



MENTIRAS #2 - HH

J

I was watching a Negative Approach video on Youtube. Before they start to play, John Brannon answers to someone who asked where his song's ideas come from. Brannon says «people I hate». It reminded me the nasty spirit I find frequently in your work, but also in the many comments you post on social medias. You do have an important presence, often quite venomous, on the web. I see it as very much linked with your artistic work. Would you say that this artistic work is only a part, among others, of a global position you have towards social conventions, some that you may find problematic, or « people you hate » ?

H

I don't know. I have to say I never really thought about it, or at least not about my involvement with blogs or social medias. For me, it sounds like an anecdote, something which doesn't matter, because eventually it only addresses a microcosm which I belong to, obviously. It doesn't stop me to try to make those kind of interventions with some sort of bravery, panache. At the end, yes, it is a part of a more global personal policy: I try to have fun, even if that means being nasty or rough, which is not so frequent, or maybe not in a very direct way, also maybe less than before. I actually have a problematic relation with conflict (some people are sometimes surprised when I say that). I know people much more violent, adamant, than me. That being said, this nasty spirit is of course very precious to me. That my position toward the world has got a certain level of influence on my work, does sound to me as a pretty obvious thing to say. I might be naive, I have the impression that every artist works that way. Let's just say I find people more and more soft, deferential, opportunistic, conniving; of course, this is totally depressing and I would be quite dishonest with myself if I wouldn't take that in consideration, and do something about it. In the end, it is difficult for me to define how important is the reaction in my work. It's complex but I feel that it does bring me to a sort of global detachment with everything, which is something that actually worries me.

J

Do you mean that your work is becoming more insular? Because there is this tension between the autonomous nature, wild, recluse, of your work and its fitting, via the bloody-minded attitude you mention, in a social context. In the same time, as you work as an artist for a long time

now, you own a land of shapes which are yours. Is it what it is about when you talk about detachment, or you're talking more about weariness?

H

Maybe detachment isn't the right word, maybe this is more like weariness, yes, some sort of erosion. I try to keep things stimulating, even tho it is not very easy. For instance, now I have this big issue with the concept of CULTURE: what it stands for today (i mix up passed and contemporary production), the way it fits into a consumption process, and everything implied there, everything weighty, rigid too. It is a bit difficult to develop because it is mostly something I feel, but it is very significant every time I go to see an exhibition, as soon as I open a magazine or a review, when I am in a bookshop, or maybe the worst, when I am in an art gallery. I might not be in the position of having a violent rejection against all these things, but it generates this strong skepticism. I am talking as a spectator here but my work as an artist is steeped in that experience. It might even have some positive impact on my work. I think there is not really any right recipe with this feeling.

On another note, the more time goes by, the more I lose faith in groups, gangs. Here I would probably tend to something insular. But I strongly believe in collaborations, in exchanges. You have to stay open, permeable, but in your corner. I don't think these can't go together.

J

You have a quasi-permanent editorial output for more than a decade. But you are the only artist I know who manages it in such an organic way: from your ideas, or desires, that you can put on page in a matter of days, to your life's economy.

You can publish a fanzine because you need 100 euros in the week. And, in the other hand, when some cash is there, you can partially pay for a new Nazi Knife. Is this strong correspondence between your daily life, its emotive or financial dimensions, and your work as an artist, part of vital artistic tactic? Or do you feel that these are heterogenous elements?

H

On one hand, there is the need to do things, whatever happens, and on the other hand, there is the context, blocking you or helping you to do those things. Once again, it totally defines the process and the result. Well, I hope I didn't make so many books or fanzines in an emergency





of getting some money, that is not really a legitimate motivation. It probably happened. Still, it generally doesn't bring a good final object. Anyway, you need something to move your ass and motivate yourself to do things, it can be a whole set of heterogeneous parameters, sometimes even contradictory ones.

I am of a relatively lazy nature, so I need to force myself at one point. Eventually, I often didn't bring together what is required to create in comfortable conditions. It does probably have an influence on the very substance of my work. I think it does also add something personal and singular. And i'm not trying to hide myself behind fake arguments.

But I do have this persistent side which makes me go for it, in the end, no matter what.

Financially, the projects are self-sustaining, each one funding the next. It seems logical and healthy to reinject the small benefit from a book to another, or, if I play for a show, to buy new gear. It is such a tiny economic system that it can't really work anyhow else.

J

The emergency to get 50 euros doesn't automatically give a bad book. But it is true that it can call some sort of repetitive pattern, a laziness. You once told me you were thinking about bringing your work to another scale, moving in a more pictorial, painting related, territory. But you didn't do it. Is it because of technical limits, because you didn't create the needed comfort to work on it, as you say, or because, precisely, it would mean going out of this very organic production, almost sudden, performative?

H

Do you speak about something like painting or making sculptures? I may have expressed this sort of desire, sometimes closer to fantasies than anything else, especially when it comes to volumes. Maybe I will end up painting, but i'm not sure this is in today's plans, not right now. There are many fields I still have to fight with, so I can dig, explore more. Material contingencies, studio issues also play a role. There were times when even only drawing was an issue. I am probably also a bit afraid, and doubtful about the compatibility between some practices and my own intuitive and direct method.

The addition, still a bit shy, of photography is a first step toward the diversification of my plastic approach. It is still bi dimensional and

you can print it, which is fine for me. I made some tries, with a friend who works as a costume designer, to work on a series of latex masks. I did set up few staged photo sessions, or I wore some in few recent live performances. For now, it doesn't feel completed, but it is still another step towards new experiments.

J

Where I might want to go is that you don't work regarding a theme, neither with the will to build a critical, narrative, or even esthetic display. Your work appears to be mostly related to your current state of mind, to a need, sometimes urgent or very prosaic. Taking this into consideration, I often find your drawings to be more powerful than your work with found pictures. They seem to be very close to this instant vibration, and your line, your graphic writing is especially singular and strong, in despair as in exhilarating moments.

Is it a separation you also do between drawings and found pictures?

H

I tend to do it now. There is less and less found pictures in my work. I used to mix a lot of sources and different materials but I feel a bit now like I did almost everything that I could do with this method. Still, I don't totally forbid myself to go there anymore. I tend to try to make object with more purity, more unicity, even tho it sounds weird to me, liking so much impurity.

About the prosaic part, it is related to what we were saying about contingencies or the reaction to a given context; it is the desire to stand out and to be a bit devious toward the global state of mind which one can find in the groups or the society we live in. It is about being a bit arrogant, no matter if that means looking like a jerk or a wanker to some.

Even if I always have very heavy doubts about what I do, I still know quite well what i'm worth, with my strengths and with my limits (technically or just materially speaking), and I try to balance all that in a way where it does look like something, the most important being to stay true to myself, and to inject some soul in it, so that, in the end, the reader or the spectator faces something that couldn't have been made by someone else. I'm not pretending it is a permanent success, but it sounds to me as the whole deal.

J

Your drawings are a good illustration of this organic process in your work. Tell me if I am wrong: you set a few elements first. Basically, those are related to what is on your table at the moment, colors, tools, paper. Then, in this flexible and fluid frame, you improvise. The combination between these fast and impulsive drawings, almost only sensitive, and the way these pictures are then displayed in a very methodic meta-structure, archived, published, is very exciting. Do you draw only for a publication, or do you consider the drawings as pieces themselves?

H

Today, when I work, I always have a publication in mind as a goal, even if it is often virtual or hypothetical. It has not always been the case, like when I was drawing on spontaneous impulses, without thinking about a specific end. What I was doing then had also a much more fragmented aspect, but this freshness and this spontaneity ran dry. I need more and more a frame which is well defined. Books looking like they are the medium I can catch in the most natural way, I project myself into this perspective. This may also be why I say that I consider maybe trying purer practices, where the process is more clearly driven. I don't think it refrains surprises and skids to happen, and my method hasn't radically changed. It involves indeed a lot of improvisation, on a foggy framework. To be honest, this is a recipe I sometimes perceive as a cell, which explains my recent difficulties to get any results somewhat satisfying (i am talking about drawings specifically). On the other hand, it is by going on this path that I end up to manage unexpected collisions to happen, but they are rarer. It is a complex thing: I feel like I raised the level of my intransigence concerning my own work, but at the same time I can't find anymore some sort of magic in its making. I try to sort things out with that.

J

There is often an omnipresence of the human body in your drawings: anus, hairs, faces, fluids. Also, in your performances and your shows, you dance, you scream, you bring your voice to the front, you use human bones. And then, there is all these photos you re-use: pornographic material, latex masks, drug addict's bodies. Is this about creating an unsettling and disturbing tone, or is there something else at play, with all these holes, all this flesh and screams?

H

There is this strong scene in the movie *Society* that I didn't watch in ages: the final orgy with all these mutants bodies, their indistinguishable limbs, the impossibility to attribute them to specific owners, origins, or to tell how they developed to achieve these shapes. This scene had quite an impact on me, even with its cheap production aspect, which adds to unsettling tone. In the same time, it has a very funny tone. In the same vein, there are visions related to other movies, like *The Thing*, *From Beyond*, *Videodrome*, or to pictures published in old issues of *L'Ecran Fantastique*, *Mad Movies*. When I was a teenager, authors like Pierre La Police, Blanquet, or later Andy Bolus, also left a strong mark on me. Body provides a joyful material, especially for drawing, since it can be unlimitedly reshaped, modified. It may sounds very basic to bring it like that, but in the meantime, the approach is very primitive, at least on my side.

That being said, what matters to me is to blow some suspicious humor, and also to easily slip toward abstraction. It is a good vector: one can move from a level to another, able to do many saugrenues things.

It is the same in my performances (or live shows). If I use significant signs related to corporal expression, I always manage to remove the dramatic contents. It isn't about being ironic, but more about taking some distance, because using the body in art is automatically linked to something loaded with pathos. When I think of body in art, the names which pop in my mind are the ones of Egon Schiele, Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, who, no matter what you think of those artists, stand for something heavy, serious. Or you've got the Viennese Actionnists, who I don't feel so much attracted to, for the little I know. This is also what had always kept me at bay in contemporary choreography. I have the feeling that you could find some sort of unleashed creativity, humble, in the pornography of a certain period of time. It might be different now. These websites about latex masks that I found out recently (even tho they're not recent, I guess) are absolutely beautiful! They're out of any artistic field that you could name (they are closer to craftsmanship) and the visual freshness is absolute. It's totally inspiring.

I think there is something potentially very moving in all this, to answer your question.

J

In a more global perspective, how do you make the link from your work





with sound and music to your visual work? Do they have the same roots, the same motives, or do they respond to each other? I guess they have a common notion of aggression, or of disharmony.

H

I think you're right. I've got few difficulties for bringing a deeper answer to this question: maybe it is too vast, or it calls on things I can't really untie myself. But I consider the different practices I have as organically linked together.

J

What puzzles me is how you manage to bring this whole set of pictures, sounds and performances, a whole which, from what I can tell, seems deeply coherent, logical. Is it only some permanent honesty, a way of being always the closest possible to a sensation, or an emotion, or do you have a proper target, a goal, when you work.

Your publications, for instance, are not basic, simple. There is a vast vocabulary involved. They seem to answer each other, or to add to each other, to shape this whole. Are those ideas some things you have in mind? Are you always aware of the objects you already made?

H

Yes, I feel that I have in mind the ones which exist, at least the ones I understand a minima. I believe that the coherence begins to appear as I take a distance from what I do. That distance can take place at different phases of the creative process, by the way (early, when I select and combine, etc.)

Then it is all a game of balance, to find the proper dosing in my use of this distance, because you still have to let yourself go into the same impulse. The fact that I work with different fields probably sharpens this distance. I can watch my visual work as a musician, or as an publication editor. It brings a certain kind of alterity, and interesting inner connexions. Actually, to do good, you have to put yourself in the condition of being multiples alone.

J

Eventually, I would like to know how you came to make music. When did you decide to buy some material, what kind of material?

I remember the very first concerts of Hélicoptère Sanglante, when you

were using objects, like light toys bought in the subway, a puzzle, or a ukulele, that you would end up breaking with a hammer. More recently, there has been this show in Milan, for which you brought human bones stolen from the parisian catacombs. When did you chose to incorporate non musical elements in the performances?

Do you script them, or is it more about preparing a set of accessories from which you will improvise?

H

Music showed up as a game, when I started to hang out with collectives organizing experimental music festivals in Paris. Back then, in the early 2000, these were mostly electronic, and it was easy to register in order to play.

My first performances were looking more like pastiches of concerts than anything. I had a totally untied relation with this whole scene, since I was still only listening things shaped by classic formats, pop, rock, dance music. My taste for more noisy and abstract things came later. I was filling my lack of technical ability by a sort of mise-en-scène, or irony toward the context. I kept that enjoyment of a certain distance, even tho I quickly thought of what I was doing as pure music.

Actually I really bought instruments and material only a very few times. In the very beginning, I was using what I could find, which meant the cheap synthesizer taking dust at my place, tapes players, etc. Randomness eventually set a lot of my buyings, I sometimes caught some opportunities, like a musician friend selling back a little analog synthesizer. I use a lot of stuff that people are getting rid of!

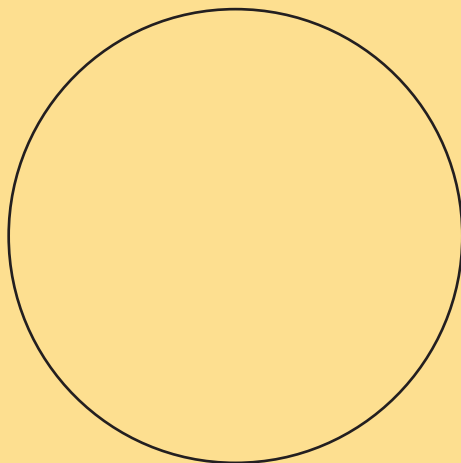
Of course, it settles in a music perspective mostly intuitive, and most often serving performances given in an unique context, because for now I put more efforts in live than recording, and they are always improvisations. The only real record I put out is in fact a piece composed by a succession of extracts recorded of tapes, that I actually use in those performances. These tapes are usually the fabric on which I anchor myself to improvise.

The objects and accessories are random. They allow me to create a theatric display, that I hope unexpected, or strange. But sometimes I have these with me without using them at all. It all depends on what seems right at the very moment.

By the way, I never used an ukulele in my entire life.

MENTIRAS (2014-)

#1	HP	2014	#14	AM	2020
#2	HH	2014	#15	AB	2021
#5	RS	2017			
#6	JW	2018			
#7	OV	2017			
#8	P*S	2017			
#9	AB	2017		cancelled	
#10	LS	2018	#4	IT	
#11	JH	2019	#?	JC	
#13	PB	2020	#12	CF	



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