

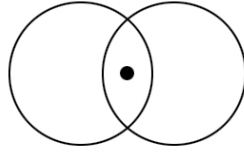
Stony Brook University



OFFICIAL COPY

The official electronic file of this thesis or dissertation is maintained by the University Libraries on behalf of The Graduate School at Stony Brook University.

© All Rights Reserved by Author.



Persistence of Vision in Liminality

A Thesis Presented

by

Yana G. Kraeva

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

In

Studio Art

Stony Brook University

May 2008

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

Yana G. Kraeva

We, the thesis committee for the above candidate for the
Master of Fine Arts degree,
hereby recommend acceptance of this thesis.

Stephanie Dinkins, Associate Professor, Department of Art

Gary Schneider, Artist-in-Residence, Department of Art

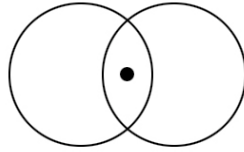
Grady Gerbracht, Assistant Professor, Department of Art

This thesis is accepted by the Graduate School

Lawrence Martin

Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Thesis



Persistence of Vision in Liminality

by

Yana G. Kraeva

Master of Fine Arts

in

Studio Art

Stony Brook University

2008

This thesis documents my explorations of the self and my artwork. I have chosen to write my thesis as a diary, in a personal and intimate way. It makes the most sense for me because my life and my art are inseparable and they constantly feed and grow from each other. Thus, the thesis becomes close to my artwork and simultaneously reflects on it. To write about my art in any other way would be lying. I do not want to pretend that I know the answers or that I do not get frustrated and confused with myself and the world around me. The process of living or making art is never straightforward. I see the artistic process as ambiguous and intuitive, spontaneous and mysterious, poetic and magical, there are no words to talk about it, it is all between the lines.

To Maryana, to S/Pasha, and to TJ



Thank you for the lessons of Love.

Table of Contents

List of Images.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Diary.....	6
Notes.....	38
Bibliography.....	44
Appendix: Images.....	48

List of Images

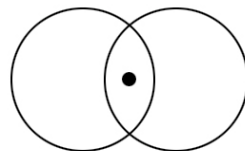
Fig. 1: <i>Untitled</i> , from <i>Haiku</i> series.....	48
Figs. 2-3: <i>Untitled</i> , from <i>Haiku</i> series.....	49
Figs. 4-5: <i>Untitled</i> , from <i>Haiku</i> series.....	50
Figs. 6-7: <i>Untitled</i> , from <i>Haiku</i> series.....	51
Fig. 8: <i>Untitled</i> , from <i>Haiku</i> series.....	52
Fig. 9-11: Pages from <i>yanaphotoy</i> PDF book.....	53
Figs. 12-13: <i>Slow Walk Performance</i>	54
Figs. 14-15: <i>Twinning 23</i>	55
Figs. 16-17: <i>Twinning 23</i>	56
Figs. 18-19: <i>Untitled</i>	57
Figs. 20-21: <i>Untitled</i>	58
Figs. 22-24: Pages from <i>Book of Books</i> PDF book.....	59
Figs. 25-26: <i>Surale Trees</i>	60
Figs. 27-28: <i>Masterpiece</i>	61
Figs. 29-30: <i>Nirvana Under Your Nuts</i>	62
Figs. 31-32: <i>Play It As It Lays</i>	63
Figs. 33-34: <i>Ersatz.com</i>	64
Figs. 35-36: <i>Kyklops</i>	65
Figs. 37-38: <i>What the Butler Saw In Time</i>	66
Figs. 39-40: <i>Life is Blue, Not Pink</i>	67
Figs. 41-42: <i>Steal This Exhibition</i>	68

Figs. 43-44: <i>Steal This Exhibition</i>	69
Figs. 45-46:  or: <i>How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Wabi Sabi.</i>	70
Figs. 47-48:  or: <i>How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Wabi Sabi.</i>	71
Fig. 49: <i>Untitled</i> , from <i>Haiku</i> series.....	72

Introduction

It seems like the best day of my time at Stony Brook. I am completely exhausted after the exhibitions and thesis writing but the sound of jazz from outside makes me forget myself. The music dissolves me, the pain in my back, my twitching eye, my frustrations. I physically feel transformed, outside of my body, one with music. This time I can hear jazz like I have never heard it before. I even went downstairs to look at people who could create something of such power on me. I was surprised to see the ordinary guys who I run into every day, not the gods. I always enjoy watching jazz musicians with their huge smiles lost in music. I enjoy every second of this moment, yet I know that it is gone already. There is nothing before this moment and the moment after will pass too. It is all real and ordinary and at the same time it is quite extraordinary and unreal. It will all ultimately end and I will cease to be. Everything is transitory. Where am I coming from and where will I end up? This is a mystery for me. However, I know that I am now here, and I am in constant transition and flux. I deliberately put myself in this state, never wanting to be rooted. I have inherited Weltschmerz¹ from my Slavic philosopher father. My nomadic Mongolian-Tartar mother has given me Wanderlust. Sometimes I wonder if I should thank my parents for my both/and identity². I grew up between the sky and earth. It seemed like it would be impossible to find people more different than my parents, and I always could see the rightness of both sides. Here I am – two-headed Janus³, with conflicting desires as my second nature, and contradictions as part of my outlook.

After 25 years of life, 4 years of studying art, 3 years at Stony Brook, 2 years of marriage, and writing 1 thesis, I have come up with a symbol that I believe quite adequately translates my self-concept. It seems so relevant to me that I am ready to tattoo it on my neck. Here it is:



Searching for the right words to talk about myself, I stumbled upon the Mandorla, an ancient symbol of two circles coming together, one overlapping the other to form an

almond shape in the middle. It represents the interactions and interdependence of opposing worlds and forces. The circles are complementary opposites. The space within the overlap where I put a dot is the liminal space. The dot is me.

When we deny one of the opposites, the circles hardly touch. When we become wholly integrated, the overlap is total and there appears to be only one circle. This is the void, not nihilistic emptiness but pure potentiality⁴, both nothing and the possibility of everything at the same time. All opposites disappear: one becomes everything and everything becomes one.

Searching for truth I wait trying to balance in-between, where I can be sure of nothing – neither meaning nor its absence. If I have to name this state of being, I would use the term liminality. Victor Turner⁵ originally used this term to describe rituals that marked someone's movement from one state to another, as between childhood and adulthood. Liminality describes an ephemeral and transitional mode in which the conventional norms are shifted opening the way to infinite outcomes. This is the state of anti-structure and chaos where all the transformation happens. “In liminality the ‘I’ standpoint is not fixed, and it occupies no clearly defined psychological location. It floats; it is not sharply delineated as ‘this’ and ‘not that’; boundaries between ‘I’ and ‘not-I’ blur... The ego is a has-been and not yet... The ‘I’ is not anchored to any particular inner images, ideas, or feelings... Inner ground shifts...”⁶

The insecurity of the space in between, space rich with ambiguity, uncertainty, and possibility excites me more than the comfort of knowledge and stability provided by conventional frameworks. What makes me this way? Was it living during a time of social instability, perestroika, in Russia, the country whose geography and identity are positioned between East and West? Constant moving and traveling? Buddhism? *Alice in Wonderland*? *Catcher In The Rye*? *Waiting for Godot*? Reading Kafka, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky at a tender age? Am I a child of the postmodern era? Is it human nature to doubt and question everything? What do I know about myself? What do I know? What am I?

The desire to be in the state of liminality more often and for a longer time brought me to art. For me the doorway was photography, the art that depicts presence and absence at the same time. The most precious experience that photography gave me was the state

of emptiness while taking pictures. Minor White⁷ describes a state like artistic void as follows: “The state of mind of the photographer while creating is a blank. I might add that this condition exists only at special times, namely when looking for pictures. For those who would equate ‘blank’ with a kind of static emptiness, I must explain that this is a special kind of blank. It is very active state of mind really, a very receptive state of mind, ready at an instant to grasp an image, yet with no image pre-formed in it at any time. We should note that the lack of a pre-formed pattern or preconceived idea of how anything ought to look is essential to this blank condition. Such a state of mind is not unlike a sheet of film itself – seemingly inert, yet so sensitive that a fraction of a second’s exposure conceives a life in it...”⁸ What makes an artist an artist is a willingness and effort to put her/himself into the state of awake mind.

I have found a lot of my beliefs reflected in photography. This fact made it a very comfortable medium for me to explore and express myself. I have always appreciated the unknown and believed in the unseen, thus the fragmentation and the chaos of life never bothered, but rather fascinated me. My photographic practice strengthened that feeling. I think of my photographs as haikus, celebrations of the commonplace (Fig. 1). They are images of moments in time, tiny pieces of an endless continuum. For me photographing means simply wandering around with a blank state of mind, following my intuition and recording what attracts my attention. These images are fragments, glimpses of the world, “not a story, but... scattered and suggestive clues. The photographer could not assemble these clues into a coherent narrative, he could only isolate the fragment, document it, and by so doing claim for it some special significance, a meaning which went beyond simple description. The compelling clarity with which a photograph recorded the trivial suggested that the subject had never before been properly seen, that it was in fact perhaps not trivial, but filled with undiscovered meaning. If photographs could not be read as stories, they could be read as symbols.”⁹ I feel like images are better at communicating the nuances and subtlety of feelings than language. Language creates rigid definitions that inevitably put fixed forms and constraints on an ever-changing fluid reality. Our constant desire to analyze and use words prevents a pure experience of reality. Images are also a language, yet they are less defined and allow for more layers of meaning.

Art viewed as a process of becoming, a fluid and partially autonomous zone of

activity that works against disciplinary boundaries interests me. Galleries and museums can be considered structurally separate from the ordinary, everyday space of human activity and, therefore, they correspond to the liminal space Victor Turner discovered in many rituals. Art can represent liminality and produce liminal experiences. After some exhibitions, plays, or books, a little enlightenment happens. Nothing changes, but everything changes. That is what good art does for me. I just hope that my work can do the same for me and maybe for someone else.

Art and Victor Turner's concept of liminality also have much in common from the perspective of establishing symbolic *communitas*¹⁰ in which a barrier disappears and it is possible to experience another person's world. "‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are able to merge, where the ‘Thou’ becomes the ‘I’ and vice-versa. The distance between self and other, which upholds life in normal times, disappears in favor of unity. ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ become ‘we’, a ‘we’ established and strengthened by ritual *communitas*. On the other hand, art can also separate and create hierarchy between the ‘I’ and ‘Thou’." ¹¹

I believe art is made by those who look at it. But how can I overcome cultural ignorance and provoke active perception? I do not know. The state of the audience is so arbitrary and depends on a variety of circumstances: if they read Rilke, if they saw Felix Gonzalez-Torres' *Stacks*, what conversations they had during the day, what they ate for lunch. Sometimes circumstances come together and it works, sometimes it does not.

My strategy for making my art "click" more often, and longer, is to maximize the potential meaning and increase the scope of interpretations. I deliberately leave out explanations and point to one of the many ways the work could be viewed with titles. Instead of trying to define a term, I prefer to maintain the ambiguity that it represents. This creates a journey, a scavenger hunt, a poem. Stephane Mallarme¹² knew the recipe for good poetry: "To name an object is to suppress three-fourths of the enjoyment of the poem, which is composed of the pleasure of guessing little by little: to suggest... there is the dream."¹³ A well-wrapped package with digested information for an audience to swallow does not seem like an exciting present. I want viewers to read my art according to their vision, enter my work through their own eyes and their own lives and not seek for my point of view on it.

In order to live my philosophy rather than discuss my artwork in academic terms I

have chosen to use a diaristic format for my thesis. As Søren Kierkegaard pointed out, philosophers make wonderful palaces, but then live in the shack next door¹⁴. By writing my thesis as a diary I am trying to practice what I am preaching.

My experience with Jorge Luis Borges' *Book of Sand*¹⁵, Milorad Pavić's *Dictionary of the Khazars*¹⁶, John Cage's writings, as well as modern music and Internet hyperlink texts has made me think of an alternative narrative for my work. In each of these examples readers are not merely free to interpret the text but must impose their judgment on the form of the work. The considerable autonomy that these things leave to the viewer is appealing because it provokes "acts of conscious freedom"¹⁷. These works reject definitive and concluded messages to provide "components of a construction kit"¹⁸ that have to be finished by the audience.

A diary shows a process, it registers a spontaneous, poetic and personal view of the world but it does not always reach conclusions. As these characteristics are inherent in me, and my work, I feel that this format is the best way to illustrate and discuss my art. Diaries allow for doubts and uncertainty. For me there are more questions than answers. Everyone should find their own answer; mine is "I don't know."

Diary

August 23, 2003

Can I become O¹⁹? How can I strip down all the layers from myself? I admire the color white because it is so pure and combines all colors in itself. White canvas is the best; I can paint anything I want on it. I would paint a chameleon. People so much try to become marble monuments, but I want to turn into a lump of clay. What if I could make myself a superhuman by my own design? What if I could become my own artwork, indefinable, fleeting, eternally transforming? I could create my own life like the character/animator in Chris Landreth's *The End*²⁰ who says: "I realized that I am the work of my own fiction. Then I realized that as the work of my own fiction I can create my own ending."

November 08, 2003

If asked what I do I answer, I am a photographer. This response comes naturally, though I have never shot a roll of film. Is the desire all it takes? Do you become an artist the instant you think you are? Is art just a state of mind?

February 15, 2003

How can I take away this milky layer that separates me from the rest? I want to focus my vision, my feelings, and my perception. I refuse to sleep any longer. All these dreams about life abundant, joyous, drunken, serene, divinely aware.²¹

September 27, 2004

I am watching you. You are watching me. They are watching us.

There has always been an eye in my life. I felt the eye watching me wherever I went. I was always performing for it. Was it my own eye looking at my life from a distance? For a long time I had no fear and all I was aspiring for was an experience: sad or joyous, it did not matter. I was craving as many impressions as I could get hoping to use them in a movie that I dreamt of making one day. Of all the body parts of God I would like to be an eye, unattached and all-seeing.

What if life is just about looking? Following the Buddhist idea of pure vision I dream of becoming a mirror that reflects the world. No judging, no comparing, no thinking. It is always such a disappointment to realize that I have a brain that never lets me see it all. It is a filter that selects and judges constantly. What is this eye like, the eye “unruled by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of “Green”? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be? Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of color. Imagine a world before the “beginning was the word.”²² What if we could abandon language and brain schemes and just start perceiving? Ironically I see escape for myself in using another filter, the still camera, to increase my awareness of what my natural mind does not allow me to see.

January 1, 2005

The fragility of things, human vulnerability: happiness lies in the precarious. It is this very precariousness, this beauty of the ephemeral, that photography reveals so much. Its here then it is gone. *Je t'aime melancolie.*²³

March 7, 2005

There are instants of exquisite pleasure when I can focus on something through my camera and stop for a second before the shutter is released to breathe in the surrounding beauty (Fig. 2-11). It helps me to look with a detached gaze, without preconceptions, in a state of total receptivity. My photography is very much process-oriented, it is not the destination that is the goal, but the journey that is the source of enlightenment and pleasure. I cannot show this through my pictures and I do not know what to do with the resulting images. I have such a hard time trying to choose what to present at final critiques. My photographs do not need the viewer because their life is happening when they are taken. As a print they are already dead. It is also difficult to get used to the idea that there has to be a choice, leading inevitably to the rejection of

something. I would like to name all my exhibitions after Wolfgang Tillmans' *If One Thing Matters, Everything Matters*.²⁴

March 12, 2005

In order to keep myself in the state where ordinary does not exist I keep taking pictures. I have never seen a boring photograph, but I have seen quite a few boring things. It is a true magic of photography. I am taking pictures of everything, and when I find I do not want to photograph something I ask myself why. After I take a picture of my boring subject it immediately becomes interesting on the photograph. And then I think about John Cage's words: "If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, then eight. Then sixteen. Then thirty-two. Eventually one discovers that it is not boring at all."²⁵

April 28, 2005

The passive noninterventive nature of photography fits me perfectly. It makes my old dream come true: I become invisible behind the camera, I do not have to participate in the surrounding life, I can just observe.

And at the same time looking is a very active occupation. I like Plato's description of this activity. In his *Timaeus* he "asserts that the gentle fire that warms the human body flows out through the eyes in a smooth and dense stream of light. Thus a tangible bridge is established between the observer and the observed thing, and over this bridge the impulses of light that emanate from the object travel to the eyes and thereby to the soul."²⁶ Looking is connecting, loving and embracing every thing. Watching something means being aware of it.

May 2, 2005

Life in America is overflowing with things and words. There is no place for emptiness and it suffocates me. Everything is chewed, digested, and ready for consumption. I feel an urge to put all things I see around together in a big ball. Will it be bigger than the Earth?

July 18, 2005

I keep gathering glimpses of the world, grains of knowledge, random beliefs and I piece them together in my head. In my blindness I can only see a part of the elephant, but I can feel its huge presence.²⁷ I have gotten used to the idea of the impossibility of completing the circle. This belief makes the fragments I perceive sufficient and gives them a different kind of wholeness. Photography helps me to make order, or I should say my chaos, out of universal chaos.

September 14, 2005

I am absorbing images like a sponge. Twenty-four hours a day I am searching for more visual food in books, friends' photo albums, exhibitions, magazines, online on photoblogs. All this information brings an overwhelming feeling without really filling me. Every day I see thousands of images and spit back hundreds of photographs. I am still searching for the right way to show my images and still when pushed to present my pictures I refuse to print them out. These are trash-images that have no home. Maybe it is the photoblogs' influence that makes all the large scale photographs in galleries look so unnecessary. I also refuse to print out my images as my inner reaction towards careless waste of resources that I see everywhere in America.

October 9, 2005

The practice of photographing seems to be my training in dealing with the passing of time, some kind of a funeral rite for a moment. Like funeral rites, photography has "a double, dialectically articulated signification: a remembering of the dead, but a remembering as well that they are dead, and that life continues."²⁸ I am more interested in remembering about the death rather than trying to keep the memory about the moment itself. Death is like a spice. Memento mori!

October 30, 2005

TJ²⁹ told be about Tehching Hsieh³⁰ and his one-year performances. It is so beautiful!!! Life = Art = Life = Art. I just saw one image from the performance, it is enough for my imagination to create a masterpiece. I was reading Marcel Duchamp's

conversations with Pierre Cabanne and found this quote: "...deep down I'm enormously lazy. I like living, breathing, better than working... my art would be that of living: each second, each breath is a work which is inscribed nowhere, which is neither visual nor cerebral. It's a sort of constant euphoria."³¹ I would argue, it is not laziness, to be aware every second of an invisible ecstasy is a hard work, maybe the hardest one. I want to be taken apart and reconstructed constantly, like a Shinto shrine.³²

November 13, 2005

Inspired by my conversations with TJ, I have started reading about Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Yoko Ono and other Fluxus artists' performances and happenings. Their ideas about closing the gap between art and life and the "every human being is an artist"³³ concept make a lot of sense to me. All life situations and activities can become contexts of creation. It is exciting to see the freedom with which Fluxus artists were crossing media – mixing music, performance, film, objects, drawing, and actions. All these ideas are boiling in our heads. Last month TJ and I staged a few happenings in an attempt to disrupt a daily life. The main strategy we used was taking the things that we regularly do and breaking their flow in order to get a better vantage point for studying and understanding them. We tried to hinder the speed, time, context as well as mental state in which they were typically performed.

The first spontaneous happening was Slow-Walk, occurring in Times Square during a Saturday afternoon. Taking turns, TJ and I imitated a Zen monk meditation walk (Fig. 12-13). This happening was provoked by our curiosity to see if we could alter our perception of the environment and fully concentrate on meditation. It took us about an hour to walk one block and caused unpredictable reactions from passersby. It was interesting to see some groups of teenagers trying to get us out of meditation state, screaming at us, touching and giving us a foot so we stumbled. One guy was trying to tell me a sexual joke. I was thinking about a loaded gun at Marina Abramovic's Rhythm 0 performance³⁴. Aggressive curiosity?

The week after we made a variation of the Slow Walk performance that took inspiration from another ritual performed by Buddhist monks, spinning a prayer wheel. For the duration of 10 hours TJ walked in Manhattan pushing a painted spool with a

prayer he depicted on it. These happenings were followed by Silent Week, Blind Walk, and a series of Staged Reality events. The main purpose of these events was to take common actions/routines and remove them from the context of the needs and desires that make them purposeful/functional in daily life. One of my favorite performances was me lying in bed with eyes closed all night and trying to stay awake. We also tried to abstain from any form of communication for a few days, live blindfolded, go to the City without money or things, then create and sell artwork from found objects. These actions are not intended to be shows or performances, as we do not announce them and do not invite viewers, but rather let random people see and participate in our happenings. There is something very exciting about these actions, but I do not know what it is. I will let it ripen in my head and see where it will lead me.

November 25, 2005

Reading about Marcel Duchamp's bottles filled with Paris air, Yves Klein's *Le Vide*, John Cage 4'33, Marco Evaristti's *Goldfish in Blender*, James Turrel's *Meeting Room*, Marina Abramovic and Ulay's *Lovers*, David Hammons *Concerto in Black and Blue* brings me such an intense pleasure. Nothing excites me more than ingenious ideas.

February 11, 2006

Our performances have led me to realize my desire for the freedom of the ephemeral. Trying to find the roots of this interest I think back to my childhood spent in ballet and theater schools. Acting and dance represent for me the idea of oneness of art and artist. Dancers and actors use their bodies and minds as the tools and expression of their creativity, so they keep working on them all their lives. Performance is also attractive due to its *here and now* aspect – the art exists and then ceases. This extreme ephemerality makes performance extremely precious and beautiful. I like Min Tanaka's words: "All of my tools and instruments are inside my body. Materials of my materials are also there. When a performance is finished, my work leaves nothing behind. I let dance rise between one body and another – nothing more, nothing less. I am currently looking for the only place that accommodates this act inside the body. Nothing has changed, but everything has changed. I stay with ever changing life, and I will leave

nothing behind.”³⁵ He can start dancing anywhere at any moment and this spontaneity is very precious. I feel the same admiration towards my friend Joe who has abandoned galleries for streets. Every day he goes outside to play, find and create. It is my Soviet grandfather avant-gardist talking in me: an artist and a food vender, art and street become the same. These people carry the art spirit within themselves all the time. All you could possibly need you already have. I keep pushing this knowledge inside.

One more positive result of these performances is that I have finally found the so-long-desired-for collaborator. I truly believe in collaborations as a way of expanding my personal and artistic limits. It is challenging and rewarding to have this very special kind of closeness with such an amazing partner as TJ.

March 22, 2006

A few weeks ago TJ and I were passing by a Halloween store in Manhattan and we could not resist buying the creepiest and most surreal mask in the store, a pink wrinkled pig head. We were playing with it for a while putting it on in different places, waiting for people’s reactions and photographing the situations. After some time we needed another mask so we went back to the store and bought a sheep. Without any particular plan we keep taking these masks to the City, taking pictures and entertaining ourselves and people around us (Fig. 16).

April 6, 2006

The idea of creating myself rather than things interests me more and more. I am inspired by Marina Abramovic’s idea of the art of the twenty-first century when there is “no object between the artist and observer. Just direct transmission of the energy. When you develop yourself strongly inside, you can transmit your idea directly.”³⁶ One day I will be able.

April 24, 2006

The masks seem to like us a lot and accompany us in all our journeys: Manhattan, Amsterdam, and Iceland (Fig. 14-15). They are so alive and intriguing that we could not stop creating amusing situations for them and taking pictures. Now I have about 8,000

images and the exact idea what to do with them. I am going to put them together at a constant speed and show it on a screen as an animation. The still-image has lost its stillness. Finally I have found an honest way to present my images that fully reveals my working process as a photographer. It seems like my images, unwanted children, have found a way to exist on their own.

May 5, 2006

Matthew Barney³⁷ is my preoccupation now. It is so difficult to resist his luscious and odd films that test the limits of coherence and endurance. I think of the first time I saw “Cremaster 3” at the Museum of Cinema in Moscow in 2004. I was completely unaware of the contemporary art scene and went to the screening to see the work of Bjork’s husband. After 20 minutes I was so overwhelmed by its complicated symbolism that I could not keep the pressure of concentrating to make any sense out of the film anymore, so I just relaxed and let images flow into me. At the end of the screening I looked at my friend who seemed half frozen after the movie and started laughing. It was an unstoppable laughter of joy. I think at this moment I felt one of these rare moments when you can touch the enlightenment quality of art. I felt released from the bonds of reason and relieved. On that day, Mathew Barney got under my skin and has been stuck there ever since.

A few weeks ago in Amsterdam TJ and I spent the whole day in the movie theater watching the Cremaster Cycle. I am not sure if it was the endurance of seven-hour non-stop of Matthew Barney or seeing all films together but something changed after that day.

May 7, 2006

My perfect project has found its perfect name, *Twinning 23*. It is hard to believe that there is a word that could unify the whole range of my ideas and hopes for this animation. Some definitions of “Twinning” according to Wikipedia³⁸ are the following:

- In biology and agriculture, producing two offspring (i.e., twins) at a time, or having a tendency to do so;
- eTwinning, a collaboration between schools in which two schools in different geographic locations are paired and communicate using the Internet;

- Widening of a road by construction of another one next to it, with a median in between (Canadian English), upgrading the road into a (usually) four-lane dual carriageway (divided highway);
- "Twinning" is a jargon term in motion pictures for various special effects that allow to double (or multiply) the presence of the same actor or actress on screen;
- "Twinning" is a jargon term in animation when two parts on opposite sides of a character's body are moving the same way;
- "Twinning" (Maithuna) is the Tantric sexual ritual in which the participants view each other as Shiva and Shakti respectively. It is a sacred occasion celebrating the transcendence of experience. For, the ecstatic condition of bliss is not an experience at all, since the experiencer is one with the experienced. In the state of ecstasy, the division between subject and object is left behind together with the conceptual mind and the ego-identity that could revel in that bliss.

All of these definitions are somehow relevant to my project. *Twinning 23* absorbs my ideas about identity, life wandering, search for truth, eternal longing for divine love, desire for unity and merging with the beloved, as well as attempts to challenge the normative relationship between artist, object, and spectator.

I put all my beliefs and little theories into this project. Here is my belief in art that helps to focus on the divine so intensely that the soul is both destroyed and resurrected. This journey is the spiritual ascent via the mind, growth through love, abundance of the ego, search for truth, and arrival at the Perfect.

May 21, 2006

In my first group exhibition I showed *Twinning* that is now 3 hour long. For me it is still mostly about photography and my practice as a photographer. I could not and would not want to do this project with a video camera. The still camera allows me to pay attention to each frame. I matted the LCD screen and put a frame around it. I decided also not to put a bench in the gallery. This is not a movie and I do not want to determine timing. I rely on chance: everyone will see what they are supposed to see even if they see something else (Fig. 17).

June 16, 2006

After having to deal with so many images I feel completely exhausted and disappointed to some extent. Now the camera feels more like a distraction. I have started looking at the camera as something between the world and me. I keep including light flares and flash marks in my photographs as well as photographing through screens and windows as a reminder of this fact (Fig. 18-19). I have also taken pictures with my digital camera through medium and large format viewfinders (Fig. 20-21). I wonder if in my attempts at focusing on reality the camera has become my helper or my enemy. More and more I feel like the camera is taking away the direct experience and replacing the reality. Have I become greedy for fleeting moments, striving “to control more than the here and now”³⁹? Do I use my camera to extract the pleasure from the surroundings or do I hide behind the camera because of fears? Is virginal vision just a utopia? Do I just recognize the reality through a set of clichés that I already know? Has my attempt at acute focusing become “fast seeing”?

November 15, 2006

I am not done yet with the *Twinning* project and hope to finish one day *Twinning 23*, a 24-hour animation. Meanwhile I keep adding new footage and experimenting with editing various short pieces. The whole idea about editing came from the open call for an animation festival. I had to make a seven-minute animation out of my three-hour piece. The inspiration for this short film became the Aphex Twin⁴⁰ composition *On* that I have listened to so many times over the last year that my heart seems to beat now in its rhythm. It made the editing process intuitive and easy. I managed to finish it in one night. There were so many surprises for me during the editing process: just the way music and images would fit perfectly sometimes by accident or the unreal pleasure I got from the full control of editing. The video turned out to be uplifting and joyful. Seeing reactions to this animation made me want to make art that helps people to live. I was so touched by Henry Miller’s words: “Every man is working out his destiny in his own way and nobody can be of any help except by being kind, generous, and patient.”⁴¹

December 6, 2006

This fall I have hardly been outside. I spent all the time in my studio with books obsessively recording and gathering information with a camera not missing a single page of some interest to me. At the end of the semester I found out that all I have produced is just photographs of words and illustrations from books. Considering my research the important part of my art making I decided to curate my own book of books. I put together a PDF book with spreads constructed by the photographs of the books. More and more I become interested in revealing my artistic process in my artwork (Fig. 22-24).

December 23, 2006

TJ and I are going to Russia to make a site-specific installation in the National Centre for Contemporary Arts in Moscow. The idea for the installation came from the Surale story that my mother told me when I was little. Surale is a creature in the woods that came to tickle little children to death. This furry creature had a mischievous nature and wished to spread its affliction, be it madness or magic. The most disturbing part of the fairy-tale was that Surale had chosen the most enjoyable form of torture, the most endearing and personal. At a certain point in my life it was a shock to realize that laughter, joy and even tickles could become the source of demise and unhappiness. This thought brought many other questions. Would we even know happiness if not by contrast to unhappiness? Would we even be unhappy if not for our striving to attain happiness? The Surale character is liminal. It is intriguing and could symbolize many things. Another part of the project that makes me really excited about it is the technical aspect of it. We are planning to cut out thousands of leaf-claw-hands from fake fur and cover several trees with them. It seems like a very labor-intensive project in the freezing Moscow. I cannot wait to see how it will look outside of my head and how we will deal with the difficulties (Fig. 25-26).

March 17, 2007

Surale Trees project with its ambition and the interest it caused in Moscow erased the burden of making serious art from me. I also try to learn from TJ. He seems very relaxed and flowing with his art. It is much more fun in comparison with my rigidity

and dreadful seriousness. This semester is a time of hyperactivity: TJ and I collaborated on three exhibitions in the Library Gallery and did a lot of projects outside. We curated and made a collage from found objects on the wall in the gallery (Fig. 31-32). For a solo exhibition⁴² *Nirvana Under Your Nuts* we also curated a show of debris from our own studios (Fig. 29-30). It became a sketchbook of our minds and a working environment transported into the sterile realm of the exhibition space. These two projects felt like playgrounds; I just let myself flow with this stream of consciousness.

For the other exhibition, *Masterpiece*, TJ and I sequestered ourselves in an empty gallery for 24 hours to see what conscious and unconscious interaction with the space would do to our perception of it. We each photographed as much or as little as desired, ultimately choosing one image that we felt was the summation of our stay to print and exhibit in the gallery. For me it was again a reminder of my false perception of myself. I could hardly stay in the gallery and I was not able to calm down my mind. I took a few hundred images, played all the tricks with the camera that I could imagine, and even went for a jog outside which was a breach of the rules for the project. TJ told me that for him being alone in the gallery was the most pleasant experience of the last year. He relaxed, meditated and then took a single image at the end of his stay in the gallery (Fig. 27-28).

March 19, 2007

Bjork, Miranda July, Amelie, Michel Gondry⁴³ - these people are magical, they are beyond life, true, sublime, subtle, magic, pure, joyous, real. These people support me with their art every second of my life. I am in awe.

May 29, 2007

Sometimes when looking at contemporary photography books and facing my own stacks of CDs containing millions of images, I get very frustrated with photography. What is behind the photographs conceptually seems to be much more important than what is depicted on them. Each image in contemporary photography books requires pages of description without which it would have little interest. Has contemporary photography lost its own language and married with literature? Is not art between the lines, in something that cannot be pronounced and it loses its meaning once it is said? Reflecting

on this, I decided to make an installation with the photographs that I have been taking for the last four years in the disturbing moments of my life. I used the camera to distance myself from an uncontrolled situations and also to satisfy my desire for the clairvoyant vision. Abandoning composition, structure, meaning I trusted the only true creators of the image: the camera and the moment.

The project consisted of two parts:

1. The shadow boxes containing manipulated black and white photographs were presented in a small room (Fig. 39-40). Each box had a URL address for the title (e.g. www.memory.yanabeing.com/18) linking it to a web page.
2. Each web page displayed a text elaborating on my mental state when the image was taken. Translation and the Mind were explored through the function of Memory. The viewers were given the opportunity to keep this title and corresponding image in their memory to explore later in the privacy of their own space. Online they could find the stories behind the images. These stories were told in Russian allowing me to keep a feeling of immediacy and poesy. It was up to the viewer to translate the text into English (I got the English text by using a clumsy online translator translate.ru) by clicking on each word individually. After a certain number of clicks words started to disappear reflecting the fleeting nature of our memories and the incomplete assumptions about the understanding of artworks.

Many things came together for me to be able to create this installation: my recent experiences of getting married and living in constant proximity with another person, living in a foreign country and being unable to express nuances and subtleties of my feelings in a foreign language, frustrations with words and desire of poesy. It also came from my inability to let go of some memories. Like dead insects in boxes, my memories cannot find an exit from my head.

July 4, 2007

Sometimes such perfect little things happen. They are undocumented treasure images and movies that I try to keep in my head. Yesterday I saw a bag with a smiley face on it dancing on the street with the wind. I also saw once a black and white dog in a big white gallery with black and white paintings. I also saw a smile chain: a girl smiled to

a guy who smiled to me that caused another guy to smile to another guy. I could never create anything better than life does.

July 26, 2007

I do not fix my influences. I deeply believe that everything influences me at the same time, watching sunrise being equally important as looking at Sophie Calle's⁴⁴ work or watching *Disco Pigs*⁴⁵. Everything is connected and intertwined.

I have a difficult relationship with words. It is not easy for me to write, start putting my impulses in words. My process is very intuitive, I read hundreds of books, look at millions of pictures, wait and let my unconscious process the information. It is a pity I sleep too little, I bet my head needs some more time to process all the input.

September 9, 2007

After reading Linda Weintraub's *ECOcentric Topics* and *Cycle-Logical Art*⁴⁶ and after my trip to Burning Man⁴⁷ I became a complete eco-freak refusing to take food in Styrofoam and saving each little piece of garbage I see around. All these obsessions brought the idea of opening the *Ersatz.com* store that carries a wide selection of products to keep visitors up to date on the latest technology and equipped with essential needs. This store does not charge visitors to buy its goods. It pays visitors to buy its goods, however, it pays with fake money.

TJ has written the following statement: The store is a low-fi or even analog version of something like Amazon.com. We find and collect various debris and garbage around the area. We then, using some basic art supplies (paint, tape, etc), transform the objects into stand-ins for other objects more commonly found in contemporary society (cell phones, laptops, ipods, etc.). The objects are clearly artificial yet crafted to convey a poetic beauty. The store typically consists of a few blankets on which we place our "products" with small corresponding labels (Figs. 33-34).

Ersatz.com has a heightened sense of comedy and commentary. The humor is clear in the absurdity of paying fake money to customers to "buy" fake products. The commentary is found in the parallel between this absurd fake store and the actual absurdity found in real stores. This project allows viewers and participants to consider the

sense and/or nonsense in paying a store slips of paper (money) to purchase what amounts to entertainment or useless objects.

The specific items for purchase are intended to demonstrate the uselessness of not just the fake products but also their real life counterparts. The materials that the fake products are made from remains clear. So a “cell phone” may be made from a water bottle that was thrown away. Thus, in a sense it is recycled but its ridiculousness reminds us that we know a real cell phone is not recycled in any way, it is much more complex. A real cell phone is also a kind of fetish item, something that we must have or simply desire as a status symbol. In the same way the crafted fake “cell phone” becomes a fetish item since it is a work of art. It is a one of a kind item that carries its own narrative and has a certain status that visitors may identify with.

The *Ersatz.com* store is intended to provide for visitors beautiful but useless handcrafted artworks from recycled materials. It also functions as a parody of a consumer culture that scavenges and strips the Earth in order to make questionable products for a public that does not question.

August 29, 2007

I think we are all here, in this universe, because we are selfish. Love is the only way to overcome it and to get somewhere else. I want to learn to love.

September 5, 2007

Today I watched an interview with Andrej Tarkovsky⁴⁸. I started trembling with joy at hearing my own thoughts pronounced by such a genius. Every word is so true and I could never tell it better. When asked: “What is art?” Andrej Tarkovsky said: “Before defining art – or any concept – we must answer a far broader question: what’s the meaning of man’s life on Earth? Maybe we are here to enhance ourselves spiritually. If our life tends to this spiritual enrichment then art is a means to get there. This, of course, is in accordance with my definition of life. Art should help man in this process. Some say that art helps man to know the world like any other intellectual activity. I don’t believe in this possibility of knowing, I am almost an agnostic. Knowledge distracts us from our main purpose in life. The more we know, the less we know. Getting deeper our horizon

becomes narrower. Art enriches man's own spiritual capabilities and he can then rise above himself to use what we call "free will." And continues: "An artist never works under ideal conditions. If they existed, his work wouldn't exist for the artist doesn't live in a vacuum. Some sort of pressure must exist. The artist exists because the world is not perfect. Art would be useless if the world were perfect, as a man wouldn't look for harmony, but would simply live in it. Art is born out of an ill-designed world."⁴⁹

Four years ago in my first artist statement I wrote "I make art so I could stop making art." I still strive to be happy. Not "a fitter, healthier and more productive pig in a cage on antibiotics"⁵⁰ kind of happiness, but radiantly and actively happy. But achieving harmony through art turned out to be impossible for me. I was very disturbed the last few years, I have deliberately agitated myself, exaggerating negative emotions and tensions, because it is not possible to create in harmony. As Sophie Calle pointed out: "It's always the same story: to be happy with a man and having nothing to say, or to be miserable and do something out of this misery... To speak of failure, since I can only speak of lack."⁵¹

October 11, 2007

Once in a while I will take clay and start playing with it (Figs. 35-36). And that is what I call a real pleasure. It is very therapeutic. Maybe it feels so good because we all basically are made from it?

Animation, cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary media, combining filmmaking, art, design, dance and performance, has it all. Raised on the most awesome animation in the world⁵² I fully believe in its magic. Last spring I created a piece called *What the Butler Saw in Time* (Figs. 37-38). The title for the piece came from an early motion picture device Mutoscope reel. As a base for the piece I used the ten Ox Herding Pictures, a Zen allegory for man's quest for enlightenment. In these pictures, a herding boy has lost his ox – his true self – and awakens a desire to take up the search for it. My little clay figures were exhibited in a niche in the Wang Center where within a period of ten days I came a few times a day and slightly changed the poses of the figures arriving at a certain image by the end of the day. I liked the idea that though it had actually happened it still could not be fully grasped by anyone since no one could sit to watch each change throughout the whole process and then connect them together in animation

in their mind. I have read recently a story about a Buddhist monk who got tired of life and walked into a painting. Since then he had been living in another dimension and once in a while people would see a figure moving slightly within the picture. This story reminded me of my little fellow in the niche.

Now I have another idea for an animation project. For the last few years I have been mulling over in my head one saying from Tao Te Ching: “When people are born, they are tender and supple. At death they are stiff and hard. All things, like plants and trees, are tender and pliant while alive. At death they are dried and withered. Therefore the stiff and hard are companions of death. The tender and supple are companions of life. Thus strong arms do not win. A stiff tree will break. The hard and strong will fall. The tender and supple will rise.” My recent interest in Japanese Butoh⁵³ coalesced with this Tao Te Ching saying and gave me a great idea for making a claymation project. The Butoh philosophy is about developing the ideas of metamorphoses. You cannot find a better material than clay to depict it. This is an exciting project that I hope to get my hands into one day.

October 19, 2007

Maybe through short animations that allow magic and small moments to come true I could tell my stories? Animation is very poetic by its nature. It “can be such a complex process because it forces simplification... a short, apparently simple film can be full of ideas and meaning – they can be intense experiences to watch.”⁵⁴

My skills and very intuitive, spontaneous way of working definitely cannot correspond to the standards of animation with my impatience and imprecision, but maybe my spontaneity and love of play can make something happen. I tried to make a test movie for my Butoh animation and ended up with a completely different animation than planned. I made a clay figure with a web camera as his head and while I was animating him, he was shooting me. I got fifteen seconds of footage and he got eight hours. I believe that this little figure took over and told his own story through me – the story about realization of our limitations and struggle to accept them. It is such a strange thing not to appreciate the values I was raised with and at the same time to realize that that is who I am. Yes, Chris⁵⁵, you are right, we are like fishes who want to jump out from the

water, but once in the air scream “Water!” How do you compromise when you hate the feeding breast? I want to find my way out.

October 21, 2007

Sometimes I wonder if making art is another way of polluting the physical and mental environment or if it is a creative way of dealing with this pollution.

October 23, 2007

I am not brave or daring enough. It makes me so angry at myself. Sol LeWitt⁵⁶ was brave, he wrote in his letter to Eva Hesse: “Learn to say “Fuck You” to the world once in a while. You have every right to. Just stop thinking, worrying, looking over your shoulder, wondering, doubting, fearing, hurting, hoping for some easy way out, struggling, gasping, confusing, itching, scratching, mumbling, bumbling, grumbling, humbling, stumbling, rumbling, rambling, gambling, tumbling, scumbling, scrambling, hitching, hatching, bitching, moaning, groaning, honing, boning, horse-shitting, hair-splitting, nit-picking, piss-trickling, nose-sticking, ass-gouging, eyeball-poking, finger-pointing, alleyway-sneaking, long waiting, small stepping, evil-eyeing, back-scratching, searching, perching, besmirching, grinding grinding grinding away at yourself. Stop it and just DO. Don't worry about cool. Make your own uncool. Make your own, your own world.”⁵⁷ I am questioned about my thesis and the way I want to present it. But then I would think about John Cage’s writings and his koans I would scream again and again: “I do not want to compromise. I want to be me.”

November 19, 2007

I am using art as a rehearsal for life and life as a rehearsal for art. I am trying to see, trying to do as many things as possible, striving always for various experiences so I can later use them in my art. Through making art I am trying to acquire some knowledge so that later I can use it in my life. I try my ideal life in art first hoping that one day I can make my life my artwork. Art is the ship that will bring me to my ideal life.

December 5, 2007

Something I have been waiting for so long has finally happened. I have been obsessively collecting things, ideas and thoughts for the last few years trying to fill myself and now I feel ready to give it back. My cup is full and is overflowing and I am ready to give back. I want to do a show that would disappear completely. It is a test to see if I can let things go away. I have been trembling too much over my things being stolen, my heart being broken, my strength being taken away. Freud said that we rehearse our fears in order to lessen them.

It is another chance to realize that all these things are mine only for a moment. We enter this world naked and go naked to death. We bring nothing into this world and do not take anything with us. Nothing is ours. We do not have to be bound by attachments.

Once my friend asked me: “Who are you?” and my brain froze. She asked: “Are you the things you own? Are you soul? Mind? Are you your thoughts? Are you your beliefs or dreams? Are you the books you read? Things you associate yourself with?” I want to bring everything I own to the gallery and give it away. I want to become bare and empty in order to see who I am.

December 15, 2007

When I was a kid my dad made a house for me out of a cardboard box. I grew up and my box became bigger. It turned out that being an artist and living in America means accumulating a lot of things. Four years ago I came to America with a small bag, now I want to leave with nothing. All this time here I was a “free” homeless person collecting and dragging all my bags and carts everywhere with me. It is not an easy life; you never feel the comfort of home. I hope things will be of good use for people and the box will become empty. It is because of its emptiness that the room will be useful again.

I have borrowed a lot of ideas from various wonderful people and I hope people can use mine. The idea of artistic originality in a world without borders with freely floating information is overrated and I hope the world starting with the Internet becomes gradually an open source. Henry Miller, my library of wisdom, said once: “We’re creators by permission, by grace as it were. No one creates alone, of and by himself. An

artist is an instrument that registers something already existent, something which belongs to the whole world, and which, if he is an artist, he is compelled to give back to the world.”⁵⁸

January 9, 2008

I do not like being dogmatic and tell the audience what to do and how to think about my work. The only element that can give viewers a clue about the intention of the big box in the gallery is a blinking TV screen that displays the words *Help Yourself*⁵⁹ and the title of the piece *Steal This Exhibition*⁶⁰. The challenge of overcoming the fear of taking is an aspect of the piece that excites me a lot.

January 14, 2008

I enjoy imagining waste-free zones, where everything you buy remains with you forever. You would have to store all these materials and invent ways to use and reuse them. When you die your children would inherit this entire accumulation. The Earth would be such a different place to live on.

I believe that waste is not a problem; the problem is what we do with it. One man’s garbage can always become another man’s treasure. We should actively seek recycling strategies. I remember one amusing paragraph by Pablo Picasso: “I came upon the saddle and handlebars of a bicycle abandoned in the road and said to myself: “Look, there’s a bull.” I put them together at once and everyone who saw them said”: Look, a bull!” until a cyclist appeared and said: “Look, a bicycle saddle!” and restored the saddle and handlebars. And this can go on forever according to people’s mental and bodily needs.”⁶¹

February 12, 2008

My box became a situational sculpture with a permanently evolving environment. Incompleteness, displacement, and whimsy were among its motifs. What an amazing experience it was to be able to build a giant box and to see people interacting with it! It was unexpectedly pleasant to see my art taken outside of the gallery, or to be more precise to see my pieces extending outside four white walls.

Inside of the box reminds me in a way of a thrift store with its dense atmosphere. You can feel each thing's memory, aura, smell. Things are there but the body is gone. Can people sense my unseen presence? Am I still there?

I view my box as a self-portrait. I think of people as boxes filled with stuff. There are so many aspects of this piece that reflect my personality. There is constant tension in this piece: contrast between outside and inside, my desire for purity and lust for exuberance of life at the same time, my yearning for craftsmanship in my art and the urge to express ideas freely and easily and my inability to execute the work in a clean way. The minimalist cube contains within itself a dark chaos (Fig. 41). At the beginning of the exhibition I spent a lot of time meticulously organizing every single thing inside (Fig. 42) but with the first visitor, with some life in the box, the space started changing dramatically and I lost any control (Fig. 43). I decided not to secure the parts of the wall by taping them together and it made the box especially fragile and easy to transform. One could possibly move the cardboard to have a better view inside or spy on the outside world from the box. This instability and roughness of the box reminds me of the fragility of our lives and our bodies, it was also the expression of my compassion and admiration for homeless people who have chosen to live outside of "Work/Consume/Die structure"⁶². I keep coming back in my memory to the period of my life seven years ago when I also was homeless on the streets of New York, and the strange feeling of freedom and presence that I have never felt before or after. Many things happened during my two-month hobo existence. I start counting my Anno Domini, A.Y., after that point.

February 18, 2008

I have been arguing with TJ for a while about my stubbornness about following my dreams. For me the dreams that I had since I remember myself are the only guides left from my childhood that may help me to find my real self, but TJ thinks of them as something that keeps me from being happy. Today in our Chinese take-away my fortune cookie said: "Keep true to the dreams of your youth." Such coincidences are like messages from the Universe.

February 22, 2008

The idea of garbage is very interesting to me. It is a relic and reminder of what is human. Trash, the homeless, artists are useless, irrational numbers, social errors. It also brings up the eternal question: to have or to be?⁶³

More than half of my things are from dumpsters: given to me by Joe and Angela⁶⁴, found on the streets of New York. Here the abundance of things makes them worthless. I come from another culture. In Russia things are taken care of, valued, exchanged, stored. I can never throw anything away. Even a half empty bag of chips will find someone who desperately needs it.

My natural tendency towards compulsive collecting manifests itself in the opposite, my constant desire to get rid of everything. But I cannot resist my frenetic gathering of knowledge. I greedily collect data that will not necessarily be of any use out of constant hunger.

When I was little I wanted to become crazy and to get far away from the world. I am very drawn to the people who are tired of reality. They carry all their belongings with them, they have a few hats on their heads and seven coats on their bodies. I am afraid I would not be able to resist becoming one of them one day.

February 26, 2008

All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl. All work and no play makes Yana a dull girl.

February 28, 2008

Search for ideal happiness, health, wealth, and longevity is universal. I am sending an expedition inside myself. I have been always interested in various esoteric teachings: Daoism, Buddhism, Sufism, Vedas, Gurdzhev's philosophy, etc. Many ideas I

find in these texts resonate with the thoughts I had when I was trying to make sense out of the world between the ages of 8 and 15. In all the readings I am not looking for the perfect answer, I am looking for the tracks. I am not interested in becoming a practitioner of these teachings, rather I am interested in becoming me.

March 2, 2008

Studying at Stony Brook is a tour de force for me. I have gotten infected by American workaholism and hypnotized by high goals and ambitions. My body feels tired and defeated, my mind is agitated, all my negative emotions are unleashed, but in a way I enjoy surrendering to this. I keep thinking about the words of my friend who said once that if I am choosing to suffer I should at least suffer with joy. “Do anything, but let it produce joy. Do anything, but let it yield ecstasy.”⁶⁵

March 4, 2008

I have been disturbing my obsessions and exaggerating feelings so I could create work. Happy Yana is silent. But I cannot take my self-destructive moods anymore. I need to take care of my body and mind. For as long as I remember myself I have been trying to systemize my life, create a perfect schedule that would liberate myself from incoherence and chaos, make my life clean and easy. It would be very simple, something like this:

4.00 am	wake up
4.05 am	glass of water
4.25 am	meditation
5.25 am	contrast shower
5.55 am	self-massage
6.15 am	breakfast
6.45 am	study
9.00 am	exercises
10.30 am	lunch
11.00 am	work
5.00 pm	walk
6.00 pm	yoga

7.00 pm reading
9.00 pm meditation
9.55 pm glass of water
10.00 pm sleep

I never succeeded in following it but I keep trying. The world is not a sterile laboratory, but maybe my art could become one.

When I was 13 I wanted to be a boy, when I was 15 I dreamt of becoming a machine that made no mistakes. Over the last 3 years I became too human, constantly in error, in search, in question, in torment. I need some rest now.

The compulsive perfectionism is an interesting side of my personality. Part of me is strongly drawn to the disciplined life. Rules provide a linear quality, a sheltering framework. But by trying to maintain order I torture myself, while having the simultaneous desire to let myself go.

March 5, 2008

I do not remember exactly how I discovered my strong interest in Japanese culture. Maybe from my mother's stories about old Japanese people going to the mountains to die in order to free space for young generations or from my literature classes at school or ikebana club in the summer camp but I remember myself always writing papers about haikus, Japanese gardens, samurais, tea ceremony, etc. I also remember a couple of beautiful books about Zen gardens with bright pictures among hundreds of boring black-and-white texts about traditional Russian paintings in my school library.

I have always tried to jump over my head and to see something beyond myself. I always wanted to become an alien and played mental games with myself *What if I just came to the Earth from Mars*. Maybe this is why I was always interested in Japanese culture: it was enough alien for me and I could find new perspectives on ordinary things in its philosophy.

March 8, 2008

I am intrigued by how subtle the relationship between my thoughts and desires

and the world is. Everything is one. My slightest desire even if I do not fully realize it shapes reality around me. I want to understand my desires and their source, make unconscious desire conscious so I could create my world consciously.

March 12, 2008

I started finding a lot of pleasure in process and labor. Sometimes it seems that I could not accept my photographs because they were so easy and effortless. For my final Library Gallery exhibition I am making a concrete rock, 120 bees wax eggs and 120 transfers of schedules of my perfect life for 120 days. I am building my mindscape Zen garden.

March 19, 2008

There are so many distracting choices, killing my time mulling over what food to eat, which clothes to wear or gadgets to buy, where to go on vacation. When gaining choice, I loose focus. Making my life ascetic, when everything is prescribed and limited I will be able to concentrate on important things. I want to get rid of old habits, disrupt the status quo, and create a new routine. Maybe Zen monks are right thinking that only within routine enlightenment comes. Routine is the most difficult thing for me.

March 24, 2008

I read today a Chinese myth about an island in the ocean known as Horai where mountain hermits live in accordance with a philosophy of eternal life. Japanese gardens are a symbol of longing for this mythical paradise.

Zen gardens, karesansui, strive to convey the deeper meaning of life by reducing materials used to stones and gravel. The stones stand for the eternal framework of the universe, and the gravel symbolizes the transience of the phenomenal world. While the world evolves often in tempestuous ways, rocks remain resolute and strong. Stones were considered to be the dwelling places of god-like spirits not only in ancient Japan. There are also magical dolmens of Stonehenge and Carnac.

I decided to build a rock out of a concrete trying to give my hand freedom to create organic natural shape. The rock will have a bowl inside with water.

March 26, 2008

I was thinking about my bees wax eggs as a book of some sort. I wanted to let them store some words, my dreams, let the audience take one, get a little piece of my story, imagine the rest. But I was struggling trying to figure out what exactly to put inside: stones with words scribbled on them, pages from my diary, my hair. Finally I decided to make tiny origami cranes and write down the qualities that I am striving to become. I researched more about cranes online and found an amazing story about the Japanese girl Sadako who suffered from the Hiroshima attack. After being admitted to hospital she started folding origami paper cranes, spurred on by the Japanese saying that one who folded 1,000 cranes was granted a wish. As time passed by her condition became worse and instead of wishing for her own health Sadako started wishing for the peace in the world. She fell short of her goal of folding 1,000 cranes, having folded only 644 before her death; her friends completed the 1,000 and buried them all with her. In this story I can see the reflection of my belief that the best way we can contribute to the world peace and harmony is to achieve peace and harmony inside ourselves.

March 31, 2008

The title of my thesis exhibition is *For: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Wabi Sabi*. The title serves as a constant reminder for me that it is ok to be imperfect, to make mistakes. It is very useful otherwise I would have been paralyzed by fear. Everything went wrong with this exhibition. In Russia they say a ship begins with its name. I had to change and transform the concept of the exhibition countless times because of all kinds of technical difficulties, while working on the concrete and wax sculptures I badly injured my hands, making transfers I got the worst headaches and hurt my back. In a certain way I liked the challenge of not being good at making things. I like that it was a lot of work and struggle. I now have completely different appreciation of sculptors-warriors. Usually if things do not go naturally I try not to push it too hard, this time I am going against the natural flow, against what feels pleasant, and I have no idea what monster I will create at the end. Now I just hope that I will be truly able to accept the perfection of imperfection of my exhibition.

April 1, 2008

Today something happened that completed a puzzle of the *Wabi Sabi* exhibition, something that made me feel again that everything is right. During the opening a student came to me and asked me if I read *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin. I could hardly remember the book, maybe in high school long time ago, but I was intrigued wondering why my exhibition reminded him of this novel. So I went to the library immediately after the opening and read the first chapter, it started with “In 120 days, the construction of the Integral will be complete.” I rejoice with such random glimpses of universal connection. Now my 120 pages connected with 120 days of Zamyatin’s novel. I remembered that I did read this book and it was somewhere on the fringe of my consciousness I could remember the Single State where all characters of the book live in a completely glass city surrendered to mathematically infallible happiness.

One step further and I could become Hitler or Stalin. Five year planning is in my blood and sometimes I dream about building the perfect world. I am glad that I am not that ambitious and these plans do not go further than my own life.

April 7, 2008

My box has not become empty as I dreamed (Fig. 44). A lot of things are left inside and I am planning on giving them to the Salvation Army. It feels like a right ending for the piece. High and low mixed together, we all need help.

April 8, 2008

I am so very tired. My body aches from all the hard work and from not sleeping for a few days and my psyche is completely exhausted. Only in this state can I create art. I put myself in a circumstance where all my defenses are broken down and all my regular patterns of thinking and acting do not exist. In this other state my mind opens up and work just flows out of me.

April 10, 2008

Every day I spend a few hours in the Library gallery. I feel like time stops there altogether. The space turned out to be very peaceful and soothing offering a sense of

repose. I feel very comfortable and connected in the space and just hope that someone can get the same feeling. I heard once that being in mother's womb is the most comfortable and pleasant experience, we are fed and taken care of, we are floating inside, everyone unconsciously is dreaming of coming back there. In a way I feel like building this space was my manifestation of this desire of emptiness and void.

This exhibition is supposed to be sensed rather than viewed. I have tried to convey a beautiful symbolic poetry that is so characteristic to Zen gardens (Figs. 45-47). Using symbolism gardens remind people of their place in the universe, with my exhibition I am trying to locate myself in the world. The best way to appreciate such place is ultimately to set aside one's acquired knowledge and commune silently with the scene, allowing one's inner spirit to respond to the space. These spaces are distanced from everyday life and invite for a mental journey. They represent infinity – a place beyond time and space where it is possible to experience the pure potentiality that is the source of all existence.

Though the gallery looks clean and empty, there are a lot of things going on in the space. The floor is covered with sheets of paper with schedules on them. The only big object in the space is the rock that has a bowl of water and eggs in it. Viewers can take off their shoes and walk on the paper or they can approach the rock by walking on the uneven stepping-stones that make a path from the gallery door to the rock. Stepping-stones are no larger than necessary; they force one to practice mindfulness in the sense of watching where one is going. Visitors can play with water and eggs in the rock (Fig. 48). It was very important for me to encourage people to touch the water because of the purification and transformation rituals that are connected with water: baptism, Indian cleaning in river, Muslim hand washing before prayer, rinsing hands and mouth before tea ceremony. Water is one of the main life forces in the natural world. Water is a metaphor for life's journey. Water never dies. It lives forever reincarnated as rain, as clouds, as rivers. Water in the stone, bring simultaneously a reflector and a reflection, represents a totalistic viewpoint that each and every thing in the universe is at once a "mirror" and an "image". It is a mirror, because it reflects all things; it is an image, because it is simultaneously reflected by all other things. "This is to say that inasmuch as one thing is – at least in some manner – related to all other things, it reflects them all; and

inasmuch as the existence of any particular thing must depend on other things, it can be said to be an image, or reflection, of objects other than itself. In addition to this metaphorical sense of reflection between subjects and objects, there is a mystic conviction that the True Mind, like a great mirror, is limpid, serene, and illuminating, literally capable of reflecting or perceiving all things in a spontaneous manner.⁶⁶ The projection in water is luminous. It glows like a gem, and viewers, thinking to grasp it, join hand to hand to reach down to it. But every time they try to grasp it, it disappears. By disturbing the water viewers dissolve a projected eye on the wall that can be clearly seen when the water is calm and create beautiful patterns of light. This eye is my own *Histoire de l'Oeil*.⁶⁷

In the left corner of the room there is a pile of wax eggs, each egg contains an origami bird in it (Fig. 44). The egg is a fortune cookie, as origami cranes have some message written inside, different qualities I try to develop in myself. For the 120 days I will try to follow the schedule that I came up with for myself and that supposed to make me perfect. Each day I am going to choose one quality to meditate on and practice and each day I am going to give one egg to someone dear. They can choose to keep the egg as an amulet or to break it and read the word inside the crane. It is always the same: you stay inside in the comfort of your world or you break an egg to be born anew. I am going to make marks documenting my progress on the paper. Later I will create a book out of all the pages. This is all unpronounced and unknown for a viewer coming to the gallery but I believe all these stories behind add to the density of the work and can be felt on unconscious level.

April 11, 2008

The act of giving eggs turned out to be even a more interesting idea than I expected. In order to fulfill my duty I have to carry a fragile egg with me all day long before I find the person to give it to I have to aware every second of the egg otherwise I break it. It keeps me awake and I come back in my mind to my meditation quality. These eggs are my two drops of oil.⁶⁸

April 16, 2008

Sound was very important in creating environment in the gallery. I tried to create surrounding sound by placing speakers all over the room and in the ceiling. I have combined three sounds: my breath, waves and echo of the hollow eggs. The process of recording my breathing made me very conscious of my body in a way that I was never before, like something external, something that is not me. Relaxed breathing pattern correspondence with the rhythms of waves. The ocean is ancient, mother of all things. It is in the watery womb of our mother. The lap and gurgle of water is the first sound heard. Breath/heart and ocean are the fundamental of the original soundscape. Biologically the waves rhyme with the patterns of heart and lung and the tides with night and day. All roads lead to water. We come from and return to the sea. The wind sound created by shallow eggs, like the ocean, possesses an infinite number of vocal variations. The sensation becomes not just aural but also tactile.

The combination of all sounds is very peaceful and subtle; it becomes almost a white noise that is disturbed occasionally by sounds of splashes when someone plays with water in the rock. Once in a while there is also a sound of flipping stones that act as a refreshing counterpoint to the monotony of the other sounds. These unexpected sounds guide participants to realization of the tranquility at the core of exhibition.

May 2, 2008

This twist in my art is very exciting. How my art became very practical, directly applicable to my life. It is not limited by it, but it can also address universal issues. One person is the reflection of the universe. You can see the world in a grain of sand. One can only understand/love other people by consciously understanding/loving oneself. I don't like preaching. I am afraid to proclaim that I have a message for the world and prefer to address just myself. I have too many doubts. It is my way. Everyone has their own.

May 10, 2008

After all the work for the exhibitions my body is completely defeated and I cannot start my schedule. Former Yana would consider it a failure but I just wait and give myself some time to heal. I think about wabi sabi and perfection of imperfection. I try not to

judge and still see myself as perfect.

May 12, 2008

The ambition of my last two projects was beyond me. But I always live beyond what I fear to be my limits that I cannot know until I reach them. I constantly keep pushing myself. Napoleon's saying about first jumping into water and then learning to swim is my constant mantra. Teaching was one of the most difficult things I have done aside from marriage. I had so many doubts about accepting this position, but at the end I believe that it was the most important experience for me at Stony Brook. Definitely, when we teach we learn the most.

May 14, 2008

After finishing *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Wabi Sabi* I can see a Japanese garden from my window (Fig. 49). I have been looking at this place all year long and never seen it this way. This is such a good example of why I am making art. I just want to be able to see more things around, expansion of mind.

May 15, 2008

I am afraid of thinking about entering the professional art world and wonder what to do next. I want to remain an amateur-lover.⁶⁹ Amateur who is not just performing duties, but living life and doing things s/he likes unlike professionals who feel duty-bound to profess. In a way I felt more like an artist before I came to school than after graduation.

May 18, 2008

For the last four years I've been constantly producing without allowing myself to listen to my inner voice, without asking myself why I was rushing. My ambitions, environment, people, things around pushed me to create. Now I want to get rid of everything, to stay bare and to understand if it is the beginning or the end.

If you, like me, prefer to start books from the end you might enjoy reading my thesis on the website www.yanabeing.com that allows for a more fluid, changing, and alive experience.

Notes

¹ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines Weltschmerz (German, from Welt world + Schmerz pain) as a mental depression or apathy caused by comparison of the actual state of the world with an ideal state.

² Both/and is contrasted here with either/or. “Both/and” term represents a nondualistic worldview. It implies wholeness of identity (I am good and bad, kind and cruel, masculine and feminine) rather than separation (I am good, not bad, kind, not cruel). I believe that everyone contains multitudes, but not everyone wants to think this way about themselves. A both/and philosophy encourages seeing many shades of grey between black and white.

³ According to Wikipedia Janus (or Ianus) was the Roman god of gates, doors, doorways, beginnings, and endings. Janus was usually depicted with two heads (not faces) looking in opposite directions, and was frequently used to symbolize change and transitions such as the progression of past to future, of one condition to another, of one vision to another, the growing up of young people, and of one universe to another. He was also known as the figure representing time because he could see into the past with one face and into the future with the other.

⁴ The philosophical concept of pure potentiality is connected to the Buddhist Sunyata, emptiness, void from which the phenomenal world of the senses is constantly being born.

⁵ Victor Turner was a cultural anthropologist who explored rituals, rites of passage, and symbols.

⁶ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, p. 45.

⁷ Minor White was an American photographer and a renowned teacher. His artwork as well as teaching philosophy reflected his interest in Buddhism and mystic philosophies.

⁸ Charles Traub, *The Education of a Photographer*, p. 24.

⁹ Liz Wells, *The Photography Reader*, p. 100.

¹⁰ According to Wikipedia during the liminal stage, normally accepted differences between the participants, such as social class, are often de-emphasized or ignored. A social structure of *communitas* forms: one based on common humanity and equality rather than recognized hierarchy. For example, during a pilgrimage, members of an upper

class and members of a lower class might mix and talk as equals, when in normal life they would likely never talk at all or their conversation might be limited to giving orders.

¹¹ Herbert Plutschow, *An Anthropological Perspective on the Japanese Tea Ceremony*, <<http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0501/tea.htm>> (May 18, 2008).

¹² Stephane Mallarme was a French poet, an originator and a leader of the Symbolist movement in poetry.

¹³ Claire Bishop, *Participation*, p. 27. The quote is taken from Umberto Eco's essay *The Poetics of the Open Work*.

¹⁴ Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher and religious thinker.

¹⁵ It is a story about the discovery and disposal of a book whose pages never remain the same from one reading to the next. The book is in effect infinite, it contains every book.

¹⁶ *Dictionary of the Khazars* has a very original format. The stories, for there are at least three interwoven tales, are told in the form of encyclopedia entries from three points of view, Christian, Muslim and Jewish. These entries are cross-referenced to related entries within their own point of view and the other points of view. The reader can read the book from cover to cover or by reading the thematic entries across the different religions, or random entries, and emerge with different views of the book for each reading.

¹⁷ Claire Bishop, *Participation*, p. 22. The quote is taken from Umberto Eco's essay *The Poetics of the Open Work*.

¹⁸ Claire Bishop, *Participation*, p. 23. The quote is taken from Umberto Eco's essay *The Poetics of the Open Work*.

¹⁹ Here O stands for Zero as a symbol of nothingness as well as for a circle, a symbol of unity and eternity.

²⁰ Chris Landreth is an American animator. He uses CGI animation, with the element of what Chris calls "psychological realism". This often adds a surrealist quality to his work. For instance, in *Ryan*, the first Chris' animation I saw, he uses people's emotional problems to appear on their face. I was very intrigued by this animation: its visual form (Chris combined hand-drawn animation with photo-realistic, animation and documentary) as well as its main character, animator Ryan Larkin, fallen angel, a gifted Canadian animator of the late 60s and the early 70s who lives today on the street and asks

for spare change in downtown Montreal. *The End* was another animation by Chris Landreth that I found interesting because of the philosophical questions it raises.

²¹ This is a paraphrase of a Henry Miller quote from *Tropic of Capricorn* (1939): “The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware, joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware.” <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_Miller> (May 18, 2008).

²² Bruce R. McPherson, *Essential Brakhage: Selected Writings on Film-Making*, p. 12.

²³ *Je t'aime mélancolie* (“I Love You, Melancholy”) is a Mylene Farmer’s song. In the song the French singer observes her own life and talks about sadness and melancholy.

²⁴ *If One Thing Matters, Everything Matters* is a major solo exhibition at Tate Britain of the work of the Turner Prize winner Wolfgang Tillmans. His photographs present us with a compelling alternative to conventional ideas about beauty.

²⁵ John Cage, *Silence*, p. 93.

²⁶ Rudolf Arhneim, *Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens*, p. 76.

²⁷ I am referring here to the story of the blind men and the elephant that is popular in various Eastern philosophies. In the story six blind men touch an elephant to find out what the elephant is. But because each of them touches different parts they cannot agree on how the elephant looks.

²⁸ Liz Wells, *The Photography Reader*, p. 141.

²⁹ TJ is my life and art partner. He is magical and reminds me of an Eastern dragon with scales of diamonds and the finest hair of golden lace. He also smells and is stinky metaphorically speaking and I wish he were more like a perfect robot than a perfect TJ but I strive to accept the stink of his poop, metaphorically speaking. Plus he likes movies that I think are stupid.

³⁰ Tehching Hsieh is a performance artist who is most well known for his One Year Performances when he stayed inside his apartment or spend one year outside or tied with a rope to another person.

³¹ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, p. 72.

³² This sentence refers to the Ise Jingu shrine that has been continually rebuilt every 20 years since year 690. This tradition is supposed to keep the purity and freshness of the holy place.

³³ From Joseph Beuys' statement dated 1973, first published in English in Caroline Tisdall: *Art into Society, Society into Art*, p.48.

³⁴ In *Rhythm 0* Marina Abramović placed on a table 72 objects (scissors, a knife, a whip, a gun, a bullet, etc) that viewers were allowed to use in any way that they wanted. Some of these were objects that could give pleasure, while others could be wielded to inflict pain, or to harm her. For six hours Marina Abramović stood immobile and the viewers could freely manipulate her body and actions. Initially, the audience reacted with caution and modesty, but as time passed several people began to act quite aggressively and one person aimed the gun at the artist's head.

³⁵ From the interview with Min Tanaka in *P.S.1 Newspaper*, Fall 2007 <<http://www.ps1.org/newspaper/view/article/32>> (May 19, 2008).

³⁶ C. Carr, *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*, p. 27.

³⁷ Matthew Barney is a contemporary artist who works with film, video, installations, sculpture, photography, drawing and performance art.

³⁸ Twinning. *Wikipedia*. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twinning>> (May 18, 2008).

³⁹ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, p.12.

⁴⁰ Aphex Twin is a British electronic music artist.

⁴¹ This is Henry Miller's quote from *Tropic of Capricorn* (1938). I took it from Wikiquote, <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_Miller> (May 18, 2008).

⁴² Technically we had two separate solo exhibitions that semester, but we united our time and collaborated on both shows.

⁴³ Bjork is an Icelandic singer, songwriter and electronic music artist. Miranda July is a performance artist, musician, writer, actress and film director. Amelie is a character in a film by the same name directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and starring Audrey Tautou, Michel Gondry is a French Academy Award-winning screenwriter, film, commercial and music video director.

⁴⁴ Sophie Calle is a French writer, photographer, installation artist, and conceptual artist. Her work frequently depicts human vulnerability, and examines identity and intimacy.

⁴⁵ *Disco Pigs* is a critically acclaimed film about a boy and girl born on the same day who grow up together and must one day experience the horror of possible separation.

⁴⁶ *ECOcentric Topics* explores the radical transformation of cultural values that accompanies the adoption of environmental considerations. The book discusses the compelling work of ten contemporary artists who are addressing these pioneering issues.

⁴⁷ Burning Man is an annual art event and temporary community based on radical self-expression and self-reliance in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada.

⁴⁸ Andrej Tarkovsky was a Russian film director, writer and opera director. He is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential directors of the 20th century.

⁴⁹ This passage is taken from the interview available as a bonus feature on Tarkovsky's film, *Andrei Rublev*.

⁵⁰ The words from the Radiohead song *Fitter, Happier*.

⁵¹ Sophie Calle, *Sophie Calle: Did You See Me?*, p. 54.

⁵² I am referring to the whole tradition of Russian/Soviet animation.

⁵³ Butoh is the radical Japanese dance movement that arose in a spirit of revolt in the 1960s. It is characterized by frank sexuality and bodily distortions. Butoh transforms traditional dance movements into new forms revealing a secret world of darkness and irrationality.

⁵⁴ Chris Gehman, *The Sharpest Point: Animation at the End of Cinema*, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Professor Chris Semergief mentioned this metaphor to me. I thought it was genius.

⁵⁶ Sol LeWitt was an American artist who was prominent in minimalism and conceptual art.

⁵⁷ Michael Kimmelman, *The Accidental Masterpiece*, p. 119.

⁵⁸ This is Henry Miller's quote from *The Rosy Crucifixion I: Sexus* (1949). I took it from Wikiquote, <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_Miller> (May 18, 2008).

⁵⁹ I like the phrase *Help Yourself* because of its double meaning. On the one hand, it suggests to take stuff but also to literally focus on your own self.

⁶⁰ After Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*.

⁶¹ Lea Vergine, *Trash. From Junk to Art*, p. 248.

⁶² Hakim Bey, *Immediatism*, p. 20.

⁶³ *To Have or to Be?* is the title of the book by Erich Fromm.

⁶⁴ My friends and artists who make art on the streets of NYC.

⁶⁵ This is Henry Miller's quote from *Tropic of Cancer* (1934). I took it from Wikiquote, <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_Miller> (May 18, 2008).

⁶⁶ Garma Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, p. 124.

⁶⁷ *Histoire de l'Oeil* (Eng: Story of the Eye) is a novella written by Georges Bataille that details the sexual experimentation of two teenage lovers. Bataille used there eye-egg analogy that I explored in my exhibition.

⁶⁸ This sentence refers to the story about a spoon with two drops of oil told in *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. In the story a wise man tells a boy to go enjoy looking around his house, but the boy has to carry a spoon with two drops of oil. He is unable to enjoy the view because he is too worried about the oil. Then he is told to simply enjoy it, but he comes back with an empty spoon. The wise man says, "The secret to happiness is to see all marvels of the world, and never to forget the drops of oil in the spoon."

⁶⁹ The word amateur comes from the Latin *amare* meaning to love.

Bibliography

Baas, Jacquelynn, and Jacob, Mary Jane, eds. *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Berthier, Francois. *Reading Zen in the Rocks: The Japanese Dry Landscape Garden*. Trans. Graham Parkes. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2005.

Bey, Hakim. *Immediatism*. San Francisco: AK Press, 1994.

Bishop, Claire, ed. *Participation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. France: Les Presse Du Reel, 2002.

Cabanne, Pierre. *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1987.

Cage, John. *Silence*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983.

Calle, Sophie. *Sophie Calle: Did You See Me?* Barcelona: Prestel, 2003.

Carr, C. *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993.

Chang. Garma. *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1974.

DiGiovanna, James Francis. *Ethics and Aesthetics of Self-Creation*. Stony Brook: Stony Brook University, 2001.

Doy, Gen. *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004.

Gehman, Chris, and Reinke, Steve. *The Sharpest Point: Animation at the End of Cinema*. Toronto: YYZ Books, 2005.

Gonzalez-Torres, Felix. *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*. Ed. Julie Ault. Gottingen, Germany: Steidl, 2006.

Gray, John. *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*. London: Granta Books, 2004.

Gussin, Graham, and Carpenter, Ele. *Nothing*. Italy: Birkhauser Pap, 2001.

Juniper, Andrew. *Wabi Sabi: The Japanese Art of Impermanence*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2003.

Kimmelman, Michael. *The Accidental Masterpiece: On the Art of Life and Vice Versa*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2005.

Knill, Paolo J. *Principles And Practice Of Expressive Arts Therapy: Toward A Therapeutic Aesthetics*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004.

Licht, Alan. *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories*. New York: Rizzoli, 2007.

McDonough, Tom, ed. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004.

McPherson, Bruce R. *Essential Brakhage: Selected Writings on Film-Making*. Kingston, New York: McPherson & Co., 2001.

Nitschke, Gunter. *The Architecture of the Japanese Garden: Right Angle and Natural Form*. Germany: Benedikt Taschen, 1991.

Okakura, Kakuzo. *The Book of Tea*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2007.

Pussel, Ryofu. *Tea and Buddhism. Chado: the Way of Tea as a Buddhist Path*. USA: Xlibris Corporation, 2005.

Slawson, David A. *Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens: Design Principles, Aesthetic Value*. New York: Kodansha International, 1991.

Sontag, Susan. *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays*. New York: Picador USA, 1961.

Strawser, Michael. *Both/And. Reading Kierkegaard from Irony to Edification*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997.

Traub, Charles H. *The Education of a Photographer*. New York: Allworth Press, 2006.

Turner, Victor Witter. *From Ritual to Theatre: the Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

Turner, Victor Witter. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1995.

Van Zuylen, Marina. *Monomania: The Flight From Everyday Life In Literature And Art*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Vaneigem, Raoul, and Nicholson-Smith, Donald. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. London: Rebel Press, 2001.

Vergine, Lea, ed. *Trash. From Junk to Art*. Corte Madera: Gingko Press Inc., 1997.

Weintraub, Linda. *Cycle-Logical Art: Recycling Matters for Eco-Art*. Rhinebeck, NY: Artnow Publications, 2006.

Weintraub, Linda. *ECOcentric Topics: Pioneering Themes for Eco-Art*. Rhinebeck, NY: Artnow Publications, 2006.

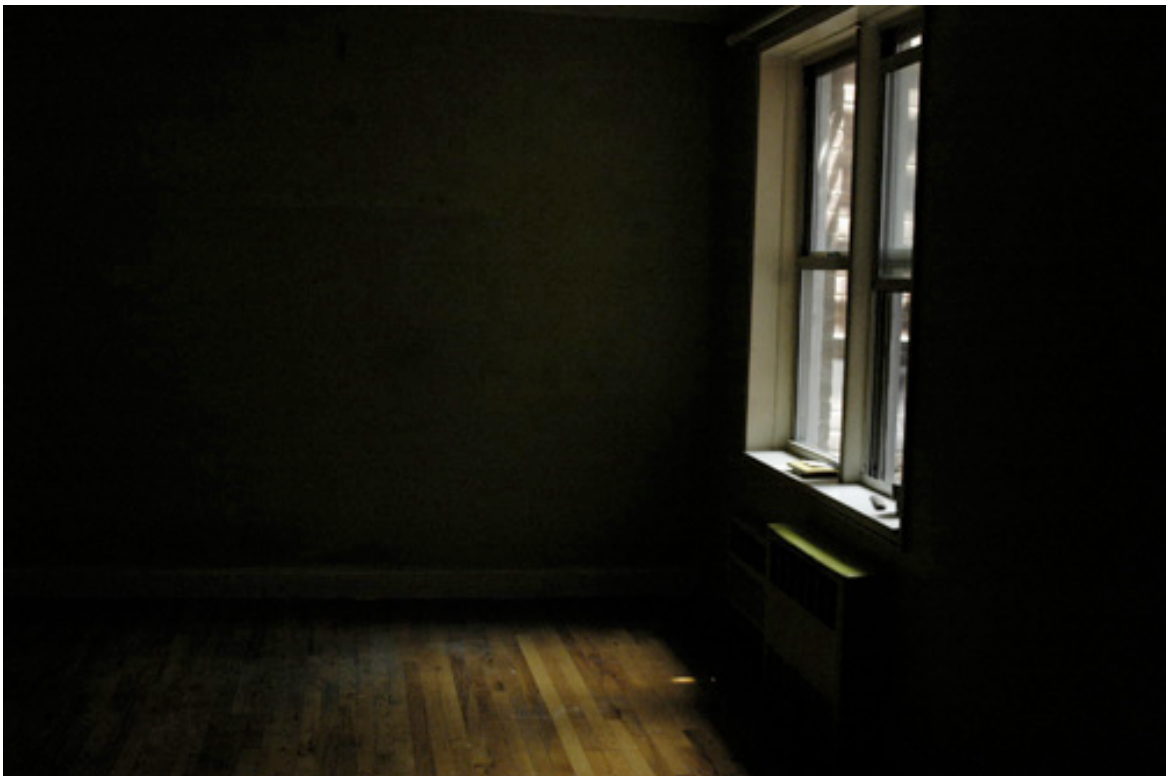
Wells, Liz, ed. *The Photography Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Zamiatin, Evgenii. *We*. New York: The Modern Library, 2006.

Appendix: Images



Fig. 1: *Untitled*, from *Haiku* series



Figs. 2-3: *Untitled*, from *Haiku* series



Figs. 4-5: *Untitled*, from *Haiku* series



Figs. 6-7: *Untitled*, from *Haiku* series



Fig. 8: *Untitled*, from *Haiku* series



.....



.....



.....



.....



.....



.....

Fig. 9-11: Pages from *yanaphotoy* PDF book



Figs. 12-13: *Slow Walk Performance*



Figs. 14-15: *Twinning 23*



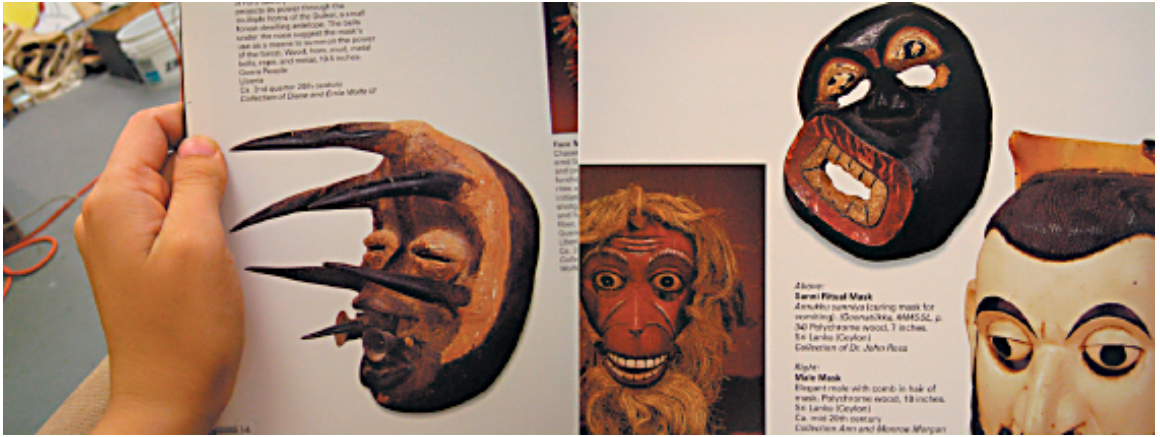
Figs. 16-17: *Twinning 23*



Figs. 18-19: *Untitled*



Figs. 20-21: *Untitled*



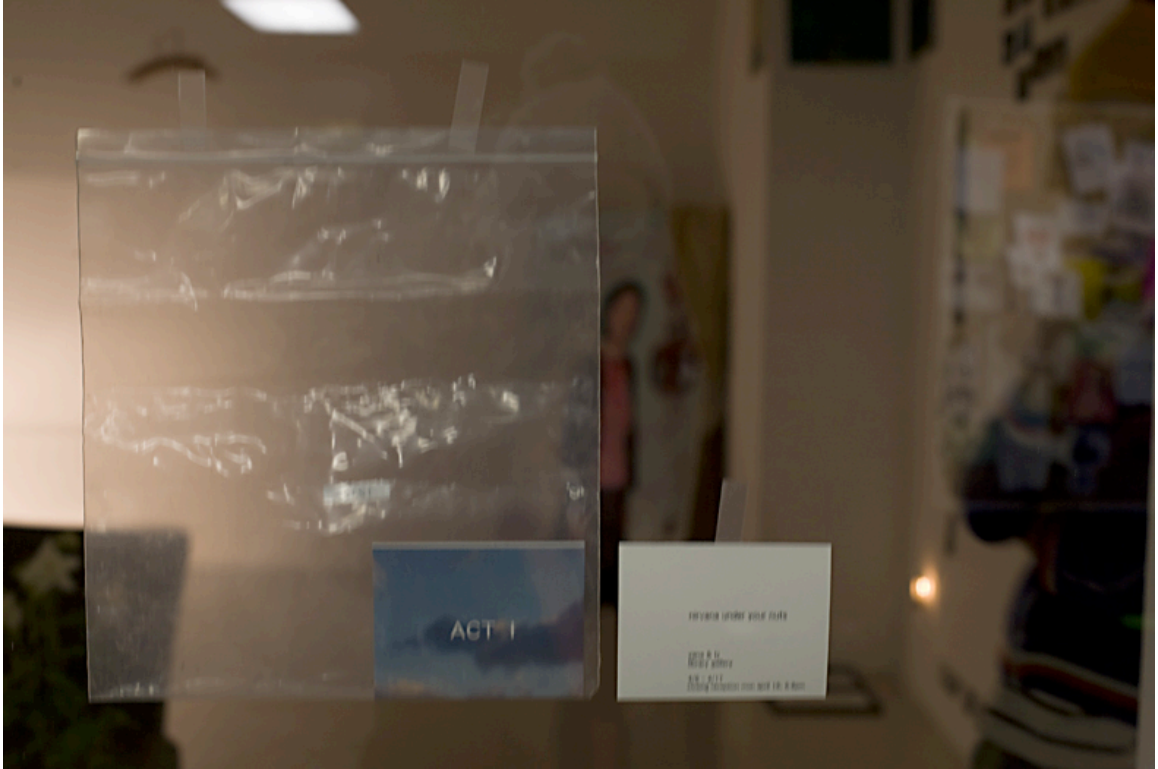
Figs. 22-24: Pages from *Book of Books* PDF book



Figs. 25-26: *Surale Trees*



Figs. 27-28: *Masterpiece*



Figs. 29-30: *Nirvana Under Your Nuts*



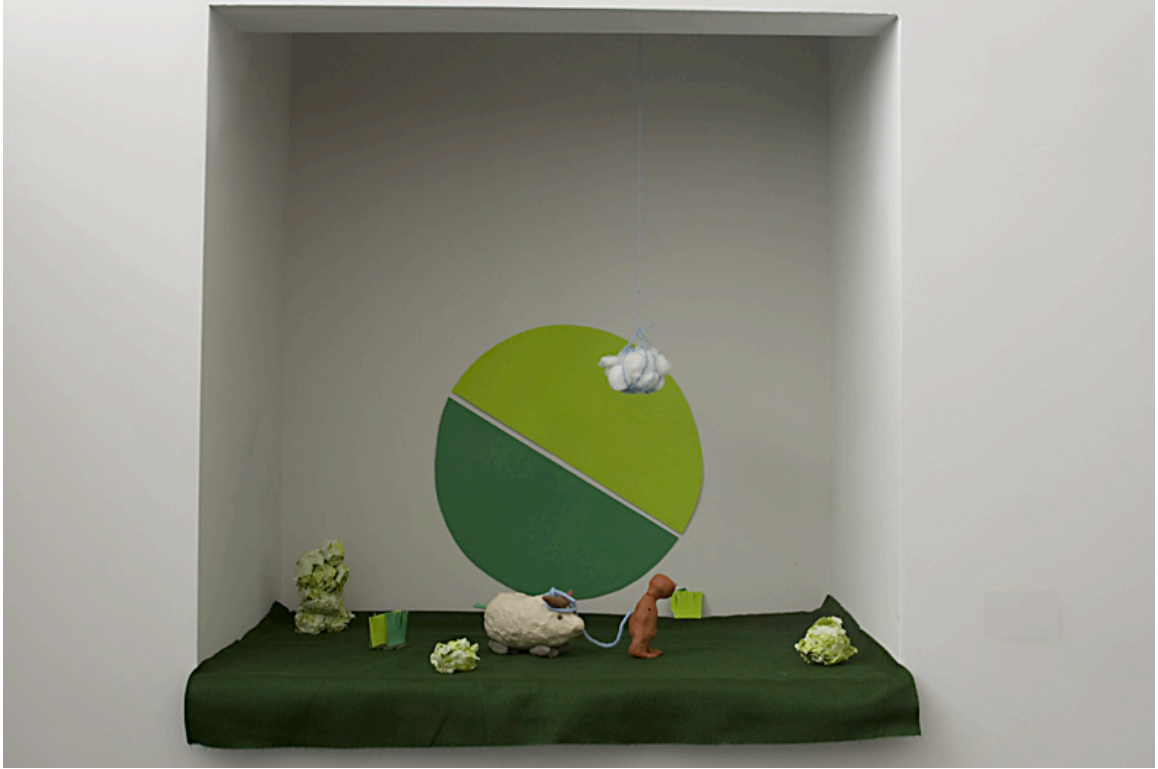
Figs. 31-32: *Play As It Lays*



Figs. 33-34: *Ersatz.com*



Figs. 35-36: *Kyklops*



Figs. 37-38: *What the Butler Saw In Time*



Figs. 39-40: *Life is Blue, Not Pink*



Figs. 41-42: *Steal This Exhibition*



Figs. 43-44: *Steal This Exhibition*



Figs. 45-46: *or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Wabi Sabi*



Figs. 47-48: *or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Wabi Sabi*



Fig. 49: *Untitled*, from *Haiku* series