

Guillaume Désanges relays in his somewhat discontent text “Art Criticism is a Non-Place”¹ (which is, in part, a response to Marc Augé²) that art criticism can be viewed as a space where one floats conflicting currents, avoiding spheres which constrain, hinder or dismantle any critic-as-tool:

Is it so bad that the critic can be seen as a non-place? No, in the sense that its anonymity and space that are prevented from being diffused do little harm to art or its viewers. No, in the sense that this improbable and functional space of thought offers in the end the same chance to everyone to have access to its basic codes, as long as we go beyond the initial semantic intimidation. But yes, in the sense that we can expect something else.

Désanges illustrates that the tendency to support any critical, scholarly position is often based on self-referential name-dropping, brown-nosing, a continuous act of defending one's elitist Ivory Tower mentality—with critics and curators alike highlighting a seemingly infinite yet inaccessible mélange of ideas, methods and philosophies trusted in the art world, each source distinguishable by:

[...] its formal and conceptual repetition (a precise and recurring semantics, the shared use of a limited body of references, the formatting of styles, the international touch [In English in the text] of certain publications), the transformation into a trompe-l'oeil space of investigation, a deterritorialized territory that is still extremely well mapped and comfortable for someone who is used to crossing it.

So, I present an oversimplified exercise proposing a move towards *something else*: whether or not you are a critic, artist, researcher, academic or otherwise, attempt to communicate without referring to someone else or an idea which you have actively (or passively) absorbed. Do not go to the library, do not attend lectures seeking knowledge, do not besiege sources on your shelf—in short: do not forfeit your inherent judgment and instincts. This won't be easy. You may confuse this desired absence of the Other as egotistical or ignorant, and you will, at times, blindly injure yourself along the way—as Désanges reminds: “[...] art criticism really becomes the place of an extreme solitude and at the same time that of a suspicious fascination with vacuousness.”

Consider Stockholm (& any perceived creative or cultural paralysis it harbors)—paradoxically, an advanced city observed to be secretly and openly distrustful, suspicious of the alien, falling back on confirmed voices, a victim of crowd behavior, motivated by an irrational fear of change, choosing stability over challenge. What would be gained (or lost) if you stopped affirming the circuitous echelon which feeds (and loops) the public prescribed, calculated notions influenced by power, privilege, economics, influence? If you did not listen to me—or Sara Arrhenius, Jonatan Habib Engqvist, Ronald Jones, Camilla Larsson, Kim West, Maria Lind, Karl Lydén, Power Ekroth, Magdalena Malm, Sven-Olov Wallenstein, Maria Lantz, Daniel Birnbaum, Milou Allerholm, Diana Baldon, Fredrik Svensk, Rebecka Thor, Sinziana Ravini, Lisa Rosendahl, *ad nauseam*—what would you hear? Désanges hints: recycled authors are guilty of rehashing (doubly suspect). Is it feral (or in bad form) to suggest concrete names? Per Hessler's request, I now incorporate a proverbial quote yet not to *reproduce existing patterns [which] impede change at a structural level*, for then I support a paradox, colliding with the exhibition's intent: “We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present.*”³ Incorporating D&G ~ *irrational, illogical, fatal*; I'm tense. *Admittance is the First Step to Recovery.*

Children begin with feeling; thought follows suit. Some are blessed, others not so much—nothing remains the same. One day: you wear no clothes, marching through streets surrounded by ridicule; you enter a space through a tiny window because you are homeless; you no longer recognize yourself and wonder how you justified submitting to monstrosities, instead of cultivating your now lost voice—because someone / something somewhere convinced you that yours was white noise. Clarity of any frequency becomes audible upon tweaking, focusing on a singular transmission. Turn them down; turn yourself up.

—Jacquelyn Davis

¹ <http://guillaumedesanges.com/spip.php?article29>

² “The real non-places of supermodernity,” according to Augé, “are original in that they also define themselves by the words and texts that they propose to us.”

³ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York City, NY : Columbia University Press, 1994), 108.