

T HREE QUESTIONS

Lea Pischke / Inky Lee

During the third lockdown we came up with the idea of asking each other three questions about writing and live art.

In this text, Lea Pischke and Inky Lee ask each other questions and answer them.

Inky's Questions

IL: How do you start writing something when you have NO idea? Do you ever really just have NO idea?

LP: It's funny to say that, but until now, I might have occasionally experienced "writer's fatigue", but never "writer's block". I might often get bored by my own text or lose faith in it, but I always have an idea, or rather, many really bad ideas.

When this happens I start talking to myself in a tone of annoyance, then get up from my desk and roam about the room as if I had to push the boundaries of my physical presence. I would talk to my imaginary commissioner, I would talk to myself as the conversant or I would talk

to the fantasy-artist whose work I am supposed to write about. I heavily gesture, I grimace, I might just end up dancing.

Eventually I return to my desk to write down all my really bad ideas, and pick the worst to see where it brings me. The text might get an interesting spin, I end up laughing, I become desperate. I pick the second worst idea. I see what happens beneath my fingers. I thrash out these ideas one by one and wait in case there is any veracity, any greater meaning it might yield. Sometimes I am surprised. Often I remain bored. I move on, yawning, and finish a text where I amuse myself with the occasional stylistic element thrown in for good measure to keep my interest awake ("yes, she truly is a writer, look here: a metaphor"). I finish, I have a tea, I look out the window, I hear the neighbour's child scream again.

No idea if that answers your question.

IL: What do you worry the most / often about when you write about live art?

LP: I worry about not sufficiently bridging the gap between the personal and the scholarly style. I am very aware that my writings often take myself as a starting point, they are the product of an experience and, or a thought that went through my body first. However, my body is the same as yours, is the same as everyone else's which is both a blessing and a curse.

How can I make my bodily experience intelligible for you, how can that which I experienced and reflected upon with and within my own body be of use, or the foundation for more thought, to you?

I fear the overly anecdotal, the pleasantly chatty style when it really is just coffee table talk without a nugget of wisdom hidden somewhere.

Don't get me wrong, if the coffee is good, the table talk might be great, but if "ahh, yes, the pandemic is just hard for everyone" - which in itself may be an important empathic acknowledgement - is the only thing that will be said at aforementioned coffee table, I might just end up writing about Arabica varieties and my latest (imaginary) trips to Ethiopia and Peru and global addiction patterns fuelling trade compared to the cocaine business further north of Southamerica.

Live art writing. It is a paradox in itself. And it is exactly this paradox which makes me want to write about it. I am not sure what my voice is and what I actually want to say, but my often experienced desperation in making myself understood to others when it comes to my profession is a strong motor. We all use language. So I open my bag of dance practice, dance performing and dance thinking and pour its contents into the language works. I then pick up what comes out from underneath. I present it to those who I am talking to, and - if I am lucky - they might be interested. If I am very lucky, they will be guided through some movement with me. Or I might have subsequent generations of those I exchanged with attend a live art event. Or those who had been in conversation with me might benefit themselves decades later, as it opened doors to new thought and feeling processes for them.

Secondly, I worry that my text might not strike a good balance between the artistic and the scholarly. I enjoy a piece of good writing, I can be thrilled, entranced by someone else's command of their language, the play with structure, overtones and meaning. It is even more thrilling when the linguistic gymnastics is both graceful and carrier of delightful meaning. Gymnastics in itself can carry meaning, yes, but it can also just be plain verbal exercise.

I don't want to show off, I want to write and charter new territories with both words and wisdom whilst at it. And that is a challenge every time

I am about to insert a figure of speech, wondering if it is there to support my argument, or to support my desire to elevate a boring noun. Every time there is an urgency in my writing, a very important and complex point which I want to give life to by writing about it, I want to do it justice with the full repertoire of my stylistic powers. And when I cannot grant this, I am upset.

IL: What is the role of writing in your daily life?

LP: Externalising what I don't want to have going on my mind.

Or: thinking something through thoroughly, at my own pace, with no conversant in front of me, with whom I would then have to construct a dialogue.

Or: writing something down, so I can grasp that something - be it a feeling, a sensation, a thought. Writing as a way of looking at something, as a form of enquiry and dissection.

Lea's Questions

LP: How does the reader enter in your writings? Is she/he the « superego » who censors your words? Is it yourself, your inner speaking voice that speaks back at you? Do you worry about offending someone when you write, that someone who you mention in the text might feel misrepresented? How is the reader responsible for the longevity of your text, is she/he the carrier of your legacy by reading your texts and passing them on themselves? Could the reader also be your ideal person who can channel your writings in a way which is necessary for the writings to have an effect?

IL: To be quite frank, I don't think about the reader so much when I write.

They are not the "superego". It is possible that some would be offended, but I don't find that to be my responsibility or concern. I also expect no responsibilities from the readers to be the carrier of my legacy or to be the ideal person who can channel my writings. The writing doesn't have to have an effect.

I consider writing as one free place I wish to afford to have where I don't have to worry about the others or have to constantly ask for permission.

I, myself, don't seem to be the "true reader" either, since I don't hear my inner voice speaking back at me, as you asked in your question. This may sound selfish, but I mostly write for myself. Writing is one of my major coping mechanisms, and the act and the process of writing give me joy.

LP: Did you have a diary when you were little? If you didn't, why didn't you?

IL: I did. I remember it being in fact a school assignment during my young years. Every day, all the children had to write a diary entry, and in the morning, they all had to turn it in to the teacher. I remember the big stack of diaries on the front table in the classroom. The teacher would look through them during the day, and give them back before the end of the school day. Who knows if the teacher really read through them all? Reading the diaries as an adult, I remember finding some questionable entries that I've written as a child. For example, "I hate my sister. She bothers me as if thorns would grow out of her mouth if she doesn't make me cry at least once every day. I want to kill her."

Making a daily diary entry was also a common homework during the school breaks. I have a memory of being lazy during the vacation period, and suddenly having to write the whole month's worth of diary entries in one day before the school would start. Looking back, this could have been a good exercise for creative thinking, since I had to make up my whole month on the spot and write about each day as descriptively as possible.

LP: When do you prefer handwriting your texts as opposed to the usual typing on a laptop's keyboard?

IL: When I have difficulty writing a certain text, I like to write down ideas with my hands in my notebook before I gather enough content to start typing at the keys.

I also like to write small bits of texts in a notebook throughout the day and in the middle of the night when new ideas pop up.