

## Endless Conversation – Spacing!

*Endless Conversation – Spacing!* enacts a performative and conversational setup to test the aesthetic and political conditions of sharing, which inevitably involves an inoperative spacing, intervaling, and displacing. This in-betweenness is the condition of taking place and the mechanism of giving meaning. “Sharing is itself the origin,” wrote Jean-Luc Nancy in *Being Singular Plural*, sharing according to language exposes singular plurality to interrogate this openness toward the infinity of performative language games and endless scholarship – “the circulation of a meaning of the world that has no beginning or end”, which is the condition of every engaged and committed conversation from a being to a being.

With this event we are looking forward to the potentiality of a new performative that has to be continuously rehearsed, re-enacted, exercised, and practiced, sharing infinite language ‘conversations’ that go into affective registers and intensive qualities. Singular plurality lies at the heart of the discourse concerned with the political and aesthetic potentiality of language, into which this event intervenes, involving the somatic quality of voices and deconstructive/uncompleted gestures, inflections, movements of bodies and production of spaces – “or sometimes it takes place through a shift in tone or modulation of voice,” (Judith Butler) or just spacing, intervaling, displacing.

At the limit of presentation, the event tests how art is a matter of differing/deferring, a coming-into-presence involving “the simultaneity of all presences that are with regard to one another, where no one is for oneself, without being for others.” (Nancy) In *Endless Conversation – Spacing!*, presentation is distinct from the representation of art. With the live event and vivid conversation, it aims to reflect on art in terms of spacing / interval / displacement in the relation between the politics of language and embodied practices, “a certain displacement in time and space that constitutes the condition of knowing.” (Judith Butler) These dislocated elements of shared language produce other spaces of knowledge, with their particular aesthetics.

The event is part of the curatorial research by Dimitrina Sevova, *On the Politics of Language and the Aesthetics of Affect – Thinking of Art Beyond Representation in Contemporary Art Practices and Production*, a qualitative curatorial research that maps out a cluster of artistic positions and reflects on their practices by means of relational and analytical techniques, from the perspective of the affective politics of the performative and the politics and aesthetics of language, conceptualizing further the relation between contemporary art, plural performativity, and the singular plural.

The research explores the potentiality of language as an artistic material and reflects on the relation between the performative and performance, practices and discourse, in voice-based and text-oriented art practices. It further discusses and analyses, in close collaboration with the artists, how artists do things with words, textuality and space – a flux of art practices that generate ‘concepts in the wild,’ in the sense that they venture beyond the conformity of the well-known and of conventional representation into ambiguous space and unpredictable experiments, pursuing other avenues and producing temporalities and unexpected encounters. The research asks how they relate a politics of place and the possibilities of language in the trajectory of the plural performative as a proliferation of difference. This research is concerned with art practices and the artists’ process of making, rather than their representational contexts.

The curatorial research reflects the role of language in contemporary art, and artistic practices that form a critical fabulation and involve other experimental forms of artistic research that bring together aesthetic practices and knowledge production. The main objective of this research is to ask how art produces knowledge by other means and opens onto a new ethico-aesthetic paradigm. The focus of my research is on artists whose practices and aesthetics embody a materialism of alterity and the translatability at the heart of the unpredictability of an event, testing the limits of how language can articulate the body and the space.

The artistic positions are selected for their experimental approach to language and voice-based practices, the inventive and critical way they work with performative strategies, and how they deal with the system of circulation and collection of information, with knowledge production and the aesthetics of affect, and operate within expanded discursive fields. I would not want to split a certain flux of practices and artists into generations. Because of this, the research is situated across what is defined as a generation. The artists and their practices are approached not as insulated cases in a monographic framework, which would have focused on individual art works or an artistic oeuvre. Rather, my aim is to give, through the research, a sense of a vibrant art scene of resonating practices and overlapping contexts. For me, it is more important to map and reflect on how they are related and shared in certain approaches and trajectories in their work. I did a series of interviews, conversations face to face, and studio visits, and followed the artists in different public activities during the period of the research.

The focal point of the curatorial selection in the process of mapping is a new generation of Swiss artists who work with language and the aesthetics of affect. Their practices can no longer be considered peripheral to the system of art, or alternative, on the edge of the art institutional context, as they form a new and fascinating direction in contemporary art. At the same time, the research emphasizes the differences in practices amid the cluster of selected artists, and the shift in the means of production in contemporary art at large, and its context as it has expanded into sociality, politics and daily life.

There is an upcoming modest publication, composed of an analytico-reflective text that sums up my curatorial reflections, insights, encounters. It will be accompanied by the collected documentation, and conversations and interviews with the selected artists recorded in the context of this research.

*Text: Dimitrina Sevova, 2018*