

David Lieske

Style and Subversion  
1979-2012

- Appendix -

Yes, the family is a stable place. It should be so. My family is not a stable place but I am not sure whether I need one. I am still a young artist, just 32 years old. I think of my private life as a political condition, even though I don't really believe in the importance of private life. But I do believe that where politics isn't involved in one's private life there politics can't be decisive and are impossible to be hold out perspectively. But, to be honest, it is hard for me to sustain any kind of private life anyway. I think, I don't really have one. I read somewhere that the private lives of our times are in crisis and are threatened by various circumstances. One of them seems to be that this private life has become inseparable from one's professional life, that these two lives fall into one so to say. In my case this is completely true. Very much so. There is not a single person I know who isn't somehow connected to my professional life, if the latter was defined as something that possibly generates income. But I find it difficult to deduce from this observation that I really suffer from these conditions.

I would imagine this professional life became political, maybe if it would carry within itself a relentless image of the supposedly private and if I would, as best as I could, make my contradictions and complications transparent and negotiable in that way. In exhibitions for instance. To be able to have a real private life would mean to me to have something worth protecting, something that I should safeguard from the grip of my professional life. It would mean, for instance that nobody knows everything about oneself, not the colleagues or especially not the boss. I regard that as politically wrong. Above all, I do not have any work-mates, I don't even know what my profession is or how to outline it in an elegant way, and I do not have a superior. I am not a worker, nor am I an employer. I love consuming but property is meaningless to me. I don't invest and to be thrifty is hard for me. But I also don't like living in poverty. I am not particularly ambitious, but still depend tremendously on the acknowledgement of others. I don't have any special opinions or convictions, don't belong to a political group or movement but I disagree with many things. I would always define myself as a leftie and I have a libidinous relationship with the language of the left. Especially with the one of the militant left. I believe that activists can develop an authentically negative approach to society rather than cultural producers, because the work of the latter functions as a mediator between the inside and the outside of a society.

Often it seems to me that I don't get on with people; on the other hand, I have the great gift of adapting to them.

I am prone to mood swings.

When presenting myself in public, I laugh a lot. I don't really notice it myself but it was pointed out to me recently. Other people like it that I make a happy impression on them, but I am usually not really content most of the time. I spend the majority of my days alone at home in my flat. I like movies and watch many of them during the day. Such excessive behaviour permeates many aspects of my life.

Certainly, I spend most of my time in bed around which I ordered things that are intended to divert me from the emptiness of my inner self. There is a turn table, a monitor with DVD player and some books that serve as decoration rather than as reading matter, as reading doesn't come easy to me. Can't concentrate very well. My mind only stays briefly with the printed word. After a few paragraphs, my eyes continue to follow the lines but my mind starts wandering, thinking mostly about unimportant things. I have a keen sense of style and taste, that's why most items in my flat are of a certain elegance. The most important device in my flat is a portable computer that is connected by wireless to the world wide data web. This connectivity helps me maintain loose contacts. Many of whom I have known in real life, many of them only virtually. They live in different time zones and - as my daily and nightly rhythm deviates greatly from the one of those in employment - I am glad to find someone to talk to even late at night.

Most of these acquaintances are homosexual men whom I find sexually attractive.

I am easily influenced. At the moment I am under the influence of Claude Chabrol movies and on some days I can watch three of them in a row. The American series *The O.C.* appeals to me on a variety of levels and fires up my imaginations and projections on the concept of the intact family. My suggestibility concerns me since it is out of my control. It is difficult for me to develop my own language, because my willingness or my drive, if you will, to appropriate is too acute to shield what could be my own language from the influences of those cherished sources. To protect things is difficult for me. I am not treating my body very well. But I do clean myself every day using high quality products, but I am really only doing this because I prefer the look of their packaging to the one of those

from the supermarket located underneath my flat. I am easily persuaded to spend four times their actual value, when I have the money. Regarding my difficulties in protecting objects, I also display a level of carelessness in my human relationships. Be they private ones or business related, although this differentiation, as mentioned earlier, has become meaningless to me.

I love to talk about things close to me and do that in an often impulsive and sometimes thoughtless way. I find it difficult to reconsider thoughts, let them rest or even guard an idea. I treat most people that I know more or less equally. There are no informal hierarchies in my relationships. I tell everybody about incidents in my life and about what I am trying to think about. I often do this in a manner that borders on harassment and often this information politics results in a disadvantage for me.

I love to write electronic letters and I easily write many lines very quickly. But I don't like to read them before sending and I press the send button once I feel that the message is complete, happy to hear the hissing sound that my computer makes. I think that this sound is meant to imitate something thrown through the air.

After sending, I read my messages often and with pleasure. Usually I feel content and very comfortable. Just as if I had produced something. In a disgusting way, I am cocksure about my self and about what I do, I was like that already as a child. I often think, for example, just as a message has been sent, that I can really think, write and agitate, but I shy away from producing something proper when it comes to it and I lose all courage. Whenever I am involved in the production of something that should meet my own expectations for an elite public - such as that of an art gallery - I suddenly stop doing anything. I am so ashamed because my greatest desire is to become a famous artist, who is admired for his spirited work and who acquires great wealth and exerts social influence.

My greatest problem is that I don't like to work continuously. Things come easy to me whenever they just happen or if I am in the mood for it. Under pressure or within a strictly defined frame work, I cannot work at all, although many days I just wish I had some orientation with regards to all the time that I have on my hands. I am jealous of people who need to clock in at a given time in their office and imagine that they fulfill their tasks just by attending work. I imagine the dynamics of such places in the most beautiful colours. I think about little differences or love affairs amongst staff, about many pleasant lunch breaks when they get together and talk about

work and family. I hear telephones ringing and the many typing sounds of fancy computer keyboards that the multitudes of employees type away at, fulfilling their duties. Wonderful. These people surely have a private life and they can age. I will most probably even at the age of 80 have to get my teeth into some vague promise.

When I am lucky, my telephone rings up to three times a day. I always pick it up instantly, even when I am in the shower or on the loo. There's nothing more terrible than to miss a call. I love everything that enters my life from the outside. I am always curious and glad about every attention from anybody. I often try to make arrangements to meet someone in the afternoon, either for a meal or a cup of tea. Many of my friends lead a similar life to mine and are able to meet up during the day. Maybe they are also happy to escape their vague working conditions for a while. Most of my friends however are more interested than me in maintaining a daily routine akin to an employee's. That doesn't make sense to me and I love to make fun of them. But I understand that the complete absence of rhythm and structure could easily lead to a certain lack of orientation, which may dip into melancholy or depression. I am fairly often confronted with this issue. My friends advise me to do sports as a cure. But I keep on refusing, because I don't really enjoy keeping my body in shape. I have a certain interest in the places where measures for physical training are carried out and the few times that I appeared in such places, I felt instantly sure that what my friends were so crazy about was the right thing for me too. It seems though, that this feeling wasn't strong enough to keep me motivated and make it a regular habit.

I dream a lot and it always seems to have a connection with reality. Unfortunately, in the mornings I am too lazy to write down my dreams and later on, usually when I no longer remember them, it makes me angry. I regard dreams as the more appropriate way of thinking, which I am incapable of in consciousness.

My physical condition is not exactly the best in the world but stable on a certain level. Actually, I am rarely ill. I don't get the flu or colds and never have a temperature and the reason for this is, in my theory, that I behave in my everyday life like employees when they are ill. Not seriously ill but like someone who stays home with a little cold and a bit of a sore throat. Stay home for a day. Take it easy, sleep and eat when you feel like it. As a principle, I only eat what I like and when I am hungry. On some days I eat several hot meals, on others I eat none. During an extended stay in Tel Aviv, I discovered cooking. It is very convenient for me that there is a supermarket in

my building and that the flat I am living in now has a well equipped kitchen.

It often happens however, that I amble a few meters down the road to the delicatessen in the Galeries Lafayette, because I prefer the products there. They are French products and their boxes have more beautiful type faces than the German ones and sometimes little illustrations that make me happy. I also like it that you don't have to put your items on a conveyor belt but you just dump your basket in front of the cashier who then places everything into a beautiful red paper bag with handles that you don't need to pay for.

Art should, in the first place, deal with its conditions of production and distribution. Treatments of complicated contents or narratives do not interest me. I have been reproached for my lack of interest and for not being serious at all. I may go along with the first accusation, but I am always serious about everything I do. I certainly believe in humour but I am no friend of polemics. Of course I often feel I am in the wrong place, like many others besides me too, but in effect I know that there exists no other field of profession that would tolerate an existence like mine. Except maybe for organised crime that, without doubt, I am drawn to. This alone is enough for me to insist on being an artist, even though I don't like to call myself as such. Too frivolous, generally available and imprecise a name for this vocation and it is seriousness that I am interested in. It is almost a fetish, you might say, and it remains a fantasy most of the times.

There is something attached to the word 'artist', I think, that I quickly associate with that intention for self-expression. Such an idea disgusts me of course, but if I were a little more honest with myself, I would discover that I constantly do exactly that and nothing else. This excessive constant communication of mine is certainly similar to uninhibited painting in watercolours.

When authenticity and authorship were made out as the main enemies of cultural production, I found my point of entry. Finally, there seemed to be something that enabled me to dissociate myself from the clichés of a subjective art practice. Unfortunately, I did not realise that my expressive character was inappropriate for such declarations of artificiality, which nonetheless remained my ideal of beauty. So far, I haven't found a solution for this problem. Rather I am constantly reminded of what I am incapable of, especially when I look at works of art that I admire. There aren't that many and most of what I see, I do not like, but when I do like something, then I am all for it. Once I am won over, work and person fall into one, as it

were, and differentiations become pretty unclear.

My character is submissive and dominant at the same time. Within the space of one sentence I may be overmodest and boastful. I have been accused of consuming people and it is hard to deny that. It is difficult for me to treat the ones I love with care but on the other hand I am readily available when they need me. Sometimes I develop strong fixations that could be associated with romantic love. This usually happens when people try to withdraw from my influence. My unconditional will to entangle them becomes even greater. Rejections spurn me on and drive me to peak performances. Often I overshoot the mark and my declarations of interest take on a form of stalking.

Last year i got stuck in such a fixation on a young man, who I met during a residency in New York. His name is Mathew. He is 25 years old and very well educated. He shares my passion for movies and music and also in the realm of visual art, we can agree on a handful of names. He worked as a gallery assistant in the same gallery that is meant to represent me in the United States of America. He had little time for me and tried to escape my exaggerated claims on his spare time, whenever it was possible for him. I am ashamed that I couldn't show my admiration for him in a more agreeable and generous manner. The conflict regarding my daily life extends to this relationship.

Mathew is no longer employed by the gallery but runs a kind of artist curated library in a so called non-profit space now. I recently opened my own gallery in berlin charlottenburg and named it after him. I hope it will be successful.

the end

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