over. In most cases it is the way of the material, that decides on form and shape. Therefore the result of my work has often led into art without products.

I can refer to the felt works of Robert Morris who created the idea of “anti-form”. Anti-form was a post-minimalism ideology. The essence is the breakdown of geometrical shapes in order to remove the preconceived shape that the mind holds, and relates to. To being able to create anti-form the artist has to remove his aura or persona away from the work in order to let the nature of its material become visual. The material could inform the finished shape, size and look of an artwork. These aspects dissociate the piece from both allusion and illusion and a pure object is formed.⁸ In April 1968 Morris's 'Anti-Form' essay was published in Art Forum where he describes this new tendency in sculpture:

*“Random piling, loose stacking, hanging, give passing form to the material. Chance is accepted and indeterminacy is implied since replacing will result in another configuration. Disengagement with preconceived enduring forms and order for things is a positive assertion. It is part of the work's refusal to continue aestheticizing form by dealing with it as a prescribed end”.*⁹

The comment: “*Passing form to the material*” is also connected to Jackson Pollock's way of re-thinking both materials and tools in making, and allowing chance and physical action to take part in the process. This way of exploring through the material was also done by other artists for example Eva Hesse.¹⁰

I found a dead tree in a small forest, behind Konstfack. The tree stood there gracious and vulnerable at the same time. The bark was falling of and it had no branches. The silence was there, the life wasn't and a feeling of insecurity came. I took a picture of it and went away.

8 Paice, Kimberly: Catalogue: *Robert Morris, The Mind/Body Problem*. New York: Rizzoli International Publ., 1994, p. 85.

9 Ibid., p. 213

10 Ibid., p. 213

At that time I was attending a course called “Going Public”. The course was about creating art or design in a public space. I instantly felt that I wanted to surround something. Fear was overcoming everything around me, in the news, in people's conversations for example about 'global warming', war on terror etc. I sometimes just wanted to go inside and cover myself under a blanket, and hide away. That gave me the need to create something that could give a peace of mind, warmth or serve as a place of peace.

I made a proposal for a public artwork, to weave a shield of reed, around the dead tree I had found. The reed is a material that originally comes from trees. It has a historical background of the basket making, which has made it one of the most needed materials similar as the plastic bag or plastic. In many places in the world it still is.

The shield would cover the tree from the ground and up as far as I could. The work would be ephemeral, since I would leave the reed on the tree to let nature take over its decay. My intention was to reflect on the value of especially nature, and to highlight things that seem worthless. Time would be very visual since the deterioration of the tree was already visual. The reed couldn't endure the weather conditions in Stockholm, and after couple of winters it would start its decay. The dead tree would soon fall down and the reed would as well. I thought about these two materials together as one whole and as separate. Changing and breaking down both within their own time.

At that time I was under a great influence of the works of the British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. He works in nature as a material and element, and produces site-specific sculptures and land art, situated in natural and urban settings. His art involves the use of natural and found objects to create both temporary and permanent sculptures which draw out the character of the environment..

He documents all of his works with photographic technique. Both good and bad are documented, choosing the right time when the work is at its peak. Before it collapses, decays, gets blown- or washed away,

... "The photographs leave the reason and spirit of the work outside. They are not the purpose but the result of my art." ¹¹

In the beginning of his development he made some very strict rules to be able to concentrate his ideas. He did not allow any kind of tools. He made experiments with leaves, grass stalks, stones, snow and ice, water, light, weather etc.

With growing experience- and his work becoming bigger in scale, as well as being indoor and permanent works, he has through some period of time allowed himself to bend his rules or even

11 Freidman, T. & Goldsworthy, A.(eds.) : *Time*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2004, p. 9

brake them. His idea of being able to adapt, to an ever changing nature of his materials, and the fact that some of his work, for example in his permanent site-specific sculptures, simply demanded the use of machines.¹²

Being dependent on the material of the location, makes the work different from if he would have had the tree trunks bent for him, to create the shape he wished for. He had some idea of the form, but left the scale and nature of the work to be resolved in the making.

In that way, the form came out of the material and place, a collaboration of man and nature.

His site-specific works are always about the area he's in at the time. It's people, nature, materials and weather. When naming weather as a factor, it derives from the fact that often the material he is using is dependent on weather in succeeding.

He found the purpose of his work being a way to express through natural materials. To find its own element and work with it in a non-manipulating way. Being concerned with the land in itself, its substance, the things that live in it and what happens to it. For some time he confined himself in formless works. Were the materials he was using were discovered in the process of studying his material rather than inventing them.

Time plays an important role in Goldworthy's art. The time in his works is the time of nature and man's mixed together in an harmonious way. It exposes movement, change, light, growth and decay, which are the life- blood of nature.

Because his works are dependent on natural elements like the weather, and therefore on chance, they have a natural time frame within. The most influential aspect for me is the way he allows the material to have its own way, and allow the work to develop and happen on its own terms. The form of the work was discovered through the material.

Materials have always been my medium in art. I like differences and contradictions. I want to sense nonsense in sensible things and think with my gut. What happens in a wordless way is what I'm seeking after. Maybe that is the reason why I want to find balance between music and art. I like to see if it can work to have two elements that are different, in the same space, both moving and still at the same time.

12 *ibid.*, p.18

Intuition

I do not find replicates of nature interesting but the force of it is, and what lays beyond the horizon. The gut feeling of something right and the battle with the fear that wants to steal that belief. I like contradictions but I want to find a balance between them.

“As has been said often enough, it is impossible to make clear the aim of a work of art by means of words. Despite a certain superficiality with which this assertion is leveled and in particular exploited, it is by and large correct, and remains so even at a time of the greatest education and knowledge of language and its material. And this assertion- I now abandon the realm of objective reasoning – is also correct because the artist himself can never either grasp or recognize fully his own aim” (Wassily Kandinsky 1866)¹³

To begin my discussion of how I moved where I'm know I'd need to start with my bachelor graduation piece. The work was a development into addressing the material and its nature as the work, away from concept and the word. Therefore I have often fallen into the trap of trying to force logic into my action. Since my main interest was in the material I found myself moving further and further away from the logic of the mind and wanting to gain another way of working using my intuition and feeling. But in a world of words and logic that can be very difficult place to be in, specially when I am in that stage of not knowing the result until the work has been done. This means taking risks.

I gathered three different materials, melted sugar pieces, light filters in meters and stickers. Each material had been worked with individually aiming for it to form its own form so to speak. The sugar was poured into circles. While making them I did not have much control over the outcome which was based on the temperature of the sugar and the way I'd manage to pour it.

The stickers formed in a very small sculptures that I had started making earlier. They were simply a circle formed small stickers, the ones you'd find in every office supply store, and that I glued together six pieces using the glue on them. My idea was to make an object created by its own nature, without any outside materialization. These objects became simultaneous work made in 3000 pieces. I felt the likeness of the textile tradition while making them. Usually there would be women

13 Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke, Honnef, Walther, Ingo F. (eds.): *Art of the 20th Century*, Köln: Taschen, 2000,

gathering and sitting for hours doing embroidery or similar work. Same was for me I did borrowed helping hands from my sisters, as we sat together the four of us, and glued six orange stickers together into three dimensional forms.

I worked the light-filters into the space without having done any previous work with that material before, I felt both insecure and excited.

I built the piece on location without knowing the final result. My goal was to create an installation based on a feeling, creating a balance between the different materials and the given space. What stood out after it, was the way I worked with my feeling and intuition and took risks in the result. I had developed a method for myself. That method was deeply influenced with John Cage's method of chance and happenstance, and Andy Goldsworthy's approach of letting the material control the result. Later I discovered Eva Hesse which became very important for my development.

The process of making has played a major role in my works. The pouring, gluing, weaving and draping etc. This way I engage my body into the making of the work plays a major role in the outcome. It becomes a physical engagement to wrap around or to address a space with different materials. I want the audience to feel with both body and mind.

My starting point in the master project was to begin my work where I had left the last time, in the forest. I wanted to continue with the dialog between the trees, and different materials. I have a method of how I choose my materials, and that is to listen to a certain need and simply serve my belongings and use my feelings to tell me if there is a relation or not. In between I have been caught in the net of doubt since my brain works slower than my intuition. It is similar as to act first and understand the next. Because of that doubt, I have been going back and forth, in and out, of deciding to be either outside in the forest or taking that work somehow in side.

I want to hear a strange harmony, drape a tree in velvet. See the result of weaving a shield of reed around a dead tree, and weave in the void between trees with plastic.

The household plastic-film is a domestic material, found in most western homes and used to preserve food. To preserve is to interfere with time. To take a piece of bread and wrap it as a simple and modern way to slow down the aging process. The act of wrapping in, made me want to explore this material in a different context. I decided to go to the forest and see what would happen if I would use it on the trees. At that point I was working through a feeling and didn't know why I was

doing it. I started out with wrapping it around one tree to the next, creating a chain. I document it, took it off the trees and did a few more sketches which I documented. The first results of the sketches showed violence and control. It was like I was trying to force the trees together. After that I stopped working with it for a while and didn't know how to continue. Later I figured that it wasn't the act of wrapping the plastic around the trees, it was rather the gap between them that I was interested in. I have a picture in my head of looking into the forest, where the eye starts seeking for a way to go deeper and deeper until it can't see further in. From this feeling I made my next approach. I started weaving it between the trees until it became a structure. The weave became an event that couldn't be done in the same way again. The more I went back and forth between the trees the more three dimensional it became. The wrinkles that appeared on the thin plastic when I stretched it reminded me of the muscles in the human body.

By working in this way, the documentation becomes the result, since the nature of an event is not to be permanent. It is a time-based material in dialog with nature, where a constant movement is happening between the image of nature and the image of the man-made. In nature movement is constant, visible in its growth and change. Therefore I find it relative to be in nature.

Between Contradictions

This method of having control and yet no-control, knowing and not- knowing, and taking risks in order to find a balance between differences is not a decision that I made over a night. There have been many artists that have influenced me and indirectly showed me the way. And it is very important to discover another artist that seems to have a similar approach or language. I discovered the works of Eva Hesse (1936-1970) after I had started at Konstfack, and felt as if I had found a parent in art, or someone that could tell me I was on the right track. Her works felt as if she was in a constant battle with finding balance between contradictions or opponents. Such as female and man, expand and contracting, light and dark, combinations of organic and mechanical forms etc. In an interview she made with Cindy Nemser in 1970, just before she died she said:

"I remember always working with contradictions and contradictory forms, which is my idea also in life, the whole absurdity of life, everything for me has always

*been opposites, nothing has ever been in the middle. My life never had anything normal or in the centre and it was always extremes.*¹⁴

Hesse wanted to bring out the nature of the material and allowing the process becoming the actual work and not caring about if it would last or not.

“I would like the work to be non-work. This means that it would find its way beyond my preconceptions.

What I want of my art I can eventually find. The work must go beyond this.

It is my main concern to go beyond what I know and what I can know.

The formal principles are understandable and understood.

It is the unknown quantity from which and where I want to go.

As a thin, an object, it accedes to its non-logical self.

*It is something, it is nothing.”*¹⁵

Like her own words say: *“it accedes to its non-logical self”*.

This expresses that she was depicting nothing and representing nothing. She is not interested in only logic, rather what lays between contradictions, nothing and everything. In one of her most famous sculptures the cuboid *Accession* she uses a cube, a form favored by the minimalists.

*“The cube made in steel had thousands of perforations, through which countless flexible plastic tubes run inwards like feelers, bristling and teeming, drawing the viewer's gaze into constant movement and touch”*¹⁶

The dialog between the formal, mathematical or man-made forms (the cube), and the organic and sensational are obvious in this work.

Later she became even more organic and made work that dependent on the space in how the result would be. Lets not forget that this is in the years of 1969-1970 and that her works were pioneering in working with the space as part of the result and not objects or artifacts.

When she says: *“It is something, it is nothing”*, I understand it as saying that her works are both something and nothing and as I understand it, there is always a connection between contradictions, and if so, they don't really exist or the line between isn't that clear.

14 Barrett, B: *Eva Hesse, Sculpture: Catalogue Raisonné*. New York: Timken Publishers, Inc., 1989, p. 11

15 Lippard, Lucy R: *Eva Hesse*. New York: New York University Press, 1976, p. 131

16 Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke, Honnet, Whalter (eds.), 2000, p. 537

Images of Time

If my works have always moved in one or the other way towards some kind of 'nothing' and I place that very notion into context with the word 'energy', being the idea of energy in everything. And that if energy doesn't disappear, but changes, than there doesn't exist a 'nothing' only change, from one form into the next, one feeling into a new one and one thought into another. It is a constant cycle, time.

I have noticed a certain repetition in my works, that is to cover one material on top of another. Which has probably to do with working with contradictions. In 2004 I cut a small (10cm x10 cm) piece of an inner tube from a car tire that had the shape of a pillow. I coated the top of it with melted sugar. The sugar became like a piece of glass, holding firmly to the vibrant nature of the rubber. The square shaped thing had an empty space within it, but looked as if it was massive. It called out for touching or pressing it together, like if it had some kind of a deep, dark secret that had to come out. I made two of these sculptures and installed each one in two separate corridors at the same building. There were small gaps in both these corridors that looked the same. This was an industrial building where spaces for pipes were visible. These sculptures fitted perfectly into these spaces. By repeating the same sculpture, as well as having the installation in two identical spaces created some kind of a flash-back or a thin line between dream and reality. To see the same installation twice in a separate corridor but with different surroundings, meant something for me that I couldn't describe completely in words. The repetition creates a movement. The walls are identical but within two different corridors. The environment is partly different which makes time visual. To wrap or coat something with another material, can also be looked upon as layers of different images of time.

The artist Sigurdur Gudmundsson made a lecture in 1969 about time and how we perceive it differently according to our attitude towards truth and how that determines where we find ourselves in time and space. That all things made by man are ideas which have been converted into materials. That gives us the distinct image of the environment which is constantly changing. If the environment did not change physically, then it could be said that time stands still.¹⁷

17 Eyck, Zsa-Zsa (eds.): *Time in Sigurdur Gudmundsson*. Malmö: Malmö Konsthall, 1992, p.26-28



*Mountain 1980-82*¹⁸

*“All that we perceive outside ourselves is our environment. This environment consists partly of unspoiled nature, partly of people and partly of things which have been made by people”*¹⁹

The idea of working with trees is connected to the image of nature's time. Part of the reason for choosing trees is to emphasize the time-based function of my work. The tree grows, regardless of my actions.

One of the strongest example I have found in wrapping or surrounding something, is in the works of Christo & Jeanne-Claude.

*“Throughout the history of art, the use of fabric has been a fascination for artist. From the most ancient times to the present, fabric – forming folds, pleats and draperies – has played a significant part in painting, frescoes, reliefs and sculptures made of wood, stone or bronze. The use of fabric on the Reichstag, follows that classical tradition. Fabric, like clothing and skin, is fragile. It expresses the unique quality of impermanence.”*²⁰

The wrapping of a monumental building like the Reichstag, Berlin makes me think of time as well as magic. What happens within the wrapping and the unwrapping. To not being able to see

18 Ibid., 1992, p. 99

19 Ibid., 1992, p. 26

20 Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke, Honnef (eds.), 2000, p. 550

something that is a normal part of the environment, just having the knowledge of it still being there, recognizing the form and shape. And then its unwrapped, and the secret is out. Like being in a fairytale and come back. I thought of something playful and being able to fabricate everything you imagined. I thought of the time aspect of wrapping, or covering something, and how the act of taking something out of its context makes its time stand still. The different images of time get more visual since the environment around it is moving, people, cars etc. Wrapping is also a way to embrace something and in that way give a sense of value.

I wanted to drape a tree in velvet. The tree I chose stood on a field, a little bit away from the thick forest, and in the back was a lake and the open sky, it was this picture perfect tree that reminded me of a tree from a fairytale, or pictures of the “tree of life”. I draped the trunk in velvet, and after I had documented it, I took the velvet off it. The gradual vanishing of the tree trunk, into the thick heavy velvet gave me this strong feeling for an overload like if I was making a huge cake. I felt I wanted to continue covering the tree but decided to stop where the branches began to grow because I wanted this still to be a tree. My intention wasn't to cover it but to find some balance between my act, the draping, and the tree. I didn't want to create a sculpture or a new object but to have both nature and the sculpture in one piece. It is an installation on a tree. The tree and its environment becomes the space. It is a living space, growing which I take part of, to drape in fabric for a short time.

Happening

I have created a space in the environment, both visual and aural. Since I didn't have an indoor space to work against, I decided to take all of my work outside, and in the end bring these different results into a one space. In that way I have created many threads that I need to fasten together where some will be hanging out, bleeding in different directions.

“When you look at a painting in a gallery you hear somebody talk behind you about their feet hurting. You hear all the noises around you. You start to talk to other people and that is how you see art. So why not hear it as well as see it all at the same time? But it is not a 'Gesamtkunstwerk'. Everything is moving along at

the same time. They are all growing. There is not one dominant”.

This comment by Lawrence Wiener has made me wonder if it is possible to make sound or a music piece function with another visual work? Does that function as a dialog, where both pieces have been circling around a similar subject matter? Or would that just be irritating? Where he says that *'everything is growing'*, sound, art, movement (people) and the space. And that it is not to the meaning of merging it into one, but to let the differences be there, *“they are all growing”... “not one dominant”*. This gives me more reason to wanting to work with music and art in a space. It is simply because if these two elements (seeing and hearing) are constantly working than there must be a way for me to make that work in space. Centuries ago art and music mixed together in the church, depicting around the same subject matter, God. The motets, oratorios, cantatas, requiems, fresco cycles, and altarpieces, while architecture provided vaulted spaces for the acoustics and illusions of music, painting and sculpture. But with cultural changes the art disciplines moved away from each other.²¹

*“With the advent of the concert hall in the nineteenth century and the growth of cities and secular thought, the arts began to disperse from this meeting ground”.*²²

Since I came from music I always wanted to built a bridge between music and art. But as I have said earlier I found it difficult. It seemed to be easier if I made a decision to only think in terms of sound, without a visual part, or do a visual piece without a sound.

In 2003 I made a sound-performance, where I gathered found objects into a percussion and played on for audience. At the beginning I received instructions as a work frame. That was to have one hour to create, and seek inspiration from a word that I had received by chance. I wanted the actual percussion to be non-visual and therefore I made a room for audience were they faced their back to me and the percussion. They did not see the percussion and were not aware of what they were about to experience, visual or aural. The reason for this was that I wanted the audience to experience sound without visual contact of what it was actually coming from, and in that sense they would be able to picture they're own experience.

Even though I did not make many sound pieces after that I see this as an important attempt to work from the gut and taking risks. I have never been as scared in my life. This work I have carried with me since then, going back into the idea of making instantly, without to much thought, and not being in total control of the final result, the making of something unexpected and the silence

21 Licht, Alan, 2007, p. 17

22 Ibid., 2007, p. 17

afterwards which I find equally important.

In the context of making instantly, from a given source, in this case words. And put faith on a result built on chance, makes me reflect on the works of Jessica Stockholder. Her installations are partly built on happenstance as well as being fixed and thought through. She comments:

*“To use a visual metaphor for this idea – objects in the place of ideas.”*²³

She allows herself to be chaotic and not having everything adding up into a thought through structure, similar as a dream.

*“My work often arrives in the world like an idea arrives in your mind. You don’t quite know where it came from or when it got put together, nevertheless, it’s possible to take it apart and see that it has an internal logic. I’m trying to get closer to thinking processes as they exist before the idea is fully formed. The various parts of my work are multivalent as are the various parts of dreams. At best, there are many ways to put the pieces together”.*²⁴

As I understand the comment: *“There are many ways to put a piece together”* means that there isn't just one truth in a piece. Based on the knowledge that there are many ways to see the world, it isn't just the sky, it is also the sea and the land, with everything in it. Her works do not have a beginning, middle part or an end, they are in constant cycle, there is no door that opens and closes.²⁵ In that sense I would like my work to be open for different results.

I have made a package that I have sent to Iceland. Its contain is based on intuition, happening and inspiration. In it is a text written by me, a recording of my heartbeat, and a recording equipment. The receivers will be five in total, they will receive the package one after another. The first receiver is chosen by me, after that they will choose each other, passing the package from one person to the next. These fixed points came in the beginning of this idea, the next step was to decide what the package would contain. The earlier mentioned words: Intuition, happening and inspiration were my key stones in the search for the right contain. I decided to send sound and text.

The sound came into my hands through a pure chance. I was standing in front of my bookshelf and without knowing why, I suddenly take a brown envelope out of it which has a recording of my heartbeat. That recording was made in the exhibition *“Les Archives”* by Christian Boltanski held in Magasin 3, Stockholm Konsthall in the fall 2008. In Boltanski's exhibition visitors were invited to donate a recording of their heartbeat, to be in the future stored on the island Ejima in Japan. I

23 Tillman, Lynne. *Jessica Stockholder: Interview*. New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 1995, p. 23

24 Ottmann, Klaus, *Jessica Stockholder: Interview*. New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 1995, p. 119

25 Tillman, Lynne. 1995, p. 26

couldn't help wondering about this island, storing thousands of heartbeats from different people all over the world. How would an island sound, if it would be possible to listen to the whole archive at ones?

After I had received the recording I had no desire in listening to it. It felt all a bit awkward - to give it a visual metaphor - it felt as if I had given a stranger my blood example, someone in no connection with the health environment. Later when I did listen, I became surprised of how musical the beat was.

There are many phrases connected to music and the heartbeat, for example: "Sing from your heart" and "listen with your heart", this way of expression indicates how deeply, the heart and the primitive sound of the heart is rooted in our sense for music. I wrote a text about different reflections on the heartbeat and instructions for the receivers. In the instructions I ask the receiver to sing from his/her heart, when the moment feels right, within the time frame of 1-3 minutes. Having the following words as a guidance: "Intuition, happening and inspiration". And to ask the receiver to record the performance and send it to the next person of his/her choice.

After the package has reached five vocals it will finally be sent to me. I have decided to play the five vocals, all at once from one speaker each, creating a harmony based on chance.

These persons will hardly have any knowledge of me, or communication other than from the sound and the text in the packet. That is a very important part of the work in order to have a result based on happenstance and chance. If the receivers were chosen by me and would have had a communication with me in the beginning, they would have had too much influence from me as a person and an artist, which could interfere with their performance. I want them to sing from their heart using their intuition and in order to do so I need to be as invisible as possible.

This connects to my sound performance where the audience couldn't see me or my source of sound. Therefore they had to listen with all their senses. A recording distances sounds from their visual source, as well as a photographic documentation of an event. It is not the spirit of the work but the result of it. To take away the visual source of a sound makes the listener fully aware of the origin of the sound, it is a way to manipulate the listener to 'only listen'. Similar departure point was done by Yoko Ono in the 1960's, when she wrote instructions to the performer of *Tape Piece II*: "Take the sound of a room breathing."²⁶ The piece is finished in the mind of the reader (not listener), and still you can hear it.

26 Licht, Alan, 2007 p. 47

Conclusion

To put a trust in the feeling and act without knowing. Like Jessica Stockholder said:

*“My work often arrives in the world like an idea arrives in your mind. You don’t quite know where it came from...”*²⁷ Reflecting on the past is a way to take a few steps backwards in order to

understand that very idea and to being able to continue. I remember an art course I ones joined, where the task was to take an idea and map how I had managed to travel to that place. To visualize and put into words the stones I had jumped on, in order to cross the river. By doing that the idea became more physical and real. And I was able to take it even further. It was not done in the conceptual fashion of asking constantly, why? But how?

This statement by Sigurdur Gudmundsson:

*“Art is a product of feeling and can therefore only be consumed intuitively”*²⁸

Meaning that the feelings should not be underestimated in making art. In order to have a clearer picture of what I am doing and will do, I have to allow myself to be scared, take risks and work without knowing.

²⁷ Ottmann, Klaus, *Jessica Stockholder: Interview*. New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 1995, p. 119

²⁸ Eyck, Zsa-Zsa (eds.), 1992, p. 18

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