

## WHEN ALL THINGS EVAPORATE WE'LL TALK ABOUT MINERALS

Written by JOVANA STOKIC

Simone Couto and JaeWook Lee: A Quattro Mania  
(A Short Glossary on the Duality of Authorship)

A Quattro Mani: Piano four hands is a term frequently applied in American usage to a specific form of piano duet for a single piano with two players.

What if we think about Couto and Lee's project as a particular translation of a music form to a visual one. They both deal with time and ephemerality. They both manifest the duality of authorship. I see the event they titled "When All Things Evaporate We'll Talk About Minerals" as a chain of echoes. But what do these echoes reflect?

Echo: In acoustics, an echo is a reflection of sound, arriving at the listener some time after the direct sound. A true echo is a single reflection of the sound source. The time delay is the extra distance divided by the speed of sound.

What if we imagine their echoes as a complex mesh of multiple reflections of their separate sources. Refractions. Fading, and then again, crystalizing? What are their sources? I recognize clay, hands dirtied by earth, years passed in silence, nostalgia, saudade, inaudible melody for flute, conspirationally produced sounds, eternal stones resisting entropy. Pathetic human short-lived memories vis-à-vis all-knowing never-forgetting Nature.

Text vs. Thing: I take a cue from the delicately seductive invite in Lee's website: "How does a text become a (real) thing? You just need to close your eyes, and visualize it. You can smell or touch it. Our brain has a magical

power to transform a text into a sensible thing." Let's transform this text into a thing by imagining before and after the event that this very entity: a two-bodied, two-person show that tickles cohabitation and transcends artistic conflict. It builds a little suspended bridge between the two authors. It is a two-headed organism that embodies the concept of intersubjectivity and brings us together in the ever-happening all-encompassing here and now: our consciousness. It merges the opposites: the formation of minerals and the entropy of clay.

Memento: I was taken by a sentence written by Couto: "The House was smaller than I imagined." It encapsulates years of nostalgic longing and the final juxtaposition of fantasy and reality. In her dreams, the house of her childhood was big imposing building once revisited, a decade after seeing it for the last time, the house did not appear big, it was just an ordinary farm house. But this realization was not a disappointment. It was a peaceful epilogue. What is then the process of crystallization; Is it beauty beyond change? But beauty should not be fetishized, commodified, mummified. What is a crystal if not a memento that captures longing for the past and future together, a stand against entropy? This event is about communal listening to the silence of the set of mementos.

Trans-: Both artists are involved in studying of the ontological status of the body-in-networks and trans-performances. They introduce the concept of BODILY NETWORK TRANSMISSION (BNT) as "gestures [that] can be transferred from the body to another body through memory and physical recollection, and then preserved." This is how the piece for four hands is supposed to transcend its dual authorship and be dispersed onto so-called co-operants and connectors forming a kind of octopus, decentralized and multi-focal, feeling with all its tentacles.

Psychology: Couto has quoted Artaud: "The eternal conflict between reason

and the heart is decided in my very flesh, but in my flesh irrigated by nerves." Then she moves away from it by claiming that the body is not stuck in psychology as it functions as a network in time and space. But what if psychology is the network – a complex settings and navigation system that allows liveliness. Contemporary psychology offers this road. Informed by psychology, performance studies further considers how a performing body could enable unexpected subjectivities to occur. There is a tri-partite schema of intersubjectivity: first signs of reciprocation (primary intersubjectivity), joint attention in reference to objects (secondary intersubjectivity), and then a third level of intersubjectivity, that is the emergence of values that are jointly represented and negotiated with others.

**Precarity:** *When All Things Evaporate We'll Talk About Minerals* is one-night only event that is about ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring, and performativity embodying critiques of representation inscribed in bodies and subjects. Its precariousness underlines the fragility of contemporary states of being. It listens and looks up to nature, human but also non-human.

**Worlding:** Takings its cue from the inspired curatorial strategy of Carolyn Christov Bakargiev I see these practices as processes of worlding: "dealing with the world at large through their embodied 'amatorial' artistic, social and discursive practices, even in their most inward-looking or most exquisitely crafted artworks and projects". I see them as belonging to practices that have high emphasis on alliance, cosmopolitical, and intra-acting of human and non-human agents.

JOVANA STOKIC is a Belgrade-born, New York-based art historian and

curator. She holds a PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Her dissertation, “The Body Beautiful: Feminine Self-Representations 1970–2007,” analyzes works of several women artists—Marina Abramovic, Martha Rosler, Joan Jonas—since the 1970s, particularly focusing on the notions of self-representation and beauty. Stokic has curated several thematic exhibitions and performance events in the United States, Italy, Spain, and Serbia. Her essay, “The Art of Marina Abramovic: Leaving the Balkans, Entering the Other Side” appeared in the catalogue for *The Artist Is Present* (2010) at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Stokic was a fellow at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; a researcher at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the curator of the Kimmel Center Galleries, New York University; and the performance curator at Location One, New York. She has taught art history at New York University, Fashion Institute of Technology, and is also on the faculty of the MFA Art Practice at the School of Visual Arts. Stokic is deputy chair, MA Curatorial Practice at SVA.