DOPPIOZERO

Being a terrorist | Jan Hoet

Daniela Zangrando

26 Marzo 2014

Love resembles cholera in its symptoms, Jan Hoet knows it well, there's no need to refer to García Márquez. His irreparable love for arts is in his feverish eyes. In his shoulder, that he moves nervously from time to time, as in a twitch. In his nervousness and anger. In the ferocity that bites his stomach.

That's full flight, full passion. It is a deaf anxiousness, that does not listen to any truce or yielding.
A man so enraged and sanguine cannot avoid to give torment to himself and to others. His project can only be subversive. Little matters here to make a list of his exhibitions. And even less to calculate the precise number of the artists of *Documenta IX* and the sites devoted to the exhibition. It would be too easy a game to compose a set of memoirs. To do that you just need to get in the bookshop of the S.M.A.K. Museum in Ghent and leaf through some catalogues. As well as the famous *Chambres D'Amis* and the three volumes of the Documenta catalogue, a whole world of satellites will appear, that are only seemingly minor, from *Rendez (-) Vous to Yellow, from Over The Edges to Open Mind-Closed Circuits*, from *Kunst in Europa na '68 to Ponton Temse*. The listing could go on for quite a while.

But let us not get distracted. What matters here is that Jan is a terrorist. A man who pushes, puts pressure, resists, smashes.

Jan Hoet | Laurens De Keyzer, Rony Heirman, Jan Hoet-LXV, Ludion, Ghent-Amsterda

Jan Hoet | Laurens De Keyzer, Rony Heirman, Jan Hoet-LXV, Ludion, Ghent-Amsterdam 2001

From 1975 Jan Hoet has been the director of the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, but, substantially, he is the director of a non existent museum. It is like putting on the crown of a much too small kingdom. Or of no kingdom at all. A bet that is lost since the very beginning. But not for him.

Do the halls of the so called museum only consist of two rooms and a corridor and are they hosted in the Museum voor Shone Kunsten? Never fear. That will mean that the museum itself will have to change, be considered as a limit whose boundaries need to be taken into account, from which you can start to create tension, a new definition. Whether the museum will end up dead or alive, we'll see. It will probably end up less presumptuous, renewed, in the spaces where people live. *Chambres D'Amis* has a lot to do with this as well.

What can you do if you remain with zero budget for two years? At stake, an exhibition with an estimated expense of 10 million Francs, and rising so uncontrollably that it imposes to declare an unofficial figure far away from the actual one.

You can only insist. And Jan knows how to do it. He puts the burgomaster with his back against the wall, getting to have a small financing, he risks all-out, allocating for a single exhibition the budget that is usually given for the whole museum sector for four years, he asks a financial support from his family and, when he is around at half of the necessary sum, he says "Voilà! I'll start!". And he convinces the suppliers to work for free, his trusted architect to invest at his own costs to build a work by Buren, his assistants to search for partners and sponsors. Until he even bothers Dunhill.

Jan Hoet | video still | Jef Cornelis, De Langste Dag, BRT 2, 21.06.1986*Jan Hoet | video still | Jef Cornelis, De Langste Dag, BRT 2, 21.06.1986*

His fury overwhelms everything. It doesn't keep the artists safe. With them he fights until he is exhausted. Side by side, but also hand to hand. He knows all too well that he could opt for exhibition of absolute integration. The ones everyone is satisfied about and forgets immediately, like the sermon after the end of the Sunday mass. He could be satisfied with filling the houses, as well as the museums, with valuable "pieces", maybe replacing an anonymous, questionable landscape through a pearl of Van Gogh's painting. But what would art be for? For adornment? Would it anyhow change the people's mentality? No. That is not the right track. You need to provoke. In order to get a reaction. Arouse something, otherwise people won't change at all! The artists should not disappoint him. "I'm only afraid of one thing" – he tells them firmly. And reaffirms: "A work of art should always deregulate. I would dare to impose you the word terrorism… I

would like you to be terrorists.”

While I am here and write this text, my thoughts go to the exhibitions. They are the text. Because art is the fundamental thing. It is not just a matter of taste. It’s a matter of choice. And art can make you ill. It forces you to continuous struggle. Better get a pair of boxing gloves. To hang them before the writing desk, well within sight.

All the references are based on interviews between the Author and Jan Hoet, Jo Coucke, Luciano Fabro, Edilbert Haentjens, and on *Chambres D’Amis. Gent 21 Juni-21 September 1986 Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent 1986; S. Carrayrou (curated by), *Entretien avec Jan Hoet (Museum Van Hedendaagse-Gent “Gand”, 24 Juin 1987) “Chambres d’Amis*”, “*Point d’orgue de tout ce que j’ai voulu démontrer dans le musée*”; Jan Hoet, *An introduction*, in *Documenta IX*, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, Kassel 1992.

(Translated by Giulia Galvan)

Se continuiamo a tenere vivo questo spazio è grazie a te. Anche un solo euro per noi significa molto.
Torna presto a leggerci e SOSTIENI DOPPIOZERO

