

Co-Lab Editions 1 at SAVVY Contemporary
Sunday, the 6th of March 2011

Review by Márcio Carvalho

Thinking about what to do

A performance project by Magnus Logi Kristinson (FIN) and Stefan Riebel (DE)

Curated by Márcio Carvalho

At Savvy Contemporary

Magnus Logi Kristinson is from Iceland and lives in Helsinki, Finland. Stefan Riebel is from Germany currently living in Berlin.

Both of them have 2 children, both of them wear black clothes most of the time they spend outside their homes, both are conceptual artists, both create lists of many things, both work with concepts and words, both are minimalists, both believe that thinking hardly on doing art can be an obstacle in practicing art.

They have a lot in common, a very positive fact that brought many interesting works and ideas for this collaboration.

Magnus arrived in Berlin on the 28th of February. In the the same evening I prepared a dinner for him and for Stefan. A cup of coffee, from a special brand I brought from Bali, was the first action they shared together. As a finishing point of their collaboration, between all the works created, both artists had another cup of coffee together, this time in front of a live audience.

Together Magnus Logi Kristinson, with his "list reading" practice, in which he constantly works around the unnoticed, the obvious and the already known, and the non-expressive way that Stefan Riebel deals with information, working with basic questions about complex subjects, built a very interesting exhibition having several high points, curious and rigorous details.

Both artists are researchers working in different medias, having a conceptual starting point to attain very interesting forms, points of view and new perspectives about several subjects. In both of their works the "Fact" and "Language" become a poetic ornament, a sculpture, a painting, something physical and alive that brings a strange conscience about small things in live.

"Fact is the material I am actually working with. The material that language should be used for" Stefan Riebel.

The starting point of this collaboration was in the framework of Co-Lab editions web platform, while Magnus was in Helsinki and Stefan in Berlin. Most of the data exchanged was text. Questions, answers, visions of their daily routines, landscapes from their windows and an

attempt of dreaming and perceiving each other's living environments.

Both artists were as well struggling with words and concepts, creating exercises between them, showing how they were working with language.

By following this exchange I could perceive a lot about the character and working methods of both artists. As a spectator of their dialogue I felt like a voyeur, learning and enjoying their communication difficulties, their agreements and their productive moments. I was very happy to continue this voyeur exercise, this time more active, during the time they were in Berlin producing work.

Stefan and Magnus were identical in so many levels that they were easily accepting both ideas and solutions for the upcoming exhibition. Between walks throughout Berlin and long talks in the Savvy Contemporary gallery space, these artists were more than producing art works, they were allowing each one to enter inside their own lives.

Their ideas were coming by accident, in the middle of a process where concentration and focus were balanced with the acceptance of coincidences. Both artists assumed this exhibition as a performative process. Since the first time they met, they were performing each other and analysing the content of this collaboration.

The exhibition developed itself, with the title "Thinking about what to do", into an intelligent, minimal, detailed and fruitful event, consisting of a video installation, an installation made with a list of things they did plus other things they should have done, a 2cm green paint spot strategically positioned in the gallery space and a final action that can be called performance or a continuation of a collaboration process. This last action concluded their exhibition presentation the same way they started: drinking a cup of coffee.

In my opinion, more than a performance, this last action was really a living moment, for them, for their collaboration and as well a sharing moment with audience. They were still working and not just presenting a final product. They were so concentrated in continuing this work that they did a proposition to the audience: They invited everybody available to escort Magnus to the airport, the next day at 8am.

It was a very cold morning when we saw Paulo coming in our direction saying that he was our only guest. This was an endless working collaboration that can be considered as a phase on a range of possibilities in between these 2 artists.