

CONTEMPLATION IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

INSTRUCTION No. 2

Over the last few weeks many of us experienced a new sense of being in space. Urban landscapes, views taken in when traveling to other cities, countries or continents have been replaced by a confined space of own apartment or house. Some of us share it with family members, flatmates or animals. Others stay in touch with others via digital technologies. In this new spatial conditions all of us, without exceptions, are accompanied by dozens or hundreds of objects gathered throughout years. Our contact with them became intensified. We no longer use a wall clock just to check, if it's time to depart to the office - it times each minute of our working and free time. Slippers no longer serve as solace for feet tortured by high heels or stiff loafers - they support us in our micro-journeys between living room and kitchen. Best time to get better acquainted with your closest surrounding! Attitude of care and understanding for imperfections will make the cooperation with your objects from much easier.

INSTRUCTION

Prepare: curiosity, patience, attention to details; optionally (piece of paper and something to write with, if writing helps you to organize your thoughts), printout of the instruction

1. Choose an object that accompanies your daily activities - it will be your experimental subject.
2. Examine it without rush. Below you will find a list of questions, but feel free to invent your own ones. Each examination has an individual character - being attentive and curious will lead you down the right track.
 - How much time do you spend together? Does the contact intensify at certain times of the day?
 - Where do you meet? Is it always the same place or do you move together? If you get around, do you follow some certain paths?
 - What kind of sensory traits the object bears? Examine its colours, size, shape, smell, texture. Does it generate sounds (by itself or when moved)? Is it able to move by its own? Which traits do you usually notice, which ones do you omit? Which ones do you like, which ones annoy you, which ones are indifferent to you?
 - What functions the object serves? Are they the ones provided by the manufacturer or do you use it for different means?

ADVICE: Don't pose too many questions at once, take breaks in between and carry your observations over several days.

3. Now reflect: would you like to substitute your object for another one? Most of the objects (and human beings) are not perfect. If you notice some flaws, think whether they make it difficult for you to use the object. Are they repairable (if you have some time now, don't postpone it to later)?
4. If you don't sympathize with your object too much, it's time to activate your imagination. Think of its history and the broader social context in which it operates. Check, where it has been produced and list people who might have had contact with it before you. Who invented / produced / transported / advertised / sold it? Give the people concrete names, imagine what they might be doing now, how they spend their days.

ADVICE: If there are people around you, you can arrange a storytelling session.

5. At this point you should know your object quite well, but remember that it will change over time! Before you decide to part with it and make place for new products purchased in the re-opened shopping malls, check, if you're not curious how it may still surprise you in future.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 for any number of objects.