

On the contrary
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Within the dramaturgical scene, staging a Brechtian work has become such a ubiquitous synonym for emboldening critical awareness that its status as discursive technique *itself* warrants a Brechtian analysis. The question begged; can one still stage *criticality* or invite an audience to take on an analytical position, when the collective critical gaze is witnessed through the *theatrum mundi* turned *Society of the Spectacle*? Attempting to occupy agency within the reductive positions of “politicized” vis-à-vis “political” arts, when one cannot even critique the critic’s critics, is a losing dialectical battle. Is then the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* coming to mean the need for a fourth wall built, instead of one broken down? If we see politics as theatre then Rousseau seems less conservative in retrospect when he claims something to the gist of the opinion that theatre teaches us to be artificial and insincere, to value pretence over truth, and to measure life by volume of applause rather than its ethical soundness.

When this work was first staged at the Berlin Biennale, I read it as a Brechtian work – Luzie is aware that she is an artist partaking in a problematic situation, but uses the situation to encourage critical awareness of “the problem”. Spectators are made aware that they are characters standing within a Rousseauian world theatre, welcome to analyse the institution’s lack of analysis of itself.

Restaging the work then begs the question if the work’s implicit meaning-making shifts into purely tacit object-making? Does a critically performed gesture become an ambiguous representation of itself – an image, devoid of reason, when doubly-aestheticised? Instead I see a mise en abyme; whereas at first I considered it a documentation of a documentation, now I think of it as an image within that same image. Digested within the original work is its own doctoring. In the 16th and 17th centuries *to doctor* meant to treat using skill and knowledge, in the 17th and 18th centuries it began to mean using this same knowledge to deceive, and by the 19th century *doctoring* had come to mean skillful manipulation. Luzie skillfully, but perhaps subliminally, doctors into this new rendition her own grappling with the original exhibition context, a transference of the perception of the reception of the original work, re-forms into *this work*.

We now live in a time in which the meanings of words change within years, not centuries, un-truths are popularised, necessitating, perhaps, a meaning-reform, alongside Germany’s penchant for spelling-reforms, in order to come to a common consensus of what we mean when we say what we think. The reception of art and its meaning is not indifferent to the influence of its surroundings. Considering the work’s first situatedness, in a specific time, a specific place, when we shift the placement, do we shift the artistic position of the work? If critical arguments become discredited as purely aesthetic in Germany, stigmatized through a culture of negation, can the same work echo this dilemma, becoming a reflexive document of that negation, in Italy? The work re-members.

I see (hear) Luzie’s voice as a call for the shared responsibility for our collective fate. And this voice is needed globally, not just locally, since it is not a fate bound to one country, but bound to a time, now; a now that is in need of an unafraid neo-avant-garde. I don’t believe that an explicit presence of politics in art is a dogmatic prerequisite for integrity; an absolute aesthetics of resistance, or that it should be every artist’s reason for being and doing. However, if *the artist* becomes synonymous with conformity, well, then the end of this sentence is superfluous...

Likewise, if artistic work puts up no resistance to the seductive, compulsive self-affirmation of its own documentation, then isn’t the work of art a mere artefact of its own image production? The artist’s own image-sublimation into the “art-world”, a world already intensely valorised by its *image*?

Photography is a formal medium with the reputation of representing reality, whilst, as an artform, it is oxymoronic – not mere truth, but also fiction. Images, on the other hand, documentation, are becoming so pervasively informal, that our experience of them reduces our understanding of what they show, because we’ve oversaturated our ability to interpret them – we are full. Instead, bereft, they taunt our loss of potential pictorial exegesis with despotic immediate impulses, stripping us of agency – a quick, sharp insult to which we often lack riposte. I open my phone and within the first three minutes images make me want to cry or scream or vomit.

This work’s *raison d’être* is political – Luzie is angry. A Freudian slip during one of our long conversations confirms it beautifully. But her gestures of disobedience still speak with a tender dialect and fragility, disproving the idea that anger is a basic, rudimentary impulse, unbefitting and at odds with the composed intellectual’s approach. Au contraire, what a perfectly appropriate response from an artist to the ushering in of a new era of a forced sycophantic hegemony, in which an artist should be seen but not heard; to be heard in her own way.

Within the pattern of neutral language spoken by contemporary artists as insurance against repercussions, we can map out the topology of obedience, in which we'd all do better (career-wise) to value *pretence over truth*, and to measure life by *volume of applause* rather than ethical soundness, staying mute. But here we're met with sound instead of silence. These works hold clues within them, analytical tips which you can tap into, or not... because even by looking at an image, you can't grasp the full picture – such is the power and the problem of the image. Whereas to access the audible, all we have to do is harness the dying skill of listening.