

PZI Lens Based-Media March 2024

# TEXT ON PRACTICE

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AT WHAT DISTANCE DOES LIFE APPEAR OR DISAPPEAR?

Or I could also ask you: at what distance does art (or an artistic practice) appear or disappear?

I found the question from the previous page lost in my never ending phone notes and I made it travel from there to this text, which may be, eventually, an (hopefully successful) attempt of trying to answer to the second one. Most likely I will get to the end of this text and I won't even come close to answering to something, since what I do best is catalog questions and doubts. However, I think that starting by explaining what I have been doing (the what, how and why), how this relates to my previous practice, what I intend to do next (and why), and how all of this relates to a larger context, can help clarify who I am as an artist or as a maker - I may prefer the last word.



Ed Panar, from the series *Walking Home* (1993-2007)

*“Words and measures do not give life; they merely symbolize it”* Alan Watts

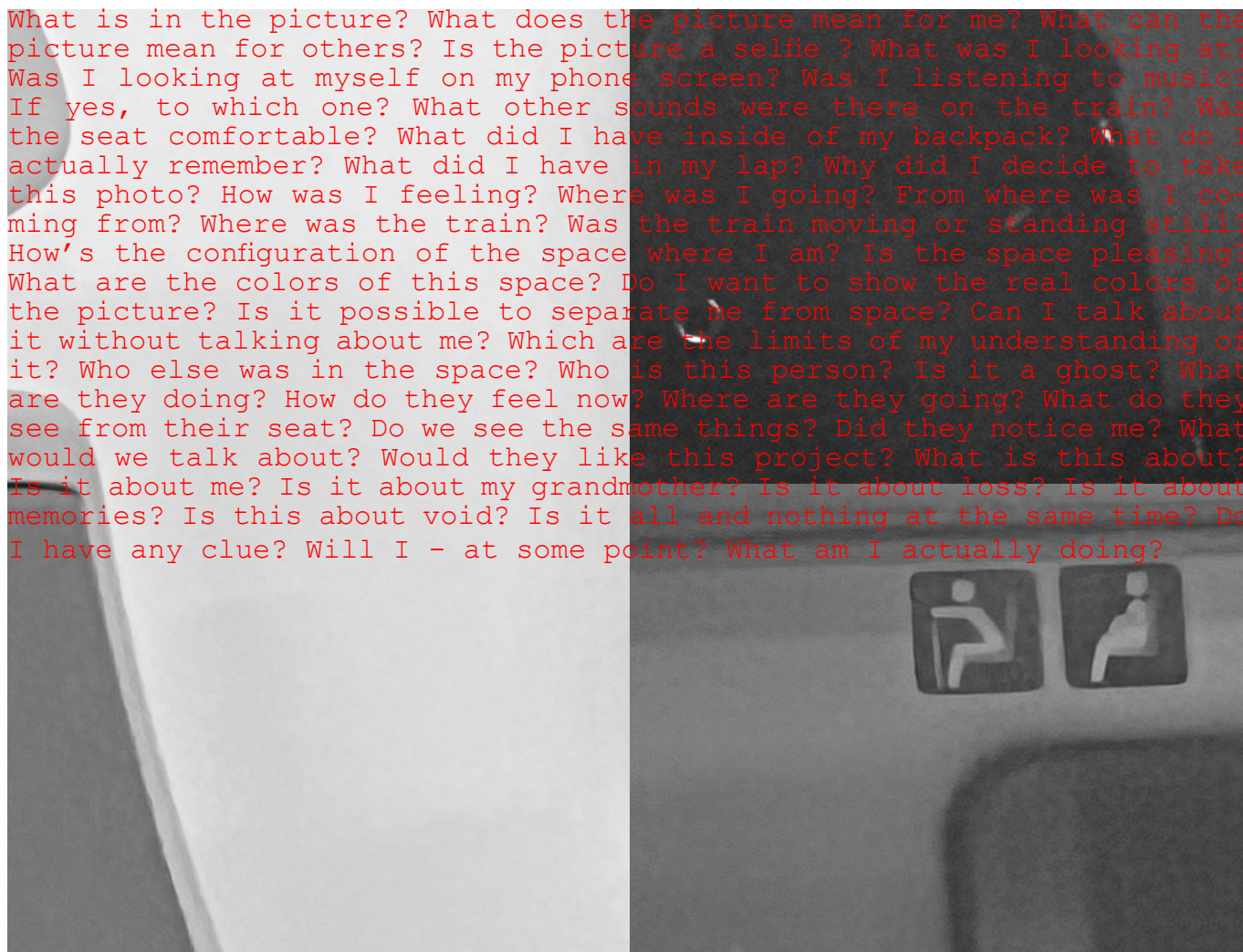
What I did the most in the last months was overwatching, overreading, overwriting, overshooting and over-overthinking, but at some point, before, during, or after collecting thoughts, ideas, words and visuals about these activities, things started to take shape and I immersed myself in *Your Presence was Cancelled* (YPWC). This is my current project and is, in essence, a short movie that I did for the EYE Research Labs, which pretends to explore and scan fragments - and possible meanings - of a still image, that I took last year.

After writing memories related to the death of my grandparents I decided to go through my (photography) personal archive and I realized I had several photos from the day after my grandmother passed away last year, which I had never looked into carefully. During a tutorial with David, we went through all those pictures, but we focused, for a large part of the conversation, on the one that ended up being the center of this work: a selfie I took in the Madrid metro, after not being able to be present at my grandmother's funeral.

The main purpose was to create a moving image based on it and there were, from the outset, three main components that I had to work with: the image - how do I make it move? How do I edit it? How can this work visually? -; the text - what do I wanna tell about this story and how? - and the sound - do I want to have music? Do I want to have a voice over? Do I want other sounds?

In addition to these doubts that highlight predominantly technical issues, there were countless other questions that arose throughout the work process, such as:

What is in the picture? What does the picture mean for me? What can the picture mean for others? Is the picture a selfie? What was I looking at? Was I looking at myself on my phone screen? Was I listening to music? If yes, to which one? What other sounds were there on the train? Was the seat comfortable? What did I have inside of my backpack? What do I actually remember? What did I have in my lap? Why did I decide to take this photo? How was I feeling? Where was I going? From where was I coming from? Where was the train? Was the train moving or standing still? How's the configuration of the space where I am? Is the space pleasing? What are the colors of this space? Do I want to show the real colors of the picture? Is it possible to separate me from space? Can I talk about it without talking about me? Which are the limits of my understanding of it? Who else was in the space? Who is this person? Is it a ghost? What are they doing? How do they feel now? Where are they going? What do they see from their seat? Do we see the same things? Did they notice me? What would we talk about? Would they like this project? What is this about? Is it about me? Is it about my grandmother? Is it about loss? Is it about memories? Is this about void? Is it all and nothing at the same time? Do I have any clue? Will I - at some point? What am I actually doing?



Fragments of *Your Presence Was Cancelled*, 2024

These questions which resulted from a process of careful observation of the image and reflection on its meaning, could continue to fill the following pages, but I think that is important to focus in a question that emerged during a methods class and which seems to me to be a fundamental point of the practice I have been developing: How does (temporal/spatial) distance influence the way we deal with processes of disconnection, loss, grief?

I still don't know - and probably I will never will. But in the meantime, I had to put most of these questions and insecurities aside and produce something that could be seen at the EYE. The result was a three minutes and a half short movie, where the camera moves through the image, zooms in and out and allows the viewer to navigate through the picture, supported by a text that narrates the story of it and accompanied by music and sounds related to the space depicted in the picture.

As well as **Loss**, a photography project that I developed before starting this program and whose starting point was the death of my other grandmother, *YPWC* is the outcome of a personal (grief) journey, which aims to process a feeling of emptiness created by my capacity of connecting. Some months ago I wrote that *Loss* "made me connect not just with my inner reality, with my feelings, but also with the way the world looked like on that day". This made me realise that there is a pattern in the way I approach my practice, or at least that the starting point is always the same, once I followed the same path with *YPWC*. *My works tend to arise* as a consequence or from a personal experience, and I always begin with placing myself at the center of the action. However, during the creation process, this center shifts and allows me to understand the complexity of what and who surrounds me. This initial-visceral relationship between me and the work is crucial for my practice, once that what I look for the most in art is to feel. I would like the viewer to feel, and I believe that my work won't be able to have that effect on someone if I don't feel it in the first place.

*"Individuals and communities pass through the unspeakable consequences of loss and can emerge transformed, redefined, reprogrammed. Results are unpredictable; the void opened up by loss can be filled by religion, nihilism, militancy, benevolence—or anything."* Taryn Simon

I want to continue to work on *YPWC* and expand the narrative around it, opening the door to new perspectives and points of view. This way, I am currently working on an extended version of the short film that I did for the EYE Research Labs, in order to create a bigger space for the image and the story to land. I would like to explore an (even more) abstract journey through the image, with the support of visuals, text and different approaches to sound. Ideally I would also like to give more room to the viewers to understand the picture (and probably the story) by themselves, through, above all, a significant reduction of text in the moving piece.

In parallel to this, and since I had written a lot during the process of creating the first video, I want to work on a publication/zine that combines texts that I wrote during the process of realising the first film, and new texts, capable of introducing new perspectives and views about the moment depicted in the image.

By expanding the project in all these directions, it feels like I am adding faces to a parallelepiped whose final shape I don't know, but if I ask myself: why am I actually doing this? Where is this taking me? I may not be super sure and clear about the answer, but I think that this way of working, of adding layers to the project, constitutes not just several moments of reflection and questioning, but also, or above all, an attempt to understand a complex and voracious reality, difficult to fit into a fragment that is, in itself, an image.



*Sections of a Happy Moment*, David Claerbout, 2007

Finally, and inspired by the work of David Claerbout and by the seminar of Nan Wang, I would like to shoot more (in analog) and to explore the idea of expanded cinema, as a way of introducing new and less static dynamics to my work.

With this said and at this distance I am not sure about how close or far away I got from making my artistic practice appear or disappear through the elements that I placed in the previous pages. Things may still be a bit grey. And blurry. But I managed to see a glimpse of light. And even if the Sun is not always here, things are getting brighter.

## References

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