

Itw transcription :

Introduction

ZB : I am Zoé Berteloot, I do not have any pseudonym so I go by Zoé usually. I am French and part Belgium actually. My main activities in Maastricht are so I'm soldier student in Interdisciplinary Arts. I'm currently working on my graduation project with the FashionClash. And on the side I am also doing a art residency with a foundation. It's a US foundation and it's also based in Ghana ,and we're currently working on the second hand market and all the damages causing there, in this country.

I started with painting and drawing when I was little. So I think I was 11, I did that for a couple of years and then, because my dad has always been into photography I started to use his camera on the side, when he was at home. And that's what I did for most of my time until I was 18 and then I started to do a bit of video as well. And when I got into iArts here in Maastricht I also started to experiment with installation, and I guess critical fashion practices. That's how you would name it. So I'm not a designer but I use fashion knowledge and strategies as ways of doing things.

IP : What are your motivations when creating?

Motivations

ZB : I think usually I start with noticing an issue I guess, so I guess something that people are starting to talk about and little bit of just something that I'm noticing. And then I start researching around that so I'm doing theoretical research but I'm also doing practical research. So what we call artistic research, you just experiment with different things and you try to understand how deter you can do your type practically essentially. And translate it through whatever medium you're using. At that point usually my starting point point so let's say the core of the project, expands and I'm trying to see how do I relate to what I'm doing, and how can also relate in their own way to what I'm trying to do. So right now, kind of like example, I was and I've always been interested in video interview so I wanted to see how video interview can be transformed into an artistic practice, and see how it can impact other people engage and see fashion essentially. So that was really my starting point, so I started to experiment with that.

But I was also interesting in seeing how can video translate the importance of the materiality of fashion and following the materiality of fashion is the human aspect, so it can be the human who makes the garment but also the human who wears it and at the end of the line, the human was gonna to have to take care of what I've decided to throw away. Because there is also the textile so what you put on your body. And going from that and starting to notice that there's also space in between, and what is that?

So right now in my project, that's the whole sensoriality dimension of fashion and what they can lead to different person I guess.

IP : What notions of Artistic Activism do you have? Are you familiar with the concept?

ZB : I'm a little bit familiar with the concept, I'm not sure exactly how to define it in like theoretical ways. But I guess for me a symbol of artistic activism and inspiration as well would be Ai Weiwei, that was kind of like my introduction to what art and activism and then also alternative media. I guess it can communicate an idea, I always wonder how could I translate and then affect and impact in a positive way other people with my own knowledge and my own production on a issue.

Familiarity
Lack of theory
Ai
Weiwei
Idea
Communication
Positive impact
Production

IP : Do you consider yourself politically engaged?

Political Engagement

ZB : For me political engagement it's an issue that touches me and if we're talking me into like about my art practice I tried to speak about things that I feel like I can speak about, if that makes sense, so not in terms of entitlement but I would say it's something that touched me so I understand it and that's also how I try to be politically engaged. So of course there are subject that we all need to be concerned about and we all have something that we can do, but when it comes to say things that's where it gets a bit more difficult for me because it's also about like, are you speaking for someone else? Are you saying the right thing? and I think with arts sometimes it's easier, to also be politically engaged in that sense, because you're not using words, you're using visuals and that's something that can speak to everybody without being too much in your face. At least that's how I try to be with my art, so with the current project I'm working on we have this fashion issue that needs to be addressed and I'm not going to scream into your face. I'm gonna do something and if that makes you question and even push the reflection forward, so I'm not trying to speak for you, I'm not trying to impose any of my ideas, I'm just trying to show it to you. And then you decide if you want to do something about it or not.

Personal issues
Legitimacy to address the topic
Not entitlement
Politically engaged
Mainstream topics of engagement
Saying things
Speaking on the behalf of someone
Easiness in art
Visual utilisation
Not barefaced
Current project
Fashion issues
Questioning & push reflection
Not speaking on the behalf of someone, not imposing ideas
Exposing an issue

IP : Do you translate your political engagement in your artwork?

Political Engagement in Art

ZB : So I guess in terms of political engagement, for me what's really important is the engagement part. With my current project I'm looking at what makes people value the closest they buy and what makes them keep them instead of throwing them away. So in that sense we're looking at the whole issue around closing again and overconsumption.

But also what happened to the clothes after, so cycling back to that. I'm trying to see how can I first understand how people consume clothes but also what's their relationship with so like. Why would you buy that shirt or why did you pick that jeans. I'm also looking at myself when I say that.

I think engagement is really important because again it always comes from an interest in an issue that I've noticed. But then I'd like to see how some people think about that. So in my own practice, I try to not only stay in my own head but also go talk to other people

Engagement
Current project
Relation to clothes
Overconsumption
Thinking further
Relationship with clothes
Rationale of choice
Self-reflection
Engagement : interest
Other perspectives
Get other opinions

and involve other people in the process. So that it could almost be seen as participatory art and I do it as I said in the form of video interviews. So I like to talk to people. It's very short question because I think that when you ask very short question then don't speak for all those and you let them you give them the freedom to participate in what you're trying to do.

Involving others
Participatory arts
Short questions
Freedom of participation

Audience

IP : What do you expect from your audience when you share your artwork? Do you seek to move them emotionally, to encourage them to take action, to make them understand what your position is, or something else? And what feedback do you seek from your audience?

ZB : I think most of the time when I decide to let my work go, so I think for me it's really like letting my work go. As I said, I most of the time work collaboratively so I already have somewhat of an understanding of what my audience could feel once they will see my work. Because usually the people I work with are also my audience or they are part of my audience so that's also one thing and in my work that is special. In my project as well I think what I'm trying to do is start the conversation, not literally starting a conversation really with those people, but just starting conversation within my audience and see where it goes. I think that if you're trying to say something, essentially through your art, then it's good to also see how you can invite other people in that conversation.

Let the work go
Collaborative work
Understanding of the audience
Collaboration with the audience (workshops)
Current project
Start a conversation within the audience
Art invites other people in the conversation

One thing that's important for me in my project to keep in mind is that, even though you think that you might not be touched by that subject, that's not something you're interested in and you don't want to take part in it, unless you live with no clothes on because we all get dressed every morning, we are all touched by it. So already choosing to buy your clothes from that brand or that brand, buying second hand or not, that's your choice you're making. That's something that I'm trying also to keep pretty open and vague in that sense, so to see how everyone can speak about it or have someone that they can relate to or find solutions in their own sphere, within that topic.

Everyone is touched
The choice is the involvement
Let the audience discuss and position within the topic

I don't know if people are being touched emotionally in my project, I think it might be the first one where the emotion takes from the sensoriality of it. Touch creates an emotion within you that is gonna stay there. So you create what what's called the "tacit knowledge", this knowledge that you don't understand. Diligence is then also invited to do so by the previous installation made out of clothes. It's a fitting room that's just made out of clothes and the audience is invited to the go inside. And the participant of the workshop have an experience as well but just in a different way and they're going to touch those cloths and I hope that within that moment like they're going to actually take the time to feel the material and think about the human that might have worn those clothes, that might have made those clothes, or the human that might have put that clothe here. And all of that can be transmitted through touch receptors and being sent to your brain. So maybe next time they'll start touching the clothes, that might just come

Sensoriality
Touch - emotions
Tacit knowledge
Diligence
Fitting Room
Audience participation
Experience
Audience is expected to take time to participate and interact
Human aspect
Transmission through touch receptors

back into their head and they might do a different choice. So for me that is the start of a conversation.

Remembering
the experience
and having an
impact

Artistic Activism

IP : Do you think artistic activism, from your experience, has more power than other forms of activism to trigger an effect on people?

ZB : I think it could have an impact just because you can speak to more people people, who might not want to speak about a subject, or people who might have not have the opportunity, as I said, to be invited into the conversation. Or they just don't know anything about it, for different reasons, and then art makes it digestible. So I think putting political topics in arts creates an affect and an effect. And that's where it becomes interesting to me. One thing, when I started i was super interested in the democratisation of knowledge essentially I think that's what it can be; the democratisation of the political world.

Large audience

Invitation in the
conversation

Art makes PP
easier

Affect and effect

Affect and effect

democratisation
of knowledge

Art : democratisation of the
political sphere

Some people say that everything is political, I don't know how true that is. I think it can have a big impact and you already see it whenever creativity is being used in the political form or like what people see as being political. It usually create a big resonance and people are talking about it, they might be shocked, they might disagree but it creates something for sure.

Creativity
in the
political
form

Creates a
resonance