

FILMMAKER WITHOUT THE CAMERA

CLASS II

Class breakdown

1. Theory
2. Practical exercise (outdoors)
3. Reflection and critical discussion
4. Screening

Technical requirements / materials for the classes

Auditorium, projector, sound system, MacBook Air adaptor (thunderbolt)

Other materials: Notebook, pen

Bibliography:

Benjamin, W. (1968). *The task of the translator (Vol. 69). Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Schocken Books

Recommended bibliography:

Heidegger, M. (2002) *On the Essence of Truth*, ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing

Lamas, S (2016)_Parafiction_Selected_Works_ed.Mousse Publishing

The filmmaker and the task of the translator

The language of the real in cinematographic language: If we circumscribe the sphere of action, we acquire the four initial movements of the filmmaker's intention: language, translation, critique, and story (these concepts are based on a prism by Walter Benjamin).

Language: According to Benjamin, no event or object exists in nature that does not somehow have a whereabouts in language. All and any exteriorization of human spiritual life can be understood as a form of language. This way, the spiritual essence communicated as language does not coincide with the language itself. What does language communicate? It communicates that to which it corresponds.

Language is imperfect in its communicative essence. It covets universality since the spiritual essence is not entirely a linguistic structure.

Names are attributed to that *which does not have a name*; nevertheless those who are nameless do not exist in this game. It is in the translation of the language of things into human language that the concept of translation is founded. It is the translation of that *which does not have a name* into a name, and this way many translations, such as languages, exist.

Translation: Will it be a valid translation for they who are not familiar with the original? It seems to be the only reason to say the same thing again! What does a film say? What does it communicate? Translation is form; to design implies returning to the original.

A translation must be taken into consideration even if it is untranslatable to the spectator. If translation is form, then the possibility of translation should be the essence of some works.

In order to evaluate the authenticity of a translation and its original, some criteria that are analogous to processes where critique or knowledge proves the impossibility of an image-copy theory must be met.

If knowledge rejects the objectivity or the demand of the objective—that is, if knowledge is composed of an image-copy—this shows that no translations can aspire to have a similarity with the original. It will therefore be a metamorphosis of the original.

In this, concepts that would never be paired together, such as “liberty” and “fidelity,” are crucial when the translator’s work begins. Being faithful to the language, to the sound and the image, is an immeasurable task.

Critique: Critique seeks the hidden truth in the artistic object and comments on its material properties. The wisest process is to search through the more intelligible *brothers* and *sisters* of the work. It is almost as if the filmmaker would build a reference map to navigate around the production. The job of interpretation is virtually that of the translator as well.

History: The history converts the representation of the past into its own theme. It is an exponential (integration) of reality, in which a past event (of its remote time) contains a greater degree of actuality than that of its existence. The honest method of making a past event present consists of bringing it or representing it in our (contemporary) space, so that the event forms part of our lives.

In any case, we can enter the space of time, but not the life of time. Looking back does not bring the past back. Thus it is necessary to bring the past to our time, and inscribe it into our current reality. Here time is a dialectic suspended between past and present, containing in an elevated way the mark of the critical moment.

I believe that these tempos are pivotal to the filmmaker’s motivation in translating reality—transporting the language of the real to the cinematographic language. It is also at this point that the discursive forms of fiction and nonfiction overlap.

2018 – Extinção / Extinction

HD video, 2:39, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 80 min., Germany-Portugal

Production: O Som e a Fúria, Lamaland, Mengamuk Films, Walla Collective, Screen Miguel Nabinho, Bikini

Development Support: , Agora Works in Progress 2016 Thessaloniki International Film Festival.

Additional Support: Screen Miguel Nabinho, Walla Colective, Bikini, Yuki, Bogliasco Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, Yadoo

Support: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual (ICA)

Synopsis

The question concerning the borders of the territories of what was once the USSR has proved to be a potential time bomb. *Extinction* is an eclectic patchwork of materials (fiction and nonfiction) led by Kolya, who is of Moldovan nationality, but declares himself a national of Transnistria. Fragments draw the viewer to the collective imaginary of the Soviet Union. The film aims to make an abstract comment on Vladimir Putin's latest political stands of "war without war, occupation without occupation."

Extinction_sample1 – 01:38

Extinction_sample2 – 04:37

Extinction_sample3 – 01:02

Self-Portrait_sample – 09:05

Extinction_sample4 – 03:57

Extinction_sample5 – 05:23

Extinction_sample6 – 04:19

2015 - A Torre / The Tower

HD video, 16:9, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 8 min., Portugal - Germany - Moldova

In collaboration with Christoph Both-Asmus

Production: Mengamuk, O Som e a Fúria

Support: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Bikini, Universidade Católica do Porto

Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem, Kinoscope

Synopsis

Maybe Kolja's experiment of merging his body (human) with the tree (nature), venturing into a border zone between the earth and the sky, is due to his purity of spirit, to the grandeur of the idiots, or the foolishness of the mystics. Or is it all of these together? Maybe it is a symptom of the enlightened—or simply an elaborated suicide.

The_Tower_sample1 – 03:41

Notes for a possible methodology: The real as a playground

It is common to film, or even not to film, but to remain there an entire day observing, until it "occurs," and you immediately know that you have won the day. It is so evident that sometimes you notice or you intuit the moment in which it will "occur."

Although there are notes written of a possible script in these films, the reality is certainly more detailed than our imagination, and it is in the recognition, the site of occupation, and the dialogue with the character that the narrative will appear.

The writing of these films comes from a fact that is intolerable to deduce, which is that what is most precious in the world should be left to chance. It is because it is intolerable that it should be contemplated. The imagination, which fills the void, is essentially a lie. Although they have an author, these films should contain anonymity in their essence to be successful. Their process will be obscure, mysterious, and isolated.

There is a methodology, in the homiest sense of the word. I'm the hyperactive kind that can't really tell apart life from work, it all runs in parallel. While I look for no particular destination, I tend to be attracted to subjects or territories of conflict, that are hard to depict, to judge, to handle, and ultimately to reach or that have been pushed out of the map. These are border territories or marginal characters.

I always thought that reality could take you to places where your mind would never dare. Places where your mind fails to enter. I was using reality as a playground; I tried to buy time for the unpredictable, for the encounter.

I approach reality as a sculptor approaches a block of matter; you must look for the hidden film imprinted in the real; such as a new block of stone – pregnant with the work – ready to be sculpted. Stone might at a first analysis not be the most flexible matter; its inflexibility or restricting plasticity is also what makes it attractive. I have the mind frame of a collector that enjoys hunting sites of no-where-ness. A gatherer of “cut ups” of reality.

Our gaze frames, and for a moment suspends life. When one is young one is defiant and stupid; when one grows up one becomes less defiant and less stupid. One of the core issues in these films is the physical experience of reality. We speak of a predisposition, or the motivation of situations (that we do not control) that leave us trapped, from which we cannot escape (in some cases literally), situations that demand an immediate reaction. I am interested in the perception of the moment in which control is lost. At this point reality turns into a “children’s playground.”

First we circumscribe reality to a geographic or time perimeter. This circumscription is born from curiosity, but should be simultaneously uncomfortable to us. We physically project ourselves into the interior of this reality in order to turn into foreign bodies and feel strange to the other who is present. It is this occupation and the spark that arises here that could encourage a film. Sometimes an adaptation is demanded from us (as simple as a step forward, or a step to the side). The rest has to do with waiting.

The question could be: How long should I stand still here in order for the quotidian to become extraordinary?

These are projects that cross both geographic and moral limits, that confront the sociocultural margins and that reflect the limits of the practice in which they are inscribed. This encounters of mutual strangeness generates multiple possibilities of occupation, duration, reaction and encounters with the other.

These are projects calling for on-call mobile crews; projects that are constructed in time and space with the investment of the others, they wouldn't be successful in any other way.

It is almost a paradox; on one hand the desired margin for the risk, the management of the collaborators, and the exigencies to accomplish a presentable product corresponding to the investment of all the interveners.

But in order to transfer myself into these territories, in the condition that I have described, one must believe that there is mystery. It is a practice that seals an act of faith.

When you rely on wait, occupation or in the encounter it is mandatory to manage the communication of fragilities and uncertainties, or you end up losing the collaborators. How will you explain that we are all there waiting for a some magic moment, that you know that might not occur, and that you don't quite know how to describe? You might be lucky to have found it but you might also be the only one that recognizes it. It is something that doesn't happen in all the projects. This moment is only a tiny parcel of the working plan and doesn't necessary have implications onto the success of the production – but it is also to witness these moments that I can't honestly describe any better, that I chose as my occupation to be a projector, and if the pleasure of recognition is shared it is even more gratifying.

The structure of the project and its motivations must be clear and communicable. The necessary collected materials of different natures can be congregated in parallel, and there should always be a consistent working plan to compensate for the insecurity of the lack of definition.

They are strong and uncomfortable experiences where one deals with extreme geographical and human realities, distinct from the ones that we inhabit in our quotidian. Experiences where we feel diminished, defenseless and naked, where we learn to value what is routinely around us; situations where we feel impotent, disarmed and insignificant, and where there is a large change of being extremely far from home. Here you can find the extremes: morality and amorality, angels and demons.

2016 - Eldorado XXI

HD video, 2:39 color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 125 min., Portugal-France-Peru

Production: O Som e a Fúria, Shellac Sud, Tambo Films

Support: Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual (ICA), Centre National du Cinéma (CNC), EURIMAGES – Council of Europe

Development awards: FIDLab 2013 FID Marseille (Le prix Sublimage, Le prix Vidéo de Poche).

Development Support: DocStation 2014 Berlinale, Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio

Center, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, Critical Media Practice – Workshop (WIP), Harvard University
Distribution: O Som e a Furia, Shellac Sud

Synopsis

Eldorado XXI is a haunting and mysterious ethnographic reality cut-up. Set in the Peruvian Andes at La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, the highest settlement in the world at 5,500 meters, it depicts an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt with the same tools and means, in contemporaneity as it has been dealt in the ancient times.

Eldorado XXI is a parafictional attempt to combine a sensory ethnographic approach with critical media practices.

Some eighty thousand people live in crowded dwellings in La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, without even the minimum for subsistence farming; they foster the hope that one day they will find the means to resettle elsewhere. There are enough stories of fortunes made randomly to keep hope and the fever alive. As a measure of safety, the miners chew large quantities of coca leaves. They carry the leaves in their pockets daily to deceive hunger and prevent exhaustion. If they live to work again the next day, it is common to celebrate with alcohol and to frequent the local brothels. This becomes a quick road to self-destruction, the only motivation behind it being to soften the harshness of everyday life.

Under the system of *cachorreo*, the miner works for thirty days without remuneration and on the thirty-first day (if lucky) he is allowed to explore the mine for four hours for his own profit. The little precious metal he might carry down the mountain has now to be separated from the rock through antiquated methods using highly toxic levels of mercury. Then the value of the gold powder has to be negotiated in a nonregulated establishment within the community, and the miner will be offered the minimum amount possible.

The system is an unpredictable lottery; nevertheless *cachorreo* means that miners and employers avoid “certain taxes.” It is a mental game, in which the possibility of generating a small fortune motivates the miners. To believe in and aspire to “something bigger” can be a greater motivation than a miserable paycheck at the end of the month; a constant low wage would simply not be worth a life of danger.

La Rinconada and Cerro Lunar are doomed towns, which will very shortly become ghost towns since the mines are running low on precious metal.

You are alone. You hear nothing, you know nothing, and you expect nothing. This is a mysterious film dwelling on the complexity of the human being. It stimulates the viewer to reflect and contemplate, constantly seeking an active audience. It will carry you on a hallucinatory journey. You will not be indifferent to it.

EldoradoXXI_sample1 – 11:13

EldoradoXXI_sample2 – 12:33

The border, the off-the-map, the no-man's-land

I do not have an easy relationship with borders. They frighten men and unnerve me. I have been searched, provoked, delayed time and time again for having had the senselessness to cross a few meters of land. Borders are bureaucratic lines, authoritative and enemy. Their existence is routinely criticized by academic geographers who portray them as hostile acts of exclusion; nonetheless, in a world without borders, where would we escape to? Where would it be worth going to?

No-man's-land is the natural land of the imagination. It is in that non-place that we arm ourselves with the means to withstand the immaculate silence of the universe that goes beyond our own imaginations, so that we do not succumb to pure panic or the threat of dissolution. Silence from the abyss that is foreign to us but to which we also belong. In this part of us that is abandoned to the pure possibilities, the unsubdued obsessions of any form, the inertia of fear, from which we falsely protect ourselves by convention.

Notes and considerations on ethnographic cinema (experimental ethnography, modified ethnography)

La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar had all the geographical, social and human qualities to attract my attention. I was occupied with the desire of facing that human and geographical topography.

I rely on the encounter, by acting as “strange body” that could possibly generate some sort of tension and ultimately drama – the clash can trigger the film. Diving into reality is also an act of faith, the act of waiting until the unexpected reveals itself; until you perceive the film you had been hunting, in your mind and later by walking its potential fabric, crystalizing in front of you. Well, that and a lot of pragmatism, sense and “evacuation tactics”. It is a paradox, I’m not romantic...I rely on methodology, work, odds and chance. The higher the budget the longer I can buy in a circumscribed reality.

I guess the film “flirts” with the tradition of ethnographic film expanding it into “old” territories while acknowledging the various crises of ethnographic modernisms. To a further extent we could say that Eldorado XXI signifies traditional ethnography only by a way of what it refuses or avoids. The film employs structuralism concepts that are familiar to a cluster of recent experiments in contemporary cinematography indeed, but the process is not entirely conscious. When I showed a work-in-progress of the film in late 2015 besides the encouraging feedback, someone pointed out that the film was “too well inscribed in the tradition of non-fiction film”; some would say that I'm preaching to the “choir”.

Overall, I wouldn't address it that way; at least in the process of its making. We share a "in statu quo ante". The production of a bibliographic critical discourse should be left to others, up to history and whatever creativeness might be involved in its writing.

Practical exercise: The task of the translator (observation exercises)

Materials: Notebook, pen

Introduction to exercise: The task of the translator (observation exercises) is constituted out of simple sequential exercises, structured in phases, which will allow students of any level to interface with reality. The student is expected to take on the task of the translator (W. Benjamin) and to translate reality in the process.

Exercise I

Exercise synopsis: In phase I, the student selects an area in outside space, that s/he feels right for the exercise. Within the area selected the student looks for a place to occupy for the next 30 min - sitting still.

As soon as s/he sits down, the student takes out a notebook and pen. The student writes down everything s/he "sees" without stopping.

In phase II, the student finds a way to interact with reality and to promote change/action.

In phase III, the student writes down any thoughts or questions that s/he might have had while performing both phases.

Duration: Phase I, 30 min - sitting still. Phase II, 15 min. Phase III, 15 min.

Exercise II

Exercise synopsis: In phase I, the student selects an area in outside space, that s/he feels right for the exercise. The student selects a stranger out of that area. The student observes them for a while. The student takes out a notebook and pen and starts describing the stranger. The student can follow the stranger but s/he can't interact with the stranger. Consulting their description, the student writes down a brief narrative with the stranger as protagonist.

In phase II, the student addresses the stranger and collects data about the stranger. Using the data collected, the student writes down a brief narrative with the stranger as protagonist.

In phase III, the student writes down a brief narrative containing elements from phases I and II.

Duration: Phase I, 30 min. Phase II, 30 min. Phase III, 15 min.

Objectives and briefing: In the task of the translator (observation exercises) the student will be guided by sequential exercises structured by phases.

The exercises take place outdoors and the student is asked to select the area where s/he will perform the exercises.

The progression, structured by phases, provides the student with strict guidelines (describing a *modus operandi*) on how to address the reality that surrounds him/her. The student is expected to experience different constraints and levels of freedom while performing the exercises.

Phase I of exercise I takes a great deal of concentration, it will be almost impossible to write down everything s/he “sees”. The exercise is designed to help the student begin to see what is actually in front of him/her, and not about what the student thinks they see. It takes so much concentration to do the exercise that the student is expected to feel tired after completing it.

In phase II of exercise I the student should find their own way or strategy of interfering with the surrounding reality, with the aim of promoting change/action. The student should be able to predict and control different levels of impact.

In phase III of exercise I the student should reflect on the earlier phases of the exercise, posing questions, writing down thoughts that have occurred and analyzing his/her response to the exercise.

In exercise II the student is expected to select and later to interact with a stranger that s/he encounters in the area where the exercise is performed. In phase I the student is expected to write down a brief narrative with the data they have collected without interacting with the stranger. In phase II the student is expected to write down a brief narrative with the data they have collected by interacting with the stranger. In phase III, the student is asked to write down a hybrid narrative containing elements from both phases.

The student is expected to verbalize his/her procedure and options, and also expected to reflect and comment on the concept of truth and any ethical issues that might arise from the exercise.

The student is expected to associate the task of the translator to the task of the filmmaker.

The task of the translator (observation exercises) helps the student to create and to understand his/her own personal methodology and strategy of approaching reality, while taking into account the notion of translation and its echoes in creating narratives – nonfiction/fiction. The student should be able to reflect and to explain his/her aesthetic, political and ethical choices.

The student should be able to associate these experiences to former experiences and to share them in class.

The student is expected to share his/her experience at the end of the exercise and to compare it with the exercises of the other students. The student will be asked to fill

out a questionnaire and to participate, on a critical level, in the class discussion - the higher the level of the student, the higher the level of discussion and reflection will be expected of them in class.

Questionnaire for open discussion:

(To be filled out after the exercise. The student is expected to answer according to his/her level. The student is expected to associate these experiences with former experiences. The student can provide a separate answer to each question or s/he can choose to address several questions in the same answer.)

1. Selected area / location

- 1.1 Please address your criteria in selecting the “right” area to perform the exercises.
- 1.2 Did you select a different area for each exercise?
- 1.3 Did you follow the same criteria for each exercise?
- 1.4 Please describe the impact of your choice on the development and success of the exercises.

2. Exercise I

2.1 In phase I:

- 2.1.1 Please address to what extent you were able to write everything you observed down on paper.
- 2.1.2 Please mention something that you remember having seen or noticed but that you did not write down in your notebook. Please describe the reasons for this absence.

2.2 In phase II:

- 2.2.1 Please describe the strategy/trigger chosen to interact with reality in order to promote chance/action.
- 2.2.2 Please address the criteria of your choice.
- 2.2.3 Did the effect correspond to your expectations?
- 2.2.4 Please rate the level of control that you had in assessing your impact upon reality.
- 2.2.5 Can you apply the same strategy/trigger chosen in a different selected area?
- 2.2.6 Have you applied the strategy/trigger chosen in former experiences?

2.3 In phase III:

- 2.3.1 Please describe and analyze your thoughts or questions.
- 2.3.2 Do you have answers for your questions?
- 2.3.2 Did your thoughts and questions differ in each phase?
- 2.3.3 If your previous answer was affirmative. Can you identify the reason for that difference?

3. Exercise II

3.1 In phase I:

3.1.1 What made you select that stranger instead of another stranger?

3.1.2 Please read your description. Do you notice any particularity in your description? What did you prioritize? What was left behind?

3.1.3 Please reflect on the language used to describe the stranger.

3.1.4 Did the selection of the stranger have anything in common with any of your former experiences?

3.1.5 Please read your brief narrative. Please describe and analyze your approach in achieving it.

3.2 In phase II:

3.2.1 What was your strategy in addressing the stranger?

3.2.2 Did you explain the exercise to the stranger before you started to collect the data? What was the reason for your behavior?

3.2.3 What was your aim or direction in collecting data?

3.2.4 Please read your brief narrative. Please describe and analyze your approach in achieving it.

3.2.5 Please identify differences and similarities with the narrative that you have written in phase I.

3.2.6 Did your approach to the stranger have anything in common with any of your former experiences?

3.2 In phase III:

3.2.1 Please read your brief narrative. Please describe and analyze your approach in achieving it.

3.2.2 Please describe and analyze ideas of non-fiction and fiction, in relation to the exercise.

3. Please read what you have written in your notebook and check for patterns: use of language, sight direction, sight framing, involuntary selection and prioritization of content. Please describe and analyze.

4. Please reflect and explain your aesthetic, ethical and political choices.

On the creative process

4.5 Production value

[...]

Collaborators can be strong allies in problem solving but they can also be misleading with their friendly offers or demands. If the project involves a map of collaborators it is important that you master them while keeping in mind a macro vision upon the production model that you have set in motion. Specialized collaborators deal with various specific small-scale problems for what they find accountable solutions, but because they lack a macro-vision of the project they are not always right, or their solution can open new pits in other departments. Immediate solutions with more or less of an impact are no matter what all shaping the final product. The artist must be able to predict how that solution brought at a particular stage of the project development will impact the macro-structure and outcomes.

Collaborators are valuable resources and the artist must be open to their contributions, but if you don't question their contribution the consequences can be severe. As a particular example – Let's imagine that the artist requests an helicopter a collaborator in the production department is not able to accommodate the helicopter in the budget. After trimming down your chances together with the collaborator the artist understands that there will be no chance of counting with a helicopter. For the collaborator this is an upsetting conclusion but he/she has got a solution for it, also he/she is enthusiastic about the found solution. He/she tells you that you can afford a drone and that it will mimic the desired effect. You must measure the impact that the replacement of a helicopter for a drone has on the macro structure. If you compromise or accept several "drones" instead of "helicopters" knowing that the "drone" is not serving entirely your purpose you can be compromising the "success" of the project. It doesn't mean that you won't conclude it successfully but you will never be comfortable with its outcome and you will have to face that it might have been due to those "drones" that you keep accepting as the easiest way out or worst you will blame it on your collaborators.

Here the solution is to come up with a completely different request. Say there is no helicopter, say the drone is not enough, say it is too big of a compromise, say the impact is too heavy and that you won't be able to accommodate that. Come up with a solution. A solution where you don't need the helicopter because you are taking the project in a completely different direction to avoid that need. A direction changes the project entirely but that is not compromising the final outcome. You must come up with a creative solution; you must "reinvent" the project, brief and lead your collaborators into its new and equally stimulating direction. It can be painful and uncomfortable but it will pay in the end.

Models, scale, duration and resources will vary from project to project depending on the mapped needs of the project. Also collaborators that are just wonderful on certain

occasions can be a bad call on other occasions disregarding the fact that they are to fulfill the same position.

Going back to the fact that the production value, or that the resources made available for the project, will affect the final product, is evidence also that a project that did not start with a clear mapping of resources needed and starts with the aim of “catching up as you go along” is a mistake. Bad management can ruin the project and get you in debt, but if you don’t invest or share equal resources during the different stages production of the project; the project will come out fragile and uneven; the unevenness will underline its fragilities and will weaken the project’s strongest assets.

4.7 The environment

It is not only funding, production value, audience design and creative-methodology related issues that frame the project’s outcome. The environment in where the artist develops the project will also shape and constrain its workflow, production model and the duration of each stage of development.

Territory and geography are key aspects of the equation. At a first glance it might appear that globalization has taken the world, borders are old-fashioned imaginary lines, transportation has never been so affordable, communications and social networks run non-stop at a high speed and that we can access any information; geography will still have an impact on the production model. To measure the impact is abstract but the soundings are certainly to take into account.

There are remote regions that have not “benefited” from globalization, communities that have resisted change and communities that have and still are neglected by their local authorities. Topography can slow down communication and expand traveling times¹. Climate can affect your performance². There are language barriers³,

¹ Above 3500 m of altitude the human body can experience severe altitude sickness. Road infrastructure, also an economic factor, has an impact on travelling times. A mountain road in the Bolivian Andes can be dangerous and filled with unsafe drivers. An island has limited resources and the prices tend to go higher than in mainland. In certain countries topography can affect communications and networks.

² Climate can affect your body enormously and change your behavior and habits. We can simply imagine the opposition of a steamy jungle full of wild creatures such as Kalimantan and a winter in Transnistria, a frozen conflict in Moldova. Severe weather conditions can complicate planning if you intent to work outdoors and might equally affect transportation – it can prevent you to moving on.

³ Languages, local dialects and the use of language are difficulties that will run across all stages of the production model. During pre-production you’ll have to make sure you’ll gather all you need for production. It is most likely that you won’t be getting half of what you have requested from your local collaborators. While in production hiring an interpreter is budget, time consuming – you will fall into a Ping-Pong that never ends even if you just want to order a sandwich, and a power struggle – you lose agency when you fail to express yourself and it can be uncomfortable to realize that you are being played or that your message is not coming across, you will have to trust and to be patient, you will be aware that simultaneous translation shortens ideas and intentions and fails to express your most articulated or emotional thoughts, that some messages simply don’t translate, you will be leading a project with someone else’s “voice”, your degree of control will be low, you will be 24h dependent, you will feel hopeless and alone. In post-production the nightmare continuous and once again you will have to be surrounded by translators that will slower the process, you will have reduced options in selecting your partners due to language skills.

education and sociocultural⁴ aspects to take into account if the artist is a foreigner and specially, if there is a pre-existing power friction⁵ or simply a development index or economic gap⁶ between the place where they are coming from and the place where the project is produced. Politics, bureaucracy, diplomacy and national or international conflict will create misunderstanding and delays⁷.

Also the artist will be confronted with a basic issue that might be the hardest to accommodate – time and how time is understood and expressed in different cultures – a flexible and abstract concept that can drive anyone crazy⁸.

When an official language is mixed with a local dialect the challenge is greater. Also paper work and simple tasks become harder to accomplish. The use of language can be misleading also. There're expressions that don't translate well and that can create game changing misunderstandings or offences. Language specifications should be taken into account. For instance the Arabic has a multitude of national accents, while the Classical Arabic is an extinguished written form still studied by many muslims in order to read the Quran in its original language, the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is its direct descendant used today throughout the Arab world in writing and in formal speaking, for example, prepared speeches, some radio broadcasts, and non entertainment content, when it comes to speaking it is a different scenery and each country will have its variations along with regional and vernacular variations.

In frozen conflicts, young countries and locations in the proximity of borders the spoken language is a combination of two or more languages. That can also happen in locations where most of the inhabitants are foreigners and recent settlers.

The number of characters or the time it takes to say the exact "same" sentence in different languages is enormous.

⁴ Customs, lifestyles and values that characterize a society, more specifically, cultural aspects include aesthetics, education, language, law and politics, religion, social organizations, technology and material culture, values and attitudes. The "same" history is written differently in different countries. Most of the educated Indonesian society doesn't acknowledge the genocide of Timor. In Zimbabwe a middle class teenager will claim that his heroes are Mubarak, Mandela, Mugabe and Kaddafi, all freedom fighters. In USA you might be easily politically incorrect if you're European. It can be rude if you fail to take flowers to your host in Czech Republic or if you refuse a drink in inner Russia. If you are a human and smoke in public in Cairo's most conservative neighborhoods it can be taken as an offence. Consuming alcohol in some contexts or in some countries is not acceptable.

⁵ You cannot enter Lebanon with an Israeli stamp on your passport. Relations between colonies and former colonies are not always peaceful and even if they give you the looks you should keep in mind those times. Other factor could be, ethnical or racial former conflicts that might have been perpetuated over times, or simply the color of your skin.

⁶ Your origin will in some occasions, if not in most occasions, define the way the others will address and judge you. In rural Uganda, if you are a penniless foreigner artist, it is not an absurd to be asked if you could sponsor their kid's education. In some occasions they will charge you different rates that they charge locals. It is possible that they might confuse you with a journalist and there might be confusion around the artist practice. Journalists are unwelcome and have bad reputation in certain communities. But overall they are respected and recognize. There might be confusion understanding the market placement of your work. Communities can be suspicious of your intentions and your goodwill. If you can't have members vouching for you it will be almost impossible to break in.

It might also happen that you won't be able to afford a number of basic goods or materials because the budget that you gathered in your origin country is not matching the health of the country where you're implementing the project. It might happen that the materials you need for the production of your project have to travel with you, if something breaks or needs to be replaced you might need to import it.

Wealthy individuals and wealthy communities tend to be less generous and to create more constrains than the less prosperous.

⁷ The border and costumes are the first trial. Some artist materials are hard to declare upon import and they might require papers, especially if you're working with a group of collaborators. Also there are simply materials you won't be able to fly with. France and Germany prefer to have documents printed and shipped by a courier in opposition to emails and PDF. In former colonial countries some procedures have remained exactly as they were when the country as a colony. To get permits from authorities can take you a lot of time. Frozen conflicts such as Transnistria, Abkhazia or South Ossetia in Easter Europe have no embassies and there is absolutely no diplomatic protection. In Transnistria the KGB is the official law and order on interrogations they still have typewriters instead of computers.

⁸ Ryszard Kapuściński in *Another Day of Life* (1976) illustrates the problem on an episode where he describes himself catching a bus in southern east Africa. The bus is at the bust stop but there is no

If your project involves any kind of participation from non-trained collaborators⁹ measure distances carefully, recognize the degree of capability those collaborators have to apprehend and judge your intentions, be transparent and honest about your goals. To appropriate non-trained collaborators in a project must be considered with responsibility if you don't want to be unethical.

Consider power relations as something productive that must be watched carefully – perform a clean transaction¹⁰ understood by both of the parts involved.

If your projects are set around the globe you must be prepared to face all the consequences and you must be flexible. It is not a matter of demanding or compelling others to be adjusted to your model it is exactly the opposite – the artist ought to show respect and ought to be modest. “Going-native” or pretending to incorporate the signs and codes is not necessarily positive; it will transform the project into a conscious compromise and the artist might be stepping into some ethical boundary.

The artist should rather be conscious of the differences, be genuine and honest to others, incorporate local collaborators and adapt the production model to the surrounding environment.

4.8 Methodologies

Recognizing your recurring interests and your own “internal methodology” as a practitioner will provide for awareness in leading a practice-based research and it will reassure that you are able to control the human and financial resources allocated to the project.

Over the time the artist will start to understand that there might be a non-scientific internal process running along the processes that include external agents and demands. You will be recovering information from past projects that you can analyze and reuse in the future. You will be identifying patterns in your behavior, anxieties, obsessions, recurrent models, or simply comfortable ways of accomplishing tasks. You will notice what stimulates progression, what can trigger results or unblock situations for yourself. You will be more accurate in measuring and estimating the time you'll need to conclude certain tasks and what is the margin of unexpectedness that you should add.

As far as this analysis can go there will always be something that will remain mysterious in the creative process. With self-knowledge and experience you will be able to accommodate the incomprehensible, the emotional, the inexplicable, the accidents and the mysteries of creation.

timetable presented anywhere. The driver is inside the bus and he can spot some of the passengers in the back seats. Intrigued and willing to move to his next destination he asks the driver when is the bust leaving the station. He driver answers that the bus will departure when it gets full of passengers.

⁹ Such as non-actors, agents and human resources with different degrees in capacity of framing and judging your project.

¹⁰ Celebrate a trade or a deal, not necessarily involving a financial value.

A common problem precisely due to the “mysteries of creation” is when artists feel like they’re the only ones that can complete tasks in the “right way” and that they have to take care of every single detail.

It is common to encounter artists that fail into delegating tasks to the collaborators they carefully selected. These are sometimes specialized collaborators. Nevertheless it is not strange to encounter a stubborn artist arguing over something he/she can barely understand.

If you fall into that pit there are a number of things that can go wrong: You won’t be meeting your deadlines, you will not get the best results, you will be “hurting” your collaborators, your collaborators will stop caring about the project because they believe their contribution is not valued or necessary so why bother if you can be “paid not to work”, you won’t be able to do everything by yourself and you will do it wrongly. – You will lose the macro structure of the project because you’re too busy solving details – You will fall into chaos and left alone.

Learn to distinguish what needs to be delegated because, you’re not the right resource; what can be delegated, so you can be fresh for decision making situations, crisis and turning points where your collaborators will need answers, advice and directions from you; and what you can’t delegate.

Learn your limits and how to control your obsessions and anxieties. You will understand how not to step onto your collaborators tasks, to value and trust.

You will be able to identify the stages of development or department where you’ll need more creative input or feedback and when you would rather brief collaborators allowing no creativity in their response.

“Crisis’s” create distress to you and the ones around you. Your collaborators might feel that you’ve lost it. Know when a “crisis” needs to be communicated and when to keep it to yourself – Learn how to lie.

You will be able manage your creative process along with the production model without eventually losing controls, feeling hopeless, blocking, slowing down, adding confusion to your collaborators or showing that you don’t know what is the next step to take or worst that you’re not uncharged – or that you have no clue of what you and your collaborators are aiming for.

Disregarding the scale and the resources of the project you are managing, it will always be a solitary process. Contributors, collaborators and advisers can surround the artist, but only the artist can master them, retaining an overall vision on the project’s outcome. You need to know what is requested or what needs to be exacted out of each resource. To fulfill your vision is exclusively your responsibility, no matter how good you are in communicating your intentions nobody will take charge for you.

If the resources fail in performance it is entirely due to your bad management or bad communication of intentions. To make the best out of what you have is also a talent.

Each intervenient is part of a working chain, they are concerned and trained in completing tasks successfully in advising and providing creative input, but most times they are unaware of the project's macro structure. And no matter how talented, professional or bright, they will never fully understand the potential and needs of what they are actively involved in developing.

You must be able to run your "internal methodology" along with managing and supervising the production model. These are two independent processes that the artist runs in parallel to each other in order to master its practice.

When someone chooses to be a practitioner there are many paths to walk. Two of those paths are to perpetuate models, others' models or a model that the artist has tested and to follow trends, established as effective and of fair results, or to keep reinventing, creating new challenges and pushing the limits.

To complete a work is not an easy task. The artist can rely on advice and feedback from others¹¹ but once again you are facing a lonely process. You will have to sign and stand for the work. You will not be able to erase it. If you've failed if you've blown out resources that were granted to your project it will be your responsibility. You will have to deal with it your entire life. Your work will stop being exclusively "your" work – critics, journalists, scholars, programmers, curators, distributors, publishers, agents, public, investors, collectors, bloggers, social networkers, public, among others will appropriate your work. Your work will have uncontrollable afterlives.

4.9 Ethics

The means and criteria of an ethical project can be somewhat complicated and blurred because of the simple fact that it deals with the issues of ethics. Ethics concerns itself with how moral values are determined and how a moral outcome can be achieved.

Projects can be a dirty practice that eventually calls for the responsibility of the projector towards the viewer and the represented subject, while revealing as much about what is projected as they expose who projects.

They involve delicate processes of transaction with the interveners of the project and the consciousness that in most occasions, they are disclosing private spheres into public. The transactions ought to be transparent and the power voltage involved in every relationship, shouldn't be ignored, on the contrary there should be an awareness on own to turn this power into a productive asset.

¹¹ Some find it distractive and un-conclusive. Different sensibilities and backgrounds will provide different feedback and critique that can generate more doubt or insecurity. Also they haven't been there developing the project since its origin. If feedback is something you desire address them with a limited number of questions that you would like to have an answer for. Select the ones you invite carefully and understand the reason that made you pick from a larger group. Chose a group or a few individuals that you would like to be present critically throughout your practice as an artist in opposition to calling different individuals any time you need feedback for a new project.

The projector ought to be aware of its own background, stands, belonging and distance. The angle and the methodology should be selected carefully along with the collaborators.

There should be an ethical coherence across the projects and in the approach to the field of the projection. The projects can be acts of explicit resistance towards the practice of other projectors and to their field of inscription, such as the production of campaign films, social dramas and the miseries of poverty tourism; to visual pornography and the saturation and consumption of images in the contemporaneity; questioning the traditions of visual ethnography and criticizing the phenomena that has been perpetuated of agents from the northern hemisphere going south in the haunt for major dramas.

The project should avoid succumbing to the pressures of financiers, funding programs, NGO's and TV stations.

While they simultaneously attempt to reflect on their own limits and to thread critical considerations onto its own practice and the contemporary panorama.

They should rely and stimulate, the growing and the agency of an active viewer in constant dialogue and reflection with the work, the setting of questions larger than the ones they might find an answer for, the economy and absence of visuals that might prove to be more effective and suggestive than the presence, the questioning of the banality of the evil. They can question their efforts of exposing the human cruelty and acknowledge that it doesn't guarantee for redemption, meaning, when is it in fact necessary and when does it become redundant, of bad-faith, or exploitation. On the contrary, possibly they perpetuate the evilness; deepen the state of general alienation and can be the key for its maintenance. They should signal and reveal realities, raise awareness, and they should offer working tools to the right agents of change.

4.11 Not to distinguish life from work

The unbearable pain of the incomplete is to say that most artists will struggle with finalizing the work. The most common reasons are peer pressure, market dictates, budget restrictions, fear of failure, inertia, perfectionism, frustration, laziness, legal actions and unpredictable events.

A few will be so critical and displeased that they will never accept closure. Similar to the Bartlebies are the artists that simply will never accomplish to complete a work.

For artists who are extremely critical and rigorous of their performances¹² manifesting indicators of preoccupation, thoroughness and purism there is a procedure to tolerate the unbearable pain of the incomplete. That is to merge life and work until a degree that the artist fails in distinguishing the limit between the both – that life and work are then driven by one another.

To expect closure turns into a false question. The work won't be ever completed and the artist will be able to keep perfecting the work. Not only to be able to bare with the impossibility of closure but also to address the multiplicity of subjects the work is yet

¹² Until an extent that leads them to trash their own work in public.

reflect. The artist preserves all that remains to be accomplished. Tracking what is yet to be explored. The work in progress is what grants the artist pleasure and comfort. Work after work the artist acquires experience.

The artist is a collector. It is vital that you keep collecting and the collection is complete. There will always be a new exciting item to acquire – collecting is addictive.

It is not about an isolated work it is about all of the works together lined up one after the other. You are what your projections. If life continues the work continues.