

HUSTLING BY VOICE MESSAGE

*Giulio Squillacciotti's video installation
about the collaboration between artists*

25.01.2019 | Feature on Metropolism (NL) - Guus van Engelshoven



Today, in Van Eyck, Giulio Squillacciotti opens *The Pit Call*, a multi-channel video installation that revolves around what is always hidden: the consultation between artists when setting up a project and all the difficult questions around it.

In *The Pit Call*, Van Eyck participant Giulio Squillacciotti presents his new short film in a multichannel video installation. The film shows the communication between three other artists currently in residence at Van Eyck: Daniel de Paula, Marissa Lee Benedict and David Rueter. They bought an old trading floor from the Chicago Stock Exchange for a joint project, without knowing for what purpose they could use this pit. The film shows how collaboration between different artistic practices comes about. How the exchange of ideas and positions takes place and what the instruments are to achieve such a collaboration. Guus van Engelshoven spoke to Giulio Squillacciotti about the creation and background of his new work.

-Guus van Engelshoven

With The Pit Call you address an often underexposed aspect of artistry - not the image of the painter, withdrawn behind the closed doors of the studio, but the artist as organiser, cooperation partner, regulator. Can you tell us more about the background of this project?

-Giulio Squillacciotti

I have always been interested in human relationships and interaction. With this project I wanted to try to present the conversations that normally take place behind closed doors between artists to a wider audience. In the short film we see three artists talking about things that you might not immediately associate with artistry as a visitor of exhibitions: finding storage space, drafting contracts, renting costs, searching for collaboration opportunities with institutions, making plans and investigating legal issues. The film is actually about the way in which artists jointly develop a methodology for working together. Usually the public only sees the end result of such collaborations, I want to show the process that precedes them.

-Guus van Engelshoven

The video installation goes beyond mere registration of a process. The way in which the film is shown within the installation is very theatrical. The two monitors on which the interview is presented become almost actors in themselves within the installation. As a viewer, you wonder if there was a script for the conversation.



-Giulio Squillacciotti

The idea was to present a completely realistic conversation in a completely fictitious environment. The film is shot against the background of a permanent artwork by Jeroen van Bergen here at the Van Eyck, which consists of false facades of restaurants, flower shops and museums. For the conversation between the artists in the film was not a script, it is a real conversation that they had to perform anyway because they are working on this cooperation project. I then recorded that conversation within a fictitious setting. The fictional background against which the film is set up introduces a layering that I find interesting, you go through it in a different way to watch and listen to the conversation. A third element that is important in the film is the way in which the three artists communicate with each other, namely via voice message, something that I see more and more around me. In the installation this causes a delay and doubling of the conversation, you hear both how the message is recorded by one, and played by the other. Certain narratives begin to merge in this way. When you enter the installation you actually enter a conversation. You may not know exactly what the people in the film are talking about, but that is not necessarily important either. It mainly concerns the way in which they shape their cooperation and how they position themselves in relation to the other within this process.

-Guus van Engelshoven

The two monitors are presented in the multichannel installation for a wall-filling image of the Academieplein in Maastricht, the street corner where the Van Eyck Academie is located. What is the significance of this specific image in the installation and the role of the Van Eyck within this project?

-Giulio Squillacciotti

The method I use in my projects starts from the story that I want to tell, but is also characterised by a certain degree of research, in which the context in which that research is carried out forms an important element. I have been artist-in-residence at Van Eyck for almost ten months now. For me, the big picture of the Academieplein is a way to involve the city where I lived in the past year. In addition, the work fits in well with the open attitude of the participants at Van Eyck, who often collaborate during their work period here. Van Eyck is a place where not only artists work, but also philosophers, writers, curators and poets. There is a constant atmosphere of exchange and new input. That is why I think it is so fitting that the installation is presented in the Van Eyck café. In the black box of the installation you listen to a conversation between three artists in a fictitious environment, while on the other side of the curtain artists might be sitting together at the table who are actually conducting this kind of conversation. In this sense, the work is also a calling card for the working method at Van Eyck.