Staying with the trouble in Painting

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- Comment vous situez vous au sein de ce travail collectif qu'est Staying with the Trouble in Painting (SWTTIP)?

How do you situate yourself within this collective work which is Staying with the Trouble in Painting (SWTTIP) ?

Katharina Schmidt is the source of the project, which comes from combining a previous project, which she intitated, titled *Trouble in Painting* (2015) and the name of Donna Haraway's recent book *Staying with the Trouble* (2016). Within this project there are two parts. The performative collective installation at Building Canebiere shares its title with the whole project, and then there is an offshoot project.

This wall installation is performed through collective working. It is formed through multiple voices and forces, of which I contribute and nourish. This multiplicity assures that the answers I give to the following questions will differ from the answers of other people involved in the SWTTIP.

I could go into specifics with the ideas and activities that I have contributed to the project but I don't think it's necessary to do that. Sometimes it can be a reassuring activity, to reaffirm your identity within a collective. When there are many egos at play together and ideas become shared, you can lose yourself emotionally and mentally. However, on the whole to lose yourself is the aim !

Haraway uses the word oddkin and the image of a string game, picking up and passing on. I think it's really important to not deplace emotions, expectations or judgements on each other. In this project where there is no hierarchy, each member helps others take on responsibilities, in consideration of other daily commitments. It's all about finding balances in yourself and within the collective - to achieve that it takes trouble.

Then there is the role of shaping, inviting, organising and making the work, but also the other of being an invited artist making a proposal. I've proposed some scanned and digitally reworked ink drawings of animals and animal behaviours. The series explores the transition or transportation of painting in and out of the digital realm, and also the marking animals use in social relationships.

-Comment s'articule le projet Staying with the Trouble in Painting par rapport à votre pratique artistique ?

How do you articulate SWTTIP in relation to your own artistic practice ?

I think this project opens up to incorporate every participant's explorations, it is very elastic - like the vampiresque realm of contemporary painting. This vampire image is being replaced by compost. I think by exchanging the image, there is a move away from 'consuming' towards the idea of interconnectedness.

By being a part of SWTTIP I get the opportunity to explore personal questions and ideas that I've been nurturing for a long time, concerning collective working. I continue to reflect on similar ideas

and participative structuring in other projects I've helped start or shape, like *Artistes sur Artistes* (2015), 1+1+1 (2018), *We are in this together, we are not one and the same* (2019) and *Buttered Toast* (2019). It picks up on a lot of the themes I was exploring in *Growth* (2016), especially the collecting and merging of images from a potentially ever expanding network of artists. Exploring the modernist myth of the Painter, as a lone self, is often the central focus in all of these projects.

- Quel statut SWTTIP a à vos yeux ? (est-ce une œuvre, installation, expo, experiment, don aux autres...tout tout à la fois ?)
What status does SWTTIP have in your eyes ? (Is it an artwork, installation, exhibition, a gift .. all this at the same time) ?

I'd call it both an artform and a collective project. I have a floppy description, which I've been using recently … 'relational painting' , but I think swttip is more of a 'performative collective installation'.

- Comment vous situez-vous par rapport aux interventions artistiques dans la rue (par ex. le graffiti) ?
How do you situate yourself in relationship to artistic intervention in the street (for example Graffitti) ?

Graffiti is heavily present in Marseille, and something which tells about the attitudes of the population. The way I interpret it, is it's an expression of multiple voices, those that are most usually not present or visible in institutional spaces. There is a mix between the legal and the illegal, a fringe is traced out between graffiti and street art. There is a tolerance which paints Marseille as a city that welcomes difference and a certain level of rule breaking, there is space left for this.
Interaction with Public space is so important as a political tissue within a society, because it is a place where people voice, share or dispute their opinions and diverse positions. A common language in which diversity can exist, comes from socialising and being aware of the other. Public space is a troubled space but it essentially defines the individual, without it there would be no social or individual desires, and no language. Language itself being a social activity, from within personal reflexivity comes. Imagine languages as needing to be formed, they don't pre-exist culture. If we could rethink language in different forms of interaction and responsiveness. we could imagine opening up spaces between humans and non humans.
Painting, in terms of trace - telling through marking, and imagery using visual signs are both forms of pre-language – post-language - extra-language that include both an idea of a universal, in what the human eye is capable of seeing, and a personalised social coding and way of interpretating. The space of Painting is a space in which collective consciousness and shared preoccupations can de tracked in repetitions of motifs, marks, innovations. There are continuous echoes and reactions within a city's Graffiti, and likewise on a much smaller close knit scale in SWTTIP, each sketching out the different social networks from where they come.

Does the project have links with this type of intervention in Public spaces?

I think SWTTIP doesn't go far enough into questioning this, or isn't meant to question this... on the whole I wouldn't say SWTTIP has much to do with graffitti.
In the original discussions there was talk of far more off-shoot projects exploring this relationship.
In the end SWTTIP is performed in a privately owned space, which is open to the public. The passage is mainly frequented by the inhabitants living in the building.
I still think it's interesting to dig deeper into the ideas and behaviours in street art, graffiti and contemporary painting, as they all share common grounds. Through looking at similarities and differences whole worlds open up.

- Est-ce que l'archivage / la documentation du projet Staying with the Trouble in Painting est-il important à vos yeux ?
Is the archiving or documentation of the project SWTTIP important in your eyes ?

I've been experimenting with 'stories' as a way of tracing a documentation of the work, by republishing participant's posts and posting my own photos concerning SWTTIP. These 'stories' are a flimsy and contemporary way of archiving, that currently touch people in their daily life. They also mimic the flow and disparition of imagery like that in the performative installation of SWTTIP. The hashtag #swttip seems an appropriate way to document or trace the work, bringing it into the virtual space and having multiple voices make up its contents. Again the idea of private and public space comes into question when using social platforms.
There have been multiple discussions about an edition or a fanzine. At one point there was my prefered idea of a photocopier in situ that people could use to make up their own fanzine, correlating to the images they like etc. However, I don't think an edition is integral to the project.

- Quelle "image" voulez-vous qu'il reste de ce projet ?
What 'image' of this project would you like there to remain ?
I liked the first description we wrote in french about the tentacled monster, an image borrowed from Haraway's text.

- L'idée que nous, les artistes, sommes les organisateurs, (ou si on veut "les curateurs"/ les "commissaires") de cette exposition, est-ce important à vos yeux ?
The idea that the artists are the organisers (or if we like ' curators') of this exhibition, is it important in your eyes ?
There is a second part to SWTTIP, an exhibition in an artist-run space, titled SWTTIP/Chris Reinecke. In the latter I would place Katharina Schmidt with Alice Griveau in the position of artist-curator. In the show we can see clearly specific roles of curating put into action. However Katharina likes the description of '*making kin*' in this situation. As if she is welcoming Chris Reinecke into her family through this exhbition.

I think the terms 'curator' or 'organiser' seem 'off' to me. I'd say we all share the role of 'artist', and the artform comes from all the interactions which make it up. As an artist when you are making work you have to source materials, or when you show a work you tell people about it, these are regular activities for artists and activities we take on with SWTTIP. A lack of curation or idea of organising could be replaced by making/thinking/performing together and inviting others; again this image of 'making kin'. Each participant in SWTTIP is exploring some kind of attitude towards painting and through a rhizome effect we've invited and incorporated voices that tell about painting and the making of painting in multiple ways.

- *Serait-ce une position politique pour certains ?*
Is there a political position for some ?

My main drive at this point in my life and painting practice is to place importance on *openness,* on possible ways of thinking that can help shape our daily life and political attitudes, especially in regards to *'staying with'* the others and when I say that I don't just mean humans. It is important that we are not one and the same, equity not equality...
There is a leveling factor in SWTTIP of financial or social status, through the use of black and white print, divided into A4 or A3. Each artist brings their own personal and therefore political intentions into the project through their image proposal and choices on scale and where that image should pasted.
Black and white and the use of the grid seem loaded aesthetic and political. For instance, the desaturation of all the images allows the '*blending'* of the images to take center stage. The modernist grid is given a new make over, in this installation gives way to crossovers and hybridations, rather than giving a restraint. Print as a medium to deal with the *'painted'* images tells directly about trouble rather than pleasure, it reduces the objecthood and materiality of a painting and acts as a representation of the work itself. Print in general talks about circulation and accessibility.
I think one way to rethink *'growth'* and accumulation, which speaks directly of our current conditioning in consummation, is to recognise infinity as having its own internal limitations. That is instead of a line going forward, a line that goes back on itself. The grid structure central to SWTTIP can relate to this idea somehow, like a circular shape it can fold/collapse back into itself.