

<< world of estrangement >>

What a strange time, right? Strange, alienated, weird.

Remembering the words of Graham Harman:

“Philosophy must be realist because its mandate is to unlock the structure of the world itself; it must be weird because reality is weird.”

– Graham Harman, “On the Horror of Phenomenology: Lovecraft and Husserl,” *Collapse* (2008), 4, 334.

With the COVID pandemic, our reality became even weirder than it was before. Its structure became unpredictable and drastically changed our routine and perception. The real reality transformed into virtual. Our communication, sense of tactility, or togetherness was ruined, and then slowly we adapted to the new circumstances. From the physical collapse of the social and political system to the psychological impossibility of knowing the right direction to take within the nature of these irresistible forces. The emotional impact of the pandemic is too strong and we may never get back to normal life. Normal became abnormal and I think the main aim of humanity now is to adapt to our new world of estrangement and to create the right strategy of living, adequate language, working conditions, lifestyle etc. I think that this extraordinary time demands us to be particularly sensitive to all that’s happening, to rethink our ideas of care and empathy, and to be strong and realistic.

The sociological project “World of Estrangement” is referring to the concept of «estrangement» that is the artistic technique of presenting common things in an unfamiliar or strange way, a basic law of art in the modern and postmodern times. The current circumstances with the pandemic and its subsequent online lifestyle, reversed the situation in the art world; if before the artists tried to alienate the audience, now the artists are alienated by the world and how to exist/create/exhibit whilst in lockdown.

“World of Estrangement” is a modest attempt to collect thoughts and feelings on pandemic times by the art community, that can be seen as a blueprint to contemplate the changes in our world/art world, to that of something more liveable, yet still meaningful.

From a poetic reflection on the time of confinement to practical advice on how to cope with the pandemic, the 15 generous contributions that are presented below share very personal experiences of existence, sensibility, contemplation and empathy, ways of accepting and adapting to the present, and thoughts of an uncertain future that is full of hope.

– Dasha Birukova

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Dasha Birukova (1985, Moscovo, Russia) é curadora e escritora, atualmente a viver em Lisboa. É licenciada em História da Arte pela Universidade Russa para as Humanidades (RSUH), e em História do Cinema pela Universidade Russa de Cinematografia (VGIK); ambas em Moscovo. Especializou-se em cinema experimental, vídeo, media e arte sonora.

Foi curadora do programa “New Media” do Centro Nacional de Arte Contemporânea de Moscovo, onde também colaborou como co-curadora no Festival de Media Art “VideoFocus”. Foi co-curadora de “Error Message”, exposição integrante da IV Bienal Internacional de Arte Jovem de Moscovo, e integrou a equipa de “Geometry of Now”, projeto com curadoria do artista britânico Mark Fell, organizada pela Fundação VAC, em Moscovo.

Foi curadora da exposição “Pink Flamingos” no espaço de artes BLEEK, na Bélgica, e co-curadora de “Corpora Aliena” no art lab Iklectik, em Londres. Em Lisboa, foi responsável pela curadoria da programação de vídeos “Fórmula for Fantasy” na Galeria Quadrum e da exposição em 6 sessões “Pink Flamingos”, na Rua das Gaivotas 6.