

## Interview with Ieke Trinks

By Isabel Waquil

On November 2, Saturday (16h), Subterrânea Studio hosts *you are and that is*, Dutch artist Ieke Trinks' performance. The event is part of the tour that the artist will take around Brazil, which includes several cities, such as Curitiba, for the International Biennial of Curitiba. Born in Rotterdam, Netherlands, Ieke develops her performances through objects and everyday actions as a way to question the intersection between performance and daily life. From simple gestures, absurd situations can arise. What happens if we no longer stick to the agreed names and their functions? This and other questions are part of artist's motivations. In the interview below, Ieke talks about her choice for Brazil to take the tour, her experience in Ecarta Gallery in 2012, and her first approaches with performance.

### How do you describe this performance that will be happening in Porto Alegre?

The performance is an exhibition of personal belongings from citizens of Porto Alegre. During the performance, audience is invited to enter the exhibition and follow a guided tour. The exhibition will be built up in the 2 days before the final presentation. During the presentation the audience, who brought in an object, are indirectly involved through their object.

Questions are raised, for example: "what does the object tells about the owner?" and "What does the combination of 2 different objects tells about their relationship?". In setting up the exhibition I will think of the different elements that the objects have, like function, shape, material, value, emotional, etc. Doing performance gives space for many ways to do it, I'm aware of this and search for different approaches other than the familiar stage with audience set-up. In this work I use the form of an exhibition, as it happens in a gallery space.

### Is it a work in progress or is it the first time you are doing this specific performance? How was this idea build?

Mainly my work is in process all the time, one work comes from the other. There are some essential ideas on which my work is developed.

They consist of thoughts on the use of objects in our daily lives, "how does the use and dependence on objects shapes and influence our lives?"

Another important element in my work is language. The naming and categorizing of things (objects / materials) that surrounds us in our daily lives.

"What happens if we no longer stick to the agreed names and their functions?"

The performance which I will present in Subterranea is a following up of other works, like 'A thing after another' (presented at Galeria Ecarta, Porto Alegre in 2012), in which I use audience their personal belongings by asking one of their bags and empty it on the gallery floor and play with it by order the several items. This same work I did last September at the University Artmuseum of Bloomington Indiana in USA. The work turns out very different because of the architecture of the building, and the different content of the audience participants bag.

**How did the idea of coming and performing in Brazil happen? What did it make you decide for the country to start this tour?**

Being invited to perform at the Bienal Internacional De Curitiba, the idea of coming and touring in Brazil seemed to me a sensible thing to do. There are three sides, one is to challenge myself by going to different places helps me to develop my ideas and work. The other side is meeting new people and discover other works is good for future exchange or collaborations. And the third is that Brazil has my interested because it's an extremely large country and I believe that South is very different in comparison with the North. Living myself in a very small country I want to experience the great differences with my own eyes, I want to meet the people and get an idea of their lives. Doing performance art is very much connected with traveling and presenting work in changing context.

**I saw that you came to Porto Alegre once, to Galeria Ecarta. How was your first experience here? Do the cultural aspects of the city and audience (and another cities and audiences) interfere in your work, since it seems you build your idea around the everyday life and routine objects?**

The time I presented my work in Galeria Ecarta was my first time in Porto Alegre, and I was there very short. It was in the days when I just arrived from the Netherlands. It gave me less time to build my work connected to Porto Alegre everyday life. At that point it wasn't important because for me the encounter with Porto Alegre was the content of a young ladies bag. Through her objects I could create a person's identity and through the audience their reaction of being very much into the performance by sensing their participation when they were giving answer on my questions.

Doing this performance 'A thing after another' was an interesting experience for me to do, also in term of using the exhibition, and the floor in the gallery space.

**In our early conversations you spoke about a Brazilian tour: Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Natal, Belém. Is this tour going to happen? What to you plan to perform in the other cities?**

It's not sure yet if I will be able to do the whole tour because of financial reasons. For sure I will be going to the Bienal Internacional De Curitiba, Perfor 4 in Sao Paulo and Colectivo ES3 in Natal. In most cases the inviting organizations unfortunately don't have budget to pay domestic flights. Particular those places like that, mostly young collectives and often run by artists or important places for me to go. The reason is that I believe it's important to get in contact and to have an international exchange going on. In Rotterdam (city in the Netherlands) I'm also part of a non-profit young artist

organization PAE (Performance Art Event). Having international artists coming over is very enriching for our community.

The performances I'm planning in other cities I will choose different approaches, some will be participatory, for others I will invite one person to collaborate with me or I will ask another person to perform the piece instead of me. Some performances will happen in public space, like the one for the Bienal in Curitiba and others in contrast to the public space in a gallery. In each work I'm aware of the location and situation and use these possibilities in the development of each work.

**How did you start to “point” to the performance field during your education as artists? Was it a natural course or did you have a “turning point”?**

In 2006 I decided to do a Masters degree in fine arts, I felt I needed a change in my work. In that period I was doing photography and video.

During the masters I found out that I needed to get out of the frame that video and photo has. I also was looking for a different way to express, and needed a direct connection between the artists and the audience without the art piece in between. In that time it felt to me that the world is full with objects and that I didn't needed to add new objects but instead use what is there. Creating moments, ephemeral moments, seems for me more valuable, moments that cannot fully be controlled only by the artist herself but is also influenced by the (participating) audience and the conditions of the space. During my education time I still wasn't that much aware of being a performance artists, and still I would call me like that, I am a visual artists who is most of the time engaged with live and time based art. A few years after I graduated from my masters I got to know about the international performance art scene, which made me focus more on performance art.

**When did you start to incorporate personal belongings in your performance?**

I think that after reading Allan Kaprow's 'essays on the Blurring of Art and Life' made me to incorporate the ordinary life in art more.

And also questioning authorship and connecting art to the everyday life made me use familiar objects we all use, objects which shows our globalized world. I'm using these materials because I also strongly believe that practicing art doesn't need that much, great ideas can exist in the simple recognizable things that surround us daily. This is also a reason to use others people personal belongings, in this case my control is less on the choice of materials and it's a way to invite others to take part in the work. And to learn through other peoples life.