

HERE WE COME AND WE DON'T CARE MUCHO

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Here we come and we don't care mucho. It seems to be a good phrase to describe the internal force that drives the society in which we live nowadays; every time I get on the bus, walking the streets or a good song jumps into my ears from my Spotify playlist, I forced myself to make a pause; A pause to look at everything that moves around me, even when there stands still. Everyone looks as if there is no tomorrow, going forward no matter who or what is in front of or next to us - we are breaking pace, maybe it is time to claim a pause - *here we come* might be tattooed on our foreheads. We seem to enjoy avoiding, it may be our "thing"; avoiding eye contact, sitting next to someone on the bus, exchanging words, etc. – basically, avoid the Other in one way or another – is it that we don't care mucho?

Who is that Other? You, he, she, me, everyone. That Other means being serendipically strange, it is a person that apparently is not part of our daily life but it becomes present - incidentally - in a certain time and space. However, that presence is only visible when we voluntarily decide to give it enough attention and dare ourselves to interact. Quoting Kio Stark during her TED talk "Why you should talk with strangers", says as follows: "When you talk to strangers, you're making beautiful interruptions into the expected narrative of your daily life - and theirs." At that moment, when we dare to leave the prejudices aside, we begin to trust -in a very precarious way- but with enough level of trust to momentarily blur the physical and mental barriers that take us away from the unknown, embracing those fleeting but deeply meaningful moments of genuine connection. In the end, is it sharing the same air not enough act of public life?

If we wish to liberate ourselves as a society, as individuals, perhaps we should start using our senses instead of our fears and prejudices. That fear that becomes our daily copilot ends up pushing us to make a quick scan of what is around us, automatically we start labelling everything that seems unfamiliar or strange to us. This takes us only a fraction of a second, enough time to auto-situate ourselves in a context in which we do not feel totally comfortable or safe, leading to an, usually, inaccurate categorization of the stranger. We do not really use our perception for this, because we don't allow ourselves to enter a world of fast emotional experiences. Fleeting ones, but necessary to mold our daily realities and the way we see-live the world around us.

Sometimes all that is needed is a small gesture; a smile, a cross of looks, a good day Hi, a conversation, open the door for someone else or even just listen to. The unique of the ordinary is there - outside, in public - waiting, it must matter to us. Otherwise would never happen. What if we dare to leave our personal-private space for a moment, letting someone else interact with us in a closer -closeness- way.

And from this approach, it is here when the true importance of art finally comes to light for me, the next quote is just a passage from the text *Everyday Gestures* that I wrote inspired by Mika Hannula's book *The Politics of Small Gestures* (2006), which I consider relevant to help me to define the relationship between a creative act and a small gesture, and its symbolic sphere. Later in this text, I would try to explain these concepts in further detail, trying to define and exemplify what a small gesture means within my own artistic practice:

"For me, art is particularly that small gesture; Art is a mode of love made public, art is that meaningful pause in time, art is a charming mistake in the open, and it is also about finding harmony - not a perfect one - in a specific time frame. An art that is accessible art, "easy" to relate to, an art that is on the periphery, at the edges. An art that allows us to ask freely what is truly important, using our own questions, meanings, and perspectives. It is a journey from the individual to the collective and goes back to the particular and unique of each one of us."

A small gesture can take many forms, but what is fundamental for me is that a creative act, a small gesture, can create a common context - a situation - that facilitates these interactions in daily life in a creative and subtle way. It's about being mentally in motion, but what does this mean? It means that a small gesture is also related to time, as the quality to train our mind and senses to recognize other small gestures. The more often we dare to open up our intimate spaces, the more likely we are going to enjoy these unexpected pleasures.

Still unpredictable and open as these encounters sound, we must be prepared to know how to recognize and separate the meaningful ones from the ones that are not as significant, that could be a good strategy. A small gesture is so impregnated in our mind that we are not able to see it that easily, it's like the killer who is closer to the family that no one suspects of, it is so obvious that it ceases to exist before our eyes.

Those gestures are built on the basis of a fundamental premise for human interaction "Let me live, but in my own way, but in your own way." From the individual to the plural, inevitably linked, therefore these unexpected encounters in public presuppose an awareness of our own identity, motivations, desires and emotions. It is important to be self-conscious, to be reflective in order to understand that these encounters can also become coalitions; confrontation of ideas, thoughts, and feelings. These coalitions are not negative; however, we must place ourselves in a context of tolerance to be able to understand and produce meaningful intellectual-emotional joy that can be shared together with the Other, in dialectical communication.

Here is an example of the level of complexity of this everydayness communication, when we see a person on the street walking his/her dog, we instinctively tend to feel more at ease, feels safer to throw a smile or start a conversation. The dog becomes a connector of people; Art is the dog in this equation. I believe in gestures that make a small difference instead of one that seeks to achieve a merely utopian-fundamentalist transformation of our daily settings.

Let's try to visualize what a small gesture could be:



www.situations.org.uk/projects/myriam-lefkowitz

The artist Myriam Lefkowitz has been working on a titled project *Walk, Hands, Eyes (a city)*, 2015. The project examines the relationship formed between the city and its inhabitants. Over the course of an hour's silent walk through the city, participant and guide form an immersive relationship with their surroundings through the simple acts of walking, seeing, and touching.

Both the artist and the audience can come to experience situations and unexpected daily life encounters in an introspective, creative, and novel way. It is an act as simple as walking, seeing, touching, etc.; is what we do every day but this time from a different perspective, a small gesture is related to the simplicity of the ordinary, to look with other eyes. It is small - not necessarily in scale - but it is small because it is tender, mischievous, significant, and subtle. It is small because is as genuine as a baby and therefore we trust in it.

A small gesture is like time; the past, the present and the future would never make sense without the connection between them. They are inevitably linked, just as the small gestures are nothing without one another, its strength lies in network building. Based on this premise, throughout this text, I have decided not to tackle any specific art project. On the contrary, what I have sought is to draw a framework, to lay the groundwork for future projects, in which different projects might be able to coexist with each other in the future, aiming to build a network of small gestures. This experimental, open, flexible and unpredictable space is a scenario in which I feel extremely comfortable working within. It is definitely a space to be wrong, to be surprised, in which many elements are uncontrollable and where new methods-strategies are constantly tried. Precisely these characteristics allow a long-term work that is based on small steps next to each other.

The door is open and I'm holding it for you...