

Ryan Trecartin and Lizzie Fitch, *Any Ever*

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The exhibition *Any Ever* was conceived two years ago, as the work of Ryan Trecartin and Lizzie Fitch was just starting to appear outside of the United States. After several years of intense activity, the artists are starting a new phase and wish to show their work in what they perceive as the most appropriate conditions possible. It is in that context that the exhibition at MAMVP takes its place, uniting Lizzie Fitch & Ryan Trecartin on the billboard, so that their sculptural and video practices are presented with the same degree of importance(1).

The goal of ARC has always been to represent as exactly as possible the most current creative climate. This connection with the present is due to the fact that artists like Lizzie Fitch and Ryan Trecartin express their time, or, at least, a part of the interrogations, worries, or obsessions of their time. Computers and cell phones are part of their world, as obviously as television was part of the 1980's. As a child Trecartin would recreate scenes inspired by TV shows with his friends. This way of absorbing elements of mass culture, to assimilate, transpose and re-interpret them in group, is still part of his practice: **“when I watch a movie, what interests me are the people watching with me, their reactions.”**(2)

Trecartin writes the scripts and edits the final footage of the videos. In between these two solitary stages, many participants intervene - a more or less elastic group, made up of all the people building the sets, designing the costumes and make up, acting and performing the scenes. From that also ensues an effect of permanent echo: everything is interconnected in the films. Characters hold multiple personalities and boundaries between reality and fiction fade, time is distorted and any linear unfolding is almost systematically thwarted.

I love learning about myself through other people's products.(3)

One can look in vain for a self portrait in *Any Ever*. It is neither about a self portrait nor about a group portrait, but rather about a single matrix from which an infinity of individual scenarios is developed. The construction in network, or, following the Deleuze and Guattari expression, “rhizome,” gives the structure of the films a perfect connection with the global numeric network; a ceaseless influx of data outpours itself, each carrying its own hypothesis, interchangeable, constantly available to “refresh” the page. The videos are mostly available online: a programmatic decision, as much esthetic as political, that refuses restricted access just because it is no longer a valid hypothesis.(4) Nevertheless, if the internet does allow a large scale broadcast of the videos, the museum exhibition remains a way to put them back on stage and to make it a public experience. By reinventing the idea of ‘*environment*’ or total performance, Fitch and Trecartin seek to reunite in one location (*Unique Sculptural Theater*) all forms of perception. There are no spectators in *Any Ever*, only participants - just like the artists' collaborators are truly *agents*: individuals choosing to offer their services for a temporary collective cause. For the two artists, as for the collaborators whose names appear in the credits of the films and at the entrance of the show, there is no separation between the mediums, but on the contrary a continuum that one can feel physically as they encounter the videos and sculptures, by moving through this environment in which everyone is invited to take place - to take *one's* place maybe.

I've got a suggestion for You, I can't find it right now, I lost it in someone's Research (5)

The world that these two artists build together is inhabited by the question of filiation and genre, of fertility and infertility - of artistic creation and auto-generation. *Me* and *We* are just

an infinity of data to which it is impossible to attribute a univocal meaning or function. Words can be characters: they play a preponderant role in the staging and have a quasi permanent presence in each of the 7 movies. Spoken dialogue is uttered very fast and manipulated in post-production, agglomerating in (apparently) meaningless expressions. The artists play with the phonic or orthographic resemblance, with the sounding of colloquial terms, which is why the work is impossible to subtitle and difficult to translate. The play on words, their overabundance and speed led us, with them, to the decision to not use sub-titles.

**We hold this “just-Say” to Be
just Evidential, That Situation are
“Just”,
Equal Relativital, In-Way,
Go make a “Say”, in =Happiness=! (6)**

Beyond the pseudo-plots that give the videos their structure, a form of urban and contemporary poetry develops from the dialogue, the use of Twitter and Facebook. The use of pronouns is a battle field - substantive, verbs, adverbs and adjectives come together out of any syntax: like I-Be, the character interpreted by Trecartin in the video acquired by MAMVP in 2010 (*I-Be Area*, 2007) and for which the meaning could be expressed as Me-myself, or Being Me, or simply : I am...

**My Body, Is a good Place for Business...
And I AMOver IT= I’m OVERHEAD (7)**

The work of Fitch and Trecartin is based more on an exploration of the post-industrial society than a critique of *mass media*. In the last two decades, the reality television phenomenon seems to have realized Andy Warhol’s formula, uttered in 1968: “In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes.” The answer is obviously truncated and illusory, but the forms it has taken have strongly impacted our visual environment, opening vast fields of possible re-appropriations. This *ready made* world, a direct product of our socio-economic environment, is here – ready to use. Borrowing from the language of corporate communications and marketing, the artists’ use of logos and brands stems from a long art historical tradition from cubism to Pop Art. General Idea, IFP or Philippe Cazal provide many examples of this practice. In the universe of *Any Ever*, everything – be it words or objects – is part of a vast puzzle with uncertain boundaries.

The furniture and tools that are the physical base of *Any Ever* were purchased at Ikea or other big box retail outlets; Fitch and Trecartin’s joint shopping excursions are an integral part of the artistic process, inscribing itself in a random, un-alienating process. Sampling normative and codified elements of our consumer society, the artists create their own poetical material using its products. The figures from *Any Ever* shatter a world where everything would be structured, psychologically correct and where freedom itself would obey specific rules, defining for each a similar space with strict legal boundaries. Naturally, the world so depicted *is not* reality. It is just one of the possible worlds, which *Any Ever* would turn upside down.

Every Thing is Different Now (8)

- (1) The unique sculptural theaters created for the seven *Any Ever* movies were part of the exhibition at MoMA PS1, *Ryan Trecartin: Any Ever* (June 19–September 3, 2011). The collaborative sculptures on display here were not shown there. Like the videos, they emerge from the same participatory process.

(2) Conversation between Ryan Trecartin and Odile Burluraux, summer 2010, between Paris and Annecy. For the other quotations, we have indicated the title of the movie, the character uttering them and the catalogue page where they appear.

(3) *Ready, Wait*, cat. p. 30

(4) The movies are available on Vimeo, as are interviews and other video material <http://vimeo.com/trecartin>

(5) *Sibling Topics (section a)*, Able, cat. p. 64.

(6) *K-CorealNC.K*, USA Korea, cat. p. 34.

(7) *K-CorealNC.K*, Mexico Korea, cat. p. 49.

(8) *K-CorealNC.K*, Global Korea, cat. p. 105

(traduction Laura Mitterrand)