

Interview between Mathijs van Geest and Mikko Kuorinki for his exhibition *Leg Sleeps Drop Deep* at SIC, Helsinki. The interview took place during March 2017 through email.

We are a few weeks until the exhibition, can you say where you are in the process towards *Leg Sleeps Drop Deep*? What elements and materials you are working with at the moment?

Nothing is decided for sure, and I'm sure I will be working on the exhibition until the opening night. Things are taking forms, but also breaking down all the time now.

Right now I am gluing wood pieces together, moulding some clay, spray painting some small surfaces. I've been using for example some bells, metal chair parts, t-shirts, cardboard, silicone, paper, parrot toys, radishes and herbs.

I've been thinking of meditation surfaces... materials that have reached certain stage and form out of neglect... I am thinking of props and racks... how radishes shrink...

What is different from some exhibitions I've made in the last few years, is that it looks like I use this time more raw materials which I then modify heavily. So it's almost opposite approach from the past works where I used objects that I altered perhaps only slightly if at all. It's been weird using clay, wood and tools for the first time.

I decided that I would only use materials that have cheap hobby craft quality - things I can transport myself from hardware store and work on without any special tools. All this is not so important to state, but it did have a heavy effect on what is seen in the exhibition - it's all pretty lightweight and somewhat amateurishly constructed. This liberated me to work with materials by myself which I haven't really done for a long time. I realised I've been in similar state of mind I was when I was making fanzines and recording music long time ago.

I always feel your works are very spontaneous, almost as if they exist from one day to the other. This time you seem to try out a more process orientated approach?

I do often work with fast pace, but I need time for trying out lots of things before landing into something that seems more solid. Ideally I hope the exhibition would emit certain energy, that it would simultaneously appear to be in one sense light and strange, but also to transmit a sense of the works being the results of some longer, more complicated thoughts.

Can you describe me what you see when you walk into your studio? How does your workplace look like? Is it chaotic or organised? What is on your desk?

Walking in my studio you would see some spray painted tetra packs on the floor. It's pretty chaotic and small. The dimensions limit what I can do here. There are three wooden structures that appear to be some sort of screens or space dividers. You would see cut metal rods, aluminium, copper, grey industrial looking plastic boxes, glue cardboard box with a metal rod sticking out of it, sticks with legs, meditation pillow, a structure that could be a coat rack but made poorly, some clay objects painted and coated with varnish. Radishes scattered around.

On my desk there are currently some watercolor paintings and a small piece of ceramic clay drying. Various yellow post-it notes with fast handwriting, a metal whistle, receipts on plastic trays. There's a tall san pedro cacti looking out towards the grey courtyard, I enjoy the fact that this plant carries inside it hallucinogenic properties... just the potentiality of that.

What kind of activities spark your working mode? I know you read and meditate quite a bit, and now I learned you play (or used to play) music. Do such activities extend their way through into your visual work?

Sencha tea has been my main drug of choice for working these days. I feel it helps me to focus - the high is long lasting, but does not have the anxiety and heart palpitation of caffeine overdose. Zen meditation contributes to my general mind state and through that it affects my working. Actually in the exhibition there's going to be maybe quite a lot of things that reflect very loosely to zen meditation... some of the shapes and materials.

I sometimes listen to the long drone continuums of Eliane Radigue while working. I don't know thought how much this listening fuels the visual work itself. It creates certain mood which ables me to work without interruption.

You often include very direct, banal, industrially produced objects in your work and distance them from their function and supposedly environment. Does the isolation happen before or after you actually bring the objects into your studio? Do you preconceive to isolate of objects, or does it happen while working with them?

Sometimes there is a conceptual idea of why I use a specific object, but I would say at the moment this is not so common. Sometimes something does seem to be "crystallising" in certain material and that is why I'm drawn to it. Or I might want to look something out of its context, liberate it in one way. Or put it into interaction with something that it usually is not in touch with. Coincidences, misunderstandings and poems also take me toward some objects. Lot of zen haikus I've been reading lately include radishes... that's one reason why I got radishes in my studio now :))

I also do think of the cycles certain objects have taken to reach certain stage. And the labour and material efforts and energy it has used up. In contrast to the unused and industrial objects I use sometimes materials that are found and used.

It feels often like writing with objects when I install them in the space. Then again writing can be like placing objects in a room?

Object Described has probably contributed to why I am now creating objects myself in this upcoming show. A big book for me has been *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* by Kubler.

Yes can you tell me a bit about *Objects Described*?

Objects Described is a series of works where I simply write instructions for someone to make into an object. I hire people who identify themselves as artisans, people who make objects with certain use. The descriptions are different each time, depending on the location of the exhibition and the materials my collaborator uses. They are partly concrete, stating dimensions for example and partly quite abstract, even poem-like. I will not include any kind of image with the instructions. I enjoy in this series how my written description filters through someone's brain and hands and turns into an object.

I like the relation you make between writing instructions and poetry. Commonly, language in instructions are extremely 'economic', direct and concrete, only using the minimal amount of words to transfer the message.

French theorist Althusser explains materialism as an indulgent of storytelling. Are economy and waste elements you think about (when writing)?

I fondly think of one poet who often states his contempt for stories.

Economy and waste are things I do think about (both in writing and when working with objects). In the past I tried often to be as economical as possible, describe as little as possible. Similarly I've tried to be materially quite scarce and use sometimes materials that I can re-use somehow or maybe it could serve as a survival element in the post-apocalyptic world.

In writing I've tried to see how little one can express and still be able hopefully to convey something. In one way I feel I used that practise up and didn't find it so fruitful anymore. Maybe this is why I write less now. I still get a lot of pleasure out of minimal poetry but I am now heavily into complex - more stylistically abundant texts.

My exhibitions tend to look also stripped down, but once you dig deeper some layers hopefully appear for the viewer.

Leg Sleeps Drop Deep, the exhibition title of your show at SIC, really starts to get stuck in my head. Often when I look at your work, I feel like you give only one leg to stand on, sort of speak. To let the viewer find some sort of balance between understanding and accepting it for what it is?

I like it myself when encounter an artwork, to sense that there is no puzzle to solve. Caribic Residency put it nicely "We practice non-definition to keep becoming".

Some of your work titles are very descriptive to the work itself while others seem to pull the viewer away from the physical object- leaving an open interpretation. Why combine such opposite approaches?

Sometimes a work benefits from straight "product information" type of title, something that clears or states what the work consist of or how it was made. Sometimes the work summons a title which origin I might not even myself be able to trace.

You already mentioned the relation between placing objects in the room in relation to putting words on paper. Yet a room is not just linear, is there a hierarchy within the works themselves? And do you imagine a certain primacy between works and titles?

Room is not linear, but for me text doesn't need to be either. I don't mean I would read with my eyes bouncing around on a page...

In poetry usually the content doesn't operate in a linearly progressing way, but bounces, stretches, overlaps and dissolves in various ways. It's not there to convince you of a story you should follow. Usually in the space the materials and objects just seek to be in and could not be in any other place, but I don't think that has to do with hierarchy.

To conclude, what is one of the better poems you read these days?

Popcorn-can cover
screwed to the wall
over a hole
so the cold
can't mouse in

(Lorine Niedecker)