

"To me art is about human exploration, which is the most important endeavor we can take as a species. For that I'm willing to sacrifice my health and happiness."

"To live is to explore, the purpose of existence is to explore.

To explore is to enter the unknown.

The domain of the artist is to explore.

The role of the artist is to encourage and inspire others to explore, without dictating what one should explore.

Hence the artist is essential to humanity, without him we would only exist and there would be no difference between us and a stone.

Any individual, group or society that downplays the importance of the artist and exploration is an enemy to humanity.

Not all artists explore, but I do.

Introduction | 2016-06-22

I believe, more than can be put into words or described, that I have something important to say, it has been said before, but not often enough because we are still living in dystopia. My form of communication is through art, but I no longer consider myself a budding artist, in many senses of the word one could say I am a failure as an artist, and it was at the point where I started to consider myself such that I began reflecting on why I strive to be an artist, from which I later concluded that in the failure of trying to be an artist I have succeeded. The scale I've failed within is a capitalistic one. It is Pop stars, super stars, reality tv stars and sport stars that sit on the top of the capitalistic hill from where they can preach to the people. There are many other groups of people lower down and a tiny handful who sit on a cloud above, but it is these celebrities who are the representatives of our way of living. What I hear and see from them is endorsement of and indulgement in passive being / happiness, which I believe is causing a regression of humanity. The hill they strut on is made by all of us, swelling in size every time we indulge in it. It is therefore every person's responsibility to help create a alternate hill that will bring the best out of humanity. I believe this is our most important endeavour,

more so than combating climate change, poverty, crime, animal cruelty, war, greed, pollution etc. This is because I believe all our problems spring from this one source, passive being / happiness.

I believe artists have immense value, not on a capitalistic scale but on a humanitarian one - for us as people and a species. This is because I believe we are living in a time where we are surrounded by darkness, but if we turn around we can still see light, and it is our job as artists to draw attention to that light. In this endeavour we are failing more often than not, it is not because we are not trying hard enough, it is because the force we are standing against is all consuming. I describe that force as passive being/happiness. You are passive when you are not present in the moment, when you are consuming without thought. The actions themselves are not destructive, but by living passively one is slowly killing oneself and humanity.

As an individual and artist I perceive myself as the prisoner who escaped Plato's cave. I left the cave, because I believe the reason for our existence is to explore, and the cave was only a simulacrum of reality imprisoning people without their consent or knowledge. I escaped my confines by taking on the attributes of the fool. I consider the fool as a methodology that can enable one to achieve an alternative perspective, because the fool is not bound by social norms. By using the fool in this manner one becomes a licensed fool. Outside Plato's cave I discovered active being/happiness a form of existence where you decide how to feel, instead of letting your feelings be passively stimulated. Every individual within the cave are experiencing passive being/happiness. A state where your happiness is determined by how well you are entertained and stimulated. Existing like this is being a shadow of who we are.

Instead of staying out of the cave, I returned, because I see it as my duty to inspire people to live up to their full potential. I don't believe in dictating what you should like or believe, however if I can inspire you to explore and strive towards active being / happiness then i have helped an individual out of plato's cave and towards an existence that is controlled by the individual and not by social norms, the state, politics, religion or any other idea that dictates who you should be. All I'm offering is a methodology for existing. By applying it you will find that there is nothing you need to feel complete, happiness comes from within you, it is nothing you need to buy or receive from external forces, all you need to do is actively explore, instead of passively exist. I do not see myself different from any intelligent being, I do not see race, ethnicity, intelligence, social status or gender, I ultimately believe stupidity is a choice and that every individual has great potential. My ideas are not unique, they are of humanity, I think that with thoughtfulness anyone would be able to

arrive at these ideas. My ideas do not come from me, they are borne from my personal observations and that of others. I see variations of what I'm writing throughout human culture, the difference being that many of them are used to subjugate you, whilst I wish to see humanity liberated, independent and self sustaining.

Let's return to Plato's cave, I face the same problems as the escaped prisoner trying to describe what was outside the cave to the people imprisoned in the cave, they are unable to understand what he is saying, because he is talking about ideas they can not comprehend, not because they are stupid, but because they have no reference point from where they can grasp what he is trying to describe. There is also the problem of want vs need. The prisoners want to stay in the cave, because they are content there, but to evolve, grow and explore they need to leave. What must be done is to entice the prisoners to experience it for themselves, only then can they experience reality in its full glory and be actively happy. And so that is what my work aspires to do, for me that is art.

When you perceive my work, I want to stop your time, encase you in a moment of reflection and thoughtfulness. There is no need for you to know what I'm thinking or to understand what I'm doing - it is better that you don't, because that is when you are exploring the moment/work, trying to solve the puzzle in front of you. The only way you can fail in my eyes is by not trying to understand. All I ask from you as the viewer is to be present in the moment, to reflect on your own thoughts, to explore and by doing so you are active and not passive. I have achieved this for myself when I create photographs, but for the viewer the image often fails, for me the failure lies in how images are viewed today, within an instance, without time taken, the picture is seen and gone. Video is not much better. I have found that for me performance art has a greater success in achieving my goal, because it gives me direct access to the audience.

For me being an artist is a calling from humanity, to inspire us to be the best we can be.

This Manifesto is a collection of my writings about why I make work and my agenda from 2012 to today.

Each text overlaps and stampedes over similar ideas, but by putting them in chronicle order, I feel one might find an evolution and a slow refinement of the ideas that lay at the core. I have texts dating back to 1999, that explore many of my ideas, looking back on them I get a sense of Déjà vu, but they were not included as I felt them to be lacking or not crystallized to the right point. I mention their existence to highlight that I have been on this path for some time, maybe as far back as the beginning of my existence.

I consider my dissertation for my Masters at Royal College of Art, 'Fool and the Hero' from 2012 part of the 'Manifesto', but I left it out, as it is it's own entity and should be read separately.

Truth is forever evolving, my ideas are not static and they are open for comment and constructive criticism.

Tusse Kallet | 2012-01-10

The trees of Norway have no fear of measuring their strength against the might of the mountains. They fight for a foothold on the barren land and more often than not win no matter how hard the rock tries to stand against thousands of roots slowly pushing themselves into every crack.

No wonder then that 'Tusse Kallet' a branch with a large round lump, from an old tree can be used to open the mountain whilst singing a Norse hymn. It is said that the first of my ancestors did just that.

On a night when the sun had not set, my ancestor saw a 'Hulder' whose beauty which had not been seen for a thousand years stepped out of a dark lake. My ancestor knew he had to marry her whatever the cost and followed the 'Hulder' through forest and over hills until she was swallowed by a mountain. He shouted and hammered day and night to be let in but nothing happened until an old goat took pity in him and whispered the secret of how to gain entry.

Within the mountain he found his 'Hulder' at the feet of a blind Troll king. My ancestor told the Troll that he would give every cow he owned to marry the 'Hulder'. "Only if you meet the request of my daughter" said the Troll. "I shall

be your wife if you exchange your eyes with my fathers," said the 'Hulder'; to which my ancestor agreed and on the wedding night he found that the Troll's eyes were indeed blind but to his surprise revealed the world as it really was.

My father and I have both travelled the seven seas to find our freedom from the land, but no matter how far we traveled our blood would never stop hearing the call of the mountain and our eyes would never stop seeing.

The Red Car | 2012-02-11

Most of my life I have felt half my existence was lost to darkness, never to be remembered, always existing in the corner of my eye, but when I turn to focus on it, what was sensed evaporated. The first time I felt this sensation was at the tender age of three.

I was in the back seat of our red car, strapped to a black leather child's seat, looking at the Norwegian landscape passing by, father was in the passenger seat whilst Mum was driving. A moment came when I could sense reality stronger than I ever had, enabling me to follow a thread that led me to what was beyond death, letting me grasp the answer to a question that had never been asked, but it evaporated before I could hold on to it and at that precise moment our car violently smashed into a truck with twelve trailers winding far up the mountain.

My mind was never the same again, a door had shut behind me, it became an experience that kindled the desire to walk the path I have found myself on ever since, a journey that only could be made by someone with a license to walk along the edge of the abyss looking for a door that exists in the realm of madness and return to the living with what he has seen and so I became an artist.

The Holy Artist | 2012-02-26

There are men who live through life and men who live life. It might be said that the hero lives life, but I say this is not true, the hero is an illustration of the current paradigm and therefore **only** a shadow of himself.

The fool perceives and acts according to his **true** nature rather than conforming to pre-transcribed perceptions of **who and what** he shall be. Every **action** and thought the **fool** makes is **genuine**, he is not trying to emulate an idea he is and therefore he is true. With this in mind look at **society**, and tell me what you see?

It may be a white loaf with marmite or the beautiful form of a girlfriend's pussy pushed in to your face, a throbbing cock wiggling like a dog's tail, sadly in all cases it is not the big picture.

I see the western world seduced by illusion displaying **kitsch** beauty, which give a sense of freedom. There is nothing new in this, the powers that rule have had hundreds of years to lock our minds away, but nothing lasts forever.

I already see a handful of people striving to take more than the bones they are given. Artists and dreamers, who see differently than most are bringing us closer to the time when the majority will embrace the fool and go where madness lies to create a new set of rules for better or worse.

Put on a blindfold and walk along the edge of a knife whilst carrying the mind of the fool and secure your safe return by rejecting everything you believe to be true. When you reach the tip of the knife follow these rules:

1. You are right
2. All rules can be broken including rule #2
3. Appose order
4. Act on your impulses, do not stop your self
5. Always be in opposition

Lines and minds are the same, they divide. Creating a division between heaven and earth or one self and the world. It is a threshold that I have jet to cross.

Scientists explore the possible, artists look at the impossible and I have embraced the fool, which lets me be who I am, instead of who I think I am. I hope it makes my work more honest.

I've always said if I had a choice between being perceived as intelligent or honest, I would want honesty.

Intelligence is more often than not your ability to function within a framework.

Honesty on the other hand reflects your soul by transcending beyond time and space.

One might not be able to build a society from the rules of the fool, but that was never the intention. The fool is not and never will be part of society, no matter who rules. A fool who rules is an oxymoron. Fools are always on the outside gibbering gibberish. Licensed fools like myself on the other hand cross freely between the borders of sanity and madness, but never resting long enough to stop being a fool.

Lines and order keep us on the straight and narrow, but if they are altered they might lead you of the edge.

I dream of melting together with every living being, becoming one, swimming in a sea of minds and emotions feeding of pain and pleasure reveling in ecstasy, pushing humanity further up the evolutionary ladder.

I believe those in power do not want the best for us, the people, they only look for ways of maintaining their position. Which is the flaw with every system we have devised to date. The question stands then, can we mentally evolve in a crowd?

To me art is about human exploration, which is the most important endeavor we can take as a species. For that I'm willing to sacrifice my health and happiness.

I draw a line, I want it to say so many things, but I look at it and ask myself, how can you see what I have drawn, that it was not for profit nor fame, but simply because I wanted to give so much, so many ideas, but the line can not hold my thoughts and I despair.

There are many artists that have great potential to help improve the world, but are not given an opportunity to fulfill it. I'm far from alone in this boat.

I've been an artist for 10 years, how many have I touched, influenced, given something of great value? Some for sure, I've been named an up and coming artist, had two solo shows in London, traveled to China, America, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway with my work. It all sounds rather successful, but the reality is that my work does not give me an income to support myself or my practice. In addition I suffer from crippling depression a direct result of being an artist. My personality is such that I take everything to heart; I easily get lost in my mind and struggle to find my way out. Why do I continue, why do I not give up? Because I believe in the importance of art, exploring ideas, giving people an alternative experience and pushing boundaries. I believe one can make a difference and that individuals can help make this a better place. It is a calling as strong as any calling can be. For me it is the purpose for living. So what do I feel when I perceive the world does not want artists, that most prefer another boy band, reality TV show or shopping mall? When that feeling overwhelms me, that is when I want to die or leave the world behind and become Robinson Crusoe, but I would not last a week. Why do I hang on with my little finger? My partner Julia holds me to this existence, reminds me of all the things I forget when I'm overwhelmed by depression and not able to string a rational thought together.

When you look at my work, all my work, know that I suffer from depression, a desire to disappear from this world, a fear to leave the house, to talk on the phone, filled with a certainty that I will never be able to communicate, that everything I create is only perceived at face value, that no one will ever see what I put in to the work, only seeing what they are conditioned to see. I'm trapped in my own mind screaming to get out, talking as honestly and passionately I can, but all that is heard is merely a whisper distorted and transformed into a lie. You might see a line, and dismiss it for that. I could not

blame you, I believe the work should stand on its own, if that is what you see then that is what it is too you. But it saddens me immensely as I know the line is so much more, but you cannot see it. Maybe it is because your senses have been blunted by our media saturated culture that we can no longer see the difference between mass production and the unique. To the extent that when we do see something out of the ordinary it tastes like dissonance rather than something magical to be treasured. So we ignore it, or if the discord is too prominent we replace it with something we know will always give us the same pleasant experience.

Make the conclusion that the world is wrong and you will see evidence for it everywhere, do the reverse and that will be proven correct also. So what is it? They cannot both be right, as they would negate one another, but they are. It is relative and determined by perspective. So whose perspective is correct, the one that benefits humanity as a whole or the one that lines the pockets of the few?

Magritte said about a picture of a pipe "this is not a pipe" whilst that statement is true, it is leaving out so much, what that is varies from artist to artist and their motives. Let's say I painted a perfectly rendered pipe, then it would be much more than just a picture of a pipe, it would be fueled by my emotions, my dreams, my soul. But how can you see the difference between what I created and an identical copy created dispassionately. You cannot because the work does not directly carry my emotions, my dreams my soul. But that is where the work comes from and knowing that makes me sad, because everywhere I look I mostly see art and craft made for profit, following a formula for how to gain the most cash. I'm an artist because that is the profession least dominated by this thought process unlike theatre, film, books, music, fashion and sports that are in varying degrees all consumed by profit and the confirmation of ego. If you make art for profits sake you are not an artist in my eyes, you are an entrepreneur nothing wrong with that per se, but the two cannot coexist they cancel each other out. Making something for profit kills the soul, because the soul, must come first. Why is that? Because if you are making work for profit you are making it on predictions of what people will like, which has nothing to do with your soul, it is about playing to people's emotions and desires – manipulating them. When you make something that comes from your soul you explore beyond what we know, looking into oblivion, risking your sanity, and trying to see what it is and then returning to society to communicate what you experienced in a language that gives people access to where you have been. Based on this a lot of masterpieces are not art in my eyes, but they are still masterpiece of manipulation of people's minds. But it is not how I define the art I make. Maybe I should find a new word for what I create, instead of insisting that we should reduce the word art down so much

that only a handful can call themselves artists. A notion that is unfair and ridiculous. It should be said that the wide definition of what can be art is also the thing I like about the word it is so wide that any person in the world could call themselves an artist and be correct in doing so.

I could say that I'm an 'honest artist' implying that I create work because I must and not for money. Or how about 'soul artist'? Sadly that word is immensely problematic leading people down many different paths that would be incorrect for what I want to say about what I do. I have previously used the phrase 'licensed fool' to describe myself, but on its own it says nothing; you would need to understand how I perceive the fool. I divide the fool into two categories the licensed fool and the natural fool, the later being someone who can not help himself from being a fool, whilst the licensed fool is someone who uses the attributes of the natural fool to enter and look into oblivion for then to return with what he has seen. Why should one take inspiration from the natural fool? Because he is, for better or worse, he is what he is, independent from society. He is not burdened by how to think or act according to the current consensus, he is. The paradox is that if the licensed fool succeeds in getting his message across he can easily fail, that is if he does not immediately return to oblivion searching for what is beyond the next horizon. In success the licensed fool can become the status quo, or transform into the hero and with that comes stagnation. The licensed fool must always have his feet in two planes of existence; he can never enter one fully without losing what he is. But ultimately calling myself something else than an artist is not going to change how my work would be perceived, or would it?

I am an artist and I make work that comes from the core of who I am, with the hope that I can help humanity evolve, to become better, wiser, hold a greater perspective and knowledge of ourselves and our surroundings.

I admire capitalism for being a system that gives security to a large population, but I do not accept that it is a good system, because it is founded on giving us what we want and not what we need, adding higher value on what we want more. Give one child what it wants and another what it needs, then see who becomes the stronger human? Capitalism is creating a system based on a foundation of dependency. Just like any system it looks fantastic on paper, but in practice it fails, and trust me one day it will fail – a lot more epically than communism, fascism, anarchy or dictatorship.

It is easy to criticize and a lot more challenging to give an alternative. As a single individual I cannot create a system strong enough to challenge capitalism, though I do suspect that a better system should always be in flux. What I can try to do is stimulate thought and with a vast amount of people thinking together, instead of just existing, we can hopefully be more than we are.

Know that all my work is about us, you, him, her and I - it is about who we are, asking questions about where we are going, how can we become more, how can we evolve positively, we are all more than just employees, consumers, workers or living battery's to a system that drains us instead of fuelling our growth.

HearMe | 2015-10-20

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The Word Artist | To be an artist is to be a dreamer.

Before we begin. Saying "I am an Artist" is as descriptive as answering: "I am human" to the question "Who are you?" The simple fact of the matter is that we do not have a word for what I do. "Artist" does not cut the mustard, answering I am human, does not distinguish me from the 6 billion other people

out there. If I could say I was a ship's captain, a nurse, a fighter pilot etc you would have it down to the T on what I do.

Part of being an artist is the possibility to be anyone and make anything. It is non-restricting, with that in mind, yes the word artist is a good term. So I will not stop calling myself an artist, just like I will not stop saying I'm human. And that is where the crux of the problem lies, we need an additional word.

Some would say what about photographer, painter, performance artist, musician, dancer and so forth. That is all well and good, but I see it as problematic, because you are naming yourself after the tool you use. Which might make sense if you only use one tool. Let me ask you this, does a carpenter call himself a hammer, just because he uses that one tool the most? The larger problem however is that once again it says nothing. I'm a painter, so you paint walls, landscapes, flowers or what? I'm a photographer, so you are a paparazzi, aerial photographer, fashion photographer or what? It comes back to the fact it is only the tool you use, it says nothing about what you create with said tool. Shabam... That is my point.

You might say I have answered my own question, did you? Well no I didn't. Let me demonstrate, imagine the following statements: "I'm a landscape painter", OK I get it. "I'm a fashion photographer", OK I get it. These statements give a clear answer to what framework the work one creates falls into, but it does not tell you why said person creates landscape pictures or fashion spreads. The answer to that question is fundamental. If the answer is "I like pretty pictures", "It is what sells" or any other answer that suggests no higher purpose, then we don't have to continue looking for a new word. What is a higher purpose? In my book it is exploration.

I explore, not space, not science, not the oceans, not the human mind..., what I explore is nothingness and everything, my destination is shrouded in mist, yet it is clear as day, it is both near and far, I explore like a child, with no skill, learning with every step, because I have not been here before.

What is it to explore? Let's start with what it is not. The western world is laid out for us like an amusement park, we get to chose what rides we want to take, they can be thrilling, spooky and scary or scenic and relaxing, but they all run on rails, where the outcome is always known, and when you exit you are the same as when you entered plus an added memory that represents

knowledge. If the ride does not deliver you are entitled to sue the amusement park. The spectacle creates the illusion of exploration, it is a mirage. To explore is to not know, and the challenges you face force you to grow and adapt, when you come out the other end you are not the same, you have evolved, maybe to the point where you would say that you are a different person. Living is not about maintaining equilibrium, living is a series of metamorphosis, constantly evolving, only holding on to a red thread of who you are. Our world today can be said to be functional and provides desired security and equality, better than any system prior to it. However that is also it's greatest flaw and failure, it is a system that is killing us more effectively than the most oppressive and malicious system from our history. Because it is hindering us from exploring and in turn living.

Only a fool would truly dare to explore, for he will jump without knowing what is below. He jumps because that is the purpose of living.

Have I found the word, I desire? No, but maybe you know it? Restrain yourself from saying fool, as that would be highly unoriginal.

The Approach | To be an artist is to see

At the age of 18 I decided not to follow the news, not to stay updated on current events and not to vote. A decision that followed in to all aspects of my life. I would observe the world differently, by encounters, by hearing what people talk about. I do not feel ashamed that I have not heard of, said politician, celebrity, artist or writer. I made a decision based on the belief that, knowing what everyone knows is not necessarily a good thing. That by attempting to stay ignorant one is also able to see differently, to see in a way that is not shaped by media or by what we are told is important. This is not to say that I would not inform myself on topics of interest or relevant to my practice, it purely means that I would not follow the trodden path of what knowledge I should acquire. Of course this is a double edged sword, but so should it be, nothing brings only benefits, the biggest drawback might be a feeling of disconnection, isolation and not belonging, that I become an observer, always looking in through the window, but never truly present. Another danger is that one becomes insular, that everything one does is informed by one's own opinion, creating a scenario where everything is amazing and not understanding why the rest of the world does not see one's greatness. Mesmerized by one's own reflection, like Narcissus, but towards one's perceived character and genius rather than one's beauty. A final danger worth mentioning is not being included into the debate or taken seriously, because one has not read the relevant books, to know the rules of the game or

to be placed on a scale that measure one's skill and knowledge of the field. From my perspective the problem with most debates is that they are often talking within the same framework, irrelevant of if they agree or disagree. I see myself as the trickster, the jester and the fool. A character whose purpose is to shake it up, to present an alternative perspective that both sides did not consider. But when one is not invited to the table, what benefit is there to society? Now that is a question I'm still trying to answer, obviously one must crash the party, I just can not get past the security guards, because unlike a good trickster I can not lie.

I believe if one follows a formula for success one achieves nothing, I'm not impressed by technical skill or how well one was able to achieve one's goals. Ticking boxes and quantifying are pursuits with no bearing on what it is to exist, to live and grow, all it achieves is reproduction and manufacturing sameness. It cuts out and discards exploration, where true value is to be found. The thrill is in the darkness not the light, uncertainty and fear give meaning and purpose. There is no middle ground, no having a safety net, as it would defeat the purpose. If one is comfortable one is already dead.

My opinions are not backed up by research or statistics, they are guttural and instinctual, as likely to be wrong as right. But that does not make them less valuable, only less reliable. Secondly I'm not able to live up to them or live by them, but I do try.

As a younger man my first response to making work was to have an idea and then recreate it. I did not start considering myself an artist until I shifted my approach. The idea became the starting point the spark, the driving force that propelled one forward, it was no longer the goal to recreate it, as that would leave out the most valuable part, exploration.

The fool is important to exploration and to art, because before the explorer became the hero he was the fool. It might be so that most fools do not make this transition, because they failed in their quest, but did they? I would argue that from the sheer willingness to enter the unknown all fools succeed, it is only a failure in that it had no bearing on society, which is the loss of all mankind, but for the fool himself. The fool only becomes the hero, because his achievements have vast effects on the world. The paradox is that the hero will ultimately transform into the tyrant, unless he dies before this happens, the man is thus separated from his achievements, and is considered pure even when his legacy turns sour. It is the nature of evolution. A sign that evolution is stagnating is when the hero stays the hero and the greater people are discouraged from becoming or following the fool

The word fool in itself is misleading, it can help by distinguishing between natural fool and licensed fool. The natural fool is the one who does not have a choice in the matter, he behaves so for he is so. The licensed fool on the other hand rationally takes on the attributes of the natural fool to enable him to break through the norm. It is one of the very few ways available to us, so that we can take the leap into the unknown from where we can explore.

The keen observer might take note that I'm trying to describe a system of thought that will stand true, through out change, because it's purpose is to always encourage evolution, rather than stating that there is a fixed and perfect utopia. Utopia is the idea that sets one on to the quest, it is not and never should be the goal, because if it is it will inherently fail. The goal should always be unknown.

The Point | To be an artist is to encourage people to live

The biggest question of them all "What is the point?" I believe the answer is rather straightforward, to live. But one must do more than breathe, more than lay on fat or muscles, more than acquisition and hoarding. Existing is not living. It is not living because it is maintaining a status quo. I believe that as a whole, humanity of today is a lump of breathing meat that is more of a cog in the machinery than a living existing and self reflecting entity. To live is to explore, grow and develop. This means venture towards the dark and the unknown. You are not exploring when you live in an Amusement Park. It may be the perquisite of an artist to explore, but it is not dependent on any factor. No matter who you are or what your job is, you can explore and in turn live. The purpose of an artist is to encourage, stimulate and inspire people to explore, a good artist is therefore one who does not give up on this endeavor, beyond that it can not be quantified through how many people one has inspired or touched, because it is irrelevant, one is good from simply trying and excellent from never giving up. As the numbers increase so does the formulaic and with that lays failure, this is why the artistic endeavor cannot and should not be quantified.

The object must change, the longer it is static, the weaker it becomes. From this system of thought the older a work of art is the less value it has, unless it has changed and evolved, which it can do, because we are not just talking

about the physical, for art is more than that, it is also what we read into it and perceive, the essence of art is not in the object it is in the perception, if art is just the object it is nothing more than any other thing in this world.

Yes anything can be art and anyone can be an artist, and they can call themselves an artist and I will not disagree with them, because everyone has the right to the word art. At the same time if they do not share my sentiment of what art is I do not consider them an artist or their work art. It is a paradox and the moment it stops being a paradox then art is no longer art.

My mission statement is to explore, but as an artist I have found it difficult sharing my exploration, reaching out to people with my work. Sometimes I'm lost in translation, maybe due to a passive nature of experiencing Art and Entertainment.

I SHOULD NOT HAVE used those two words in conjunction with each other, as Entertainment is as far removed from Art one can come. Entertainment plays to your senses, it lulls you to sleep. Entertainment is a mirage, it halts your journey, it pulls you towards an illusion and kills you. The better you are entertained the more you should question it? The function of a mirage is that it takes the appearance of your imagined desire, it shows you what you want, but ultimately it does not fulfill it. In fact it does the reverse. Your desires can not and should not be easily achieved, and if they are the more they become devalued, furthermore as one progress with the journey one might find that what drove you to begin the journey was not what you wanted or needed, this is a discovery one can only make if one completes one's quest without being led astray by the promise of instant gratification. If you find yourself bored, embrace it, let it wash over your body. Let it linger, and then wait until your own brain activates, hold on to that moment and stick to it. Never let anyone else repeatedly alleviate your boredom, if you do, you ultimately let them take control of who you are and what you can become.

The desert is filled with mirages promising you what you want, and everyone is running towards them, exhausting valuable energy. I'm not here to entertain you, nor am I here to pacify you, neither am I here to preach to you. I'm here to set you free from the chains that bind you, to shatter the illusion. I'm the ugly duck in the sea of false promises, I promise nothing, I will add nothing, for I believe it is all already within you, nothing is wrong and you are not lacking, you are only lead to believe that it is.

I make work because I believe in humanity and our potential. I make work to explore with you, not for you. I make work to reach out beyond my immediate circle, to reach people's hearts and minds. In this endeavor I fail, time and time again. I'm not alone in this, we are a ship of artists with something to give, but find ourselves preaching to each other, because we find that most of humanity are chasing the mirage and have only eyes for the illusion. But we continue, for if we only save a few it might just be enough to steer our course towards a future where people as a society are living.

My desire is to truly engage with people on the level I've set out. It is not to sit in a hotel room, disconnected from the world, writing this shit nobody will read. Or said in other words, a text only read by my mum and my peers who are in the same boat as I.

I need to be out there among the illusions, and hope that some can tell the difference between the fake and the real, our future development as a species depends on it.

Snakes and Ladders | 2015-11-08

Imagine being flooded with negative emotions, unable to process them, not knowing or willing to accept where they are coming from, not understanding why simple tasks get connected to feelings of terror. Not knowing the reason for one's depression becomes the biggest elephant in the room; it is the question everyone wants to be answered.

I could not see an answer or I did not want it to be an easy equation. From my perspective there is a lot to me, there is no simple answer. Ultimately however it is simple.

Confidence issues are the source of my depression.

The first time I can clearly say I had a mental struggle between what I wanted to do and an emotional response was Oslo 2001, I wanted to join a live role-playing group, but when I saw them I was not able to approach, it was an anxiety attack stemming from a lack of confidence. This was the catalyst, but

many events leading up to this had been feeding into it. Bullying, being an outcast, dyslexia, not being a part of any group activities that help bolster a young boys confidence, my quiet and non assertive demeanour and many other little drops in the water. Up until this event I believed I had a strong will and mind, that I had struggled through my challenges and become stronger, but this was and is not true I'm highly sensitive and easily have negative reactions that I let affect my confidence. When my confidence is challenged I retreat and become disconnected from the world, as I do not want it to be seen that I'm lacking in confidence. One negative aspect is that I do not create art in these periods, however it still fuels my creation. What truly is the killer is that I'm not able to do research, write applications and put myself out there when I'm caught by the tendrils of apathy.

Where I am strong is in the willingness to continuously put myself back into situations that have the potential to knock me down again. I'm like that man who never lies down; I always get up again from the punch, a stubborn boy who does not know how to fight, but worse still does not get any smarter after each punch, which makes me rather stupid. To top it of, I picked the carer of an Artist, a bad idea for someone with my problem. Whilst studying art was an excellent time of growth as it was in a framework that supported and celebrated good work. The flip side is outside of the university framework, making good work is only 10% of what is needed; it is about making good connections, being forward, writing application after application, demonstrating oneself to be trustworthy, selling oneself and stimulating egos, nothing wrong with most of that, however they are all actions that hammer at my confidence, I do not have tough skin, I feel a lot, which makes me an extraordinary artist but a bad salesman and ultimately a bad artist. Oh how I love paradoxes and oxymorons, I'm both good and bad at what I do.

If life is like snakes and ladders, then one could say that there have been times I've played well, landing on some amazing ladders and going up and away, but my confidence issues have landed me on a lot more snakes. For the last year I have fallen down the biggest snake, walked up one amazing ladder, which was Venø Gård KUNST, just to immediately fall down a big snake once more. I would say I'm currently right back at the beginning of the game, reflecting on my past work, uncertain of how to actually play the game, clueless of how to reach the ladders, wondering if I can walk the path, knowing that with the person I am, I will be landing on many snakes, telling myself platitudes in an attempt to push myself forward. Ultimately I can but do one thing, struggle.

To accept Sisyphus tale of pushing a boulder up a mountain, which rolls back to the base every time he reaches the top, as a positive reflection of life, we must imagine that it is the struggle that is his source of happiness and not reaching the top. I on the other hand am not enjoying the struggle, how can one enjoy pushing one's confidence up the mountain only to see it roll down again, knowing from past experiences that this will happen time and time again? I continue not for the vague chance I might actually reach the top or because I enjoy the struggle. I continue because I believe in my definition of art, to explore the unknown and encourage others to explore, to be immensely important for humanity.

Amidst self-doubt and depression I have that one belief which is rock solid, I have something to say, so HearMe.

The Church of Bjørn | 2015-12-28

A system of thought:

- We are not a singular being we are humanity, both past, present and future.
- We are not separate from the space that surrounds us; it is as much apart of us as our hand.
- Our purpose of existence is to explore for the benefit of evolution.

Take the title of this text with a grain of salt, a pinch of irony and a dash of self-mockery. Bjørn is my name, but it also means bear in Norwegian and is the name of many a Nordic man. Not that it is a church for Bears or hairy male worshippers, no it is not even a church, it is nothing more than the title of this chapter which is presenting my perspective that I do not profess to be true or false. What I propose is meant to be a way of thinking that is never closed or dictating towards whom one should be. It is an approach that I hope can be shared by others with the aim to further our evolution as a species.

Like most I have an ego, mine revolves around that I believe I have something important to say and that I'm worth listening to. At the same time I'm brimming with insecurity and an inability to control my emotions. Neither of these qualities are a negative or a positive, but together they give me a semblance of balance and a unique perspective.

I cannot accept truths that require one to dismiss all other truths.

I do not believe in a static truth. There are systems of thought where a static

truth can always be correct, but such truths are human constructions disconnected from the world.

I do not present a truth; I present a way of thinking with an aim to allow for constant exploration and discovery. I propose that any human action that explores for the benefit of all humanity and the environment we reside in is good. I believe that is how humanity can evolve.

Many forms of exploration can be questionable and turn out to have negative consequences even if one's intention was directed towards a positive outcome. This does not mean that the act should be avoided. It does mean however that one should take care regarding the actions one takes and be mindful with exploration that is beneficial to only one self or a select few.

Personally I have chosen to explore through art because it is the one human activity that has never been clearly defined what it should be. There are forces at work that try to box art in, but so far it has been the most resistant at not being defined.

Everywhere I look I see the world being closed down and limited. More and more human actions are seemingly being regulated and designed to fit a specific pathway. But most worryingly I feel that our thought patterns are being shaped by technology and media with one purpose in mind, for us to be more functional and dependent on the system we are within. This is not beneficial to us as humans, because we become pillars that uphold a status quo rather than being individuals striving towards evolution of humanity and the essence of who we are.

I do not give examples, references or statistics to support my beliefs, because I'm not trying to sell you my perspective, secondly I look at the world with instinct and perception, which are not quantifiable. What I am doing is attempting to encourage everyone to explore and to arrive at his or her own conclusions and perspectives, irrelevant from what I or anyone else believes. The higher the human percentage of who is exploring the grater we can hope to push ourselves forward.

I propose that it is each individual's duty to explore. Do not be passive, engage in activities that challenge you and push you to think.

Support in any way you can activities and people that are working towards these goals.

I know I'm trying but so are many others. I feel that many alternative thinkers and artists are talking to deaf ears, or are only in dialogue with others who already share their perspective. Most of the people I see in this world are following the carrot dangling in front of them. Let me tell you this: That carrot

will always be out of reach. The only carrot you can eat is the one you grow yourself. So leave the path that is given to you, come and explore instead.

I make art to explore but most of all I make art to encourage others to explore with me or on their own.

Originally I believe religion was an activity that gave us access to a domain outside of what we knew. But religion lost its virginity along time ago and became a tool for suppression and regulation.

Art is in a position to replace or be a substitute to religion, but it is in danger of failing when it is lead by profit and not guided by a mandate to explore.

Profit is one of humanity's most dangerous concepts. It detours us from exploration and evolution. Profit is about more, more and more. It is also singular in that for someone to profit more, someone else must lose more. As far as I'm concerned the losers are majority of the population and the world itself. The irony is that the minority that profit are ultimately the biggest losers, in that from my perspective they are the furthest away from the purpose of living. Our world revolves around profit and is infused by it. Ultimately I believe it will consume us like cancer. Profit does not encourage exploration it demands predictable outcomes. By doing so it becomes the antagonist against our humanity.

Art must be free from ideas of profit to truly be able to encourage exploration.

This does not mean profit is an evil that must be destroyed; rather it is a dangerous beast that must be ridden with care and consideration towards how it is affecting the world and us. A concept that I believe can challenge the idea of profit or be an alternative is sustainability, and frankly a ride that is inherently a wiser choice, as it is a concept that enforces balance.

Art is in a position to challenge us and guide us, but to do that it must be free and not bound by truths even my own and yours. It is why I suggest a system of thought that is free to evolve with us.

The Church of Bjørn is a farce, an acknowledgement of my ego and that each and every one of us has an ego that we should not deny, hide or suppress. In tandem with recognizing our singular perspective that is the ego we must acknowledge that we are both one and many existing both back and forward into time.

I wish to stress that the point of this text is honest and I implore it to be taken seriously, in that it is relevant for all of us.

Art and exploration is the most important activity we can take to further the evolution of who we are as individuals and a collective species.

Like what you don't like | 2016-01-01

We live in a world where everything can be art, hence what is good and what form it takes is just a matter of perception, and the game for an artist is about convincing others that his work is good. Often used tactics are aesthetic values, technical capability, conceptual ideas, spectacle and many other novel ideas. Ultimately though what tactic one chooses to employ in creating one's work is irrelevant compared to meeting those who can validate your claim. The gatekeepers of good art don't do a terrible job in maintaining a standard, certainly better than what the majority could do. Art might be one of the few forms where what is good is not determined by the majority. Which let's be honest it is a good thing, because the majority would not know what is good if they were hit over the head with it. If the majority were to decide what should be art, galleries would be littered with baby pictures, celebrities, super heroes, sunsets and cute animals. You might feel a bit insulted just about now, you may say to yourself my taste is excellent. Trust me, if you are the majority, like me, it is trash, because our taste is based in passive consumption and immediate gratification. Do you feel better now that I included myself into the pit that is the majority, together as brothers in ignorance? Anyway...Take the music that you listen to, it makes pleasing sounds that confirm your pre-existing perceptions, this however does not equal good, what it actually is, is a pacifier. Imagine yourself as a little babe screaming, and your mama shoves a pacifier down your throat, which reminds you of sucking her tities and therefore you are happy. The pacifier at a stretch is a necessity for a time, but when constantly used becomes detrimental to the development of the child, imagine how you would perceive a big hulking man with a pacifier? I'm using the American word hear, but the English one is not bad either, dummy, especially when considered in conjunction with one and other, the Dummy Pacifier. This then is a picture of you and I, the majority, our evolution as a species hampered by immediate gratification in the form of a metaphorical pacifier that dumbs us down.

Side note, interestingly enough, if you are reading this text, you are most likely not the majority and if you are, you're either a small segment of the majority who is happy to go with the flow, because it is easier or you are like me writing a text just like this one either now in the same moment, in the past or the future.

In an ideal world it is the majority who should determine what is good art, and not stuffy intellectuals, hipster curators or the other end of the spectrum, that mysterious group of people who drive cars that can sustain a small country for an hour. However we the majority have lobotomised our minds, because we have bought into the idea of short-term gain and immediate fixes. In conclusion, it is our responsibility to humanity and its future, to challenge ourselves and experience things we do not know we will like or not, so no more pictures of dolphins, sunsets, superheroes, celebrities and pussy cats for you, Doctors orders. In essence we must count ourselves lucky that there are intellectuals out there who can tell us what is good art, God forbid the day when good art is determined by the market or satisfying political agendas.

Now that is out of the way, let's deal with another tiny problem, which is the scale used to determine what is good or bad, yes you guessed it, value in the form of money, after all we live in a world based on the principle that higher the value higher the worth. The problem is that such a scale is ultimately flawed, because:

Art is like a human life, one can not apply a value to it. Why can one not put a price on a human's life you ask? Besides it being ethically wrong, simple, it's potential is unpredictable. Humans can not be classified into pawns or kings, life is not a game, it is many games layered on top of each other, all having different and contradictory effects that can only be determined by perspective, and even then that will never be static since the world is forever changing. Only in a static world can something have value, but such a world would be a fallacy, as it would be disconnected from the real.

Art cannot be owned, even by the creator himself. It can be in your house or your collection, but you do not own it. It does not matter if you say it is mine, it does not matter if you put it under your control, it does not matter that you are the only one to have seen it or that you are the one who destroyed it. The only thing that you can achieve by trying to own art, is to demonstrate your standing and power within the framework you live in.

If we cannot use value to determine what is good, than what? How about this, what your basic instinct tells you to dislike is in fact not bad but good. It is good because it is more demanding of you because if you don't immediately like it, you must work to understand it, and the work you must do, will reward you in that it pushes you in new directions, you expand and grow further. In short like what you don't like. And that is how you shall know good art from

bad, not by it's value, technical skill or it's stamp of approval, but in it's ability to challenge and stimulate you.

Such art will help further the evolution of our species all other forms of art will dumb us down until we are nothing more than a living lump of flesh.

I am Jesus and Luke Skywalker | 2016-02-26

There are many ways to save humanity, and together we can explore them. I believe art is one way and that is how I make my contribution.

Humanity has lost its way. Our priorities are not our own and they benefit no one. We are on a path of self-destruction and for every step we take the more enthralled we become. We are prisoners of society. We priorities profit over exploration and entertainment over knowledge. Enough is enough, it is time for us to stand up and say "NO MORE"

Together we can make a difference.

What can we do?

1. Think different.
2. Like different.
3. Act different.
4. Bee different.

Do this to the best of your ability and you will be amazed at who you are. Instead of seeing a shadow you will see a radiant you.

We need two paths, one that we walk together as a society and one we walk alone as who we are.

You are perfect as you are, you need nothing to make yourself perfect. All you need is to look and then you shall see.

As an artist I can help you, but I cannot and will not give you a set of rules or a step-by-step guide for how.

I do not believe in absolutes or a single answer to a problem. There is not an ultimate truth or a final utopia. There is only change and evolution, resisting it goes against nature and will destroy us.

Nature is balance and symbiosis.

What I can do is inspire, encourage and perhaps offer a methodology for how you can enter the path that you must walk alone.

I am the boy who said the King is naked, I'm the prisoner who escaped Plato's cave, I'm Neo, Jesus, Ash Lad, the trickster, Sam Lowry, John Murdoch, Gandhi, Winston Smith, John Preston, Buda, Katniss Everdeen, Beatrice Prior, Luke Skywalker we are all one and the same. Always hated, shunned and despised because we said "No this is not how it should be. We said it because in our heart and our bones we know our cause is just.

Do not hate us, instead join us and say no I will not give all of me to a society that is killing humanity. A society that is hampering humanity's evolution.

I am not advocating for you to turn your back on society, but I'm imploring you to split your mind one for society and one that will go towards the path that must be walked alone.

Society will not change overnight, but if we walk our own direction, I have faith that every so slowly society will start to match its people instead of enslaving us to one ideology.

Society will never be perfect, but it can be better, it can be one that is not leading us towards self-destruction, not pacifying us, not enslaving us to technology and making us dependent. It can be one that challenges us to be more, that encourages us to explore.

You Need Nothing to be Happy | 2016-03-08

A good friend asked: "Bjørnson... do you have a philosophical quote to describe happiness...???"

At first I thought no, and was about to write some personal thoughts, but then I remembered, Yes I do:

"The struggle itself [...] is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy." Albert Camus, the Myth of Sisyphus

Sisyphus is the Greek myth about the man pushing a boulder up a mountain only to see it roll down again. The book is short, describes the myth, talks about the absurd. I did not read it cover to cover, I skim read it, looking for the point, I felt there was a fair bit of bush beating, but it is worth having in your bookshelf.

Regarding my personal quotes, on happiness? – I might have written something in the past, if so it would have been heavily inspired by the above quote. Though I also react strongly against that quote, as I feel it wants you to accept the absurdity (meaningless) of life, and by doing that you are able to be happy. In contrast to that I believe that yes life is absurd, but life is absurd (meaningless) so that there will always be something to explore - which I see as the purpose of our existence. Now if one accepts life's absurdity (meaningless) one will lose the need to explore and in turn lose the purpose of living. A train of thought that leads to misery not happiness, and debunks Camus quote.

Is exploring and happiness connected? Yes I think so. Imagine back to when you was a child, what did you feel when discovering something new? For me it was a sense of wonder, a moment of heightened awareness. One could change the Camus quote and say, "one must imagine Sisyphus Exploring" but that becomes an oxymoron - he is going nowhere in fact it then becomes the ultimate punishment, which in the myth it was meant to be and Camus book then leads me onto a different quote:

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Thomas Gray

A quote that in itself is saying that exploring will create misery, because exploring gives knowledge and wisdom. I'm not familiar with the source of this quote. I feel that this quote becomes true only if one believes that one knows and understands everything, that one sees the patterns and is never surprised – when knowledge starts to limit one's desire to explore and creates a feeling that there is nothing more to explore. It is then not the act of exploring that creates misery but a perception that may arise from it. But this is an illusion, a mirage that arises around us. A trap that is easy to fall into. Through exploring we may start to see patterns around us, but what they are is a box around our mind, stopping us from seeing, we need to believe that everything is different, that nothing is the same, to enable us to see through the box that surrounds our mind, because that is what it is. We might have only taught ourselves how

to categories and not see the differences, it is how we learn to navigate the world, but it holds us back. It is the nature of society and how society can maintain its existence, in the contract we signed to join society we gave up certain liberties, indirectly one of them was happiness. Society can only give us a simulacrum of happiness, because that is it's nature, to experience true happiness we must go beyond Society, divide our minds in two, one for the path of society and one we must walk alone, a place where we can explore and in turn feel a heightened sense of happiness. We do need society to function if we wish to live as a community, but letting it consume everything we are, is to deny ourselves true happiness and evolution for ourselves and ultimately the community.

The next quote stands in opposition to Thomas Gray, and is closer with what I believe.

"It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question." John Stuart Mill

I believe this quote acknowledges the importance of exploration, and states that it is the acquisition of knowledge in itself that is important, which I see as exploration, but it does not attribute happiness to that, only that it is better, one can imagine that it is better because one is fulfilling one's purpose by exploring, that Socrates knows what it is to be a fool, as that is where he started, he knows both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, he sees beyond the illusion, Socrates himself admitted to knowing nothing.

"I know that I know nothing" Socrates

Which to me implies that we can never find the meaning of life, or see beyond its absurdity. However that is not a problem because by knowing that I know nothing implies that there will not be an end to exploration, and in turn one will always be happy. Yes I believe that happiness lies in exploration, I believe Socrates can not be dissatisfied, he is in fact experiencing true satisfaction or a heightened sense of reality, whilst the pig and the fool are only experiencing a simulacrum of happiness, that from their perspective Socrates must be dissatisfied, but because they do not know true happiness, they only know the shadow of it. Because they do not know, when they see it, they perceive it

only as misery, but that is because they cannot experience the happiness Socrates does, because they do not explore.

To find a quote that describes happiness, I need to go to one that does not refer to happiness, but instead the nature of existence.

"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." Heraclitus

When one truly sees and understands that quote then I believe one can know happiness - one is forever exploring - being true to what I believe is our purpose - which in turn gives us happiness.

From my argument happiness is not the act of having children, gaining money, winning competitions, being with friends and family, having sex and receiving praise, they are all irrelevant in themselves, heightened happiness is only possible if one explores those scenarios, looks at them with eyes that have never seen it before. This will enable one to find happiness in anything, death, disaster and failure, if one explores it, tastes it, feels it and sees it. In the end it comes down to perspective and state of mind, you choose how you react to something by the perspective you take on it.

In conclusion you need nothing to be happy, all you need is a certain perspective, one that allows you to know that you are always exploring, and by knowing, you are doing.

What about the emotions one cannot control, the ones that overwhelm us? It can be like a storm that we must ride through. We must acknowledge, that we cannot always see, we cannot always know we are exploring, sometimes there are forces beyond our control, we must sail through them and hopefully we come out the other end, and can look at it. Then we will realize we were in fact exploring, but did not have the skill to see that we were happy. It is why I don't believe in medication. You need to experience life. Tie yourself to the mast if you must, but stay awake, only then can you hope to find a point from where you can once again see and in turn letting the storm subside and regain the ability to know that you are always exploring.

From this train of thought one could argue that nothing matters as long as one has the right perspective, in that one is correct, but one is never able to have the right perspective at all times, it is a feat beyond us, it is like the meaningless of the world, it is so, to enable us to strive forward to an end that never exists, but it is in the struggle that purpose and what matters resides... because that is where we explore and that is where we gain happiness. And so I have disagreed and agreed with Camus.

Notes:

From the logic of what I have written there are two kinds of happiness, passive and active, the passive is the one we know the best, it is immediate gratification, connected to our body, then there is active the one that few know, because you need to work for it, it is connected to the mind, and it can only be achieved through perspective, understanding of oneself and exploration. It is elusive and hard to gain, but it is within all of us, we are just not trained to see it. Everything in our society is focused towards the passive. Which causes an unbalance. There is nothing wrong with passive happiness in it self, but what is bad is when it shadows the existence of active happiness.

Be grateful for the moments of passive happiness and remember them fondly, but active happiness is what we should strive for, as it will enable one to find happiness in everything. Giving a heightened sense of reality.

Why You Should Listen to Me | 2016-03-27

I know who I make art for, but I do not know how to connect and engage with them, I write this, in the vain hope that someone who reads this knows and can enlighten me.

I make art for the people, not for fame, not for myself, not for galleries and not for money. Unlike entertainment, sport, religion, politics, newspapers, fashion and corporations I do not give people what they want; instead I endeavour to create what I believe they need. Our society is created around the idea of want, and most places I look enforce that to a detrimental degree. Want is connected to passive happiness, which is immediate gratification that is connected to our body. Passive happiness is when an exterior force makes you feel good, it can be a compliment from someone you look up to, a Like on Facebook, good food, an orgasm and so on. Active happiness is what I try to

give people; it is what I believe we need. Active happiness is a heightened sense of happiness that is connected to our mind, in the sense that we need to use our mind to achieve a perspective that heightens our experience. The fundamental difference between the two forms of happiness is that when one achieves active happiness one can gain pleasure from both forms, with passive happiness one cannot. My work is not created to trigger active happiness, if it did then it would be passive in nature, instead my work requires the viewer to actively look at it, to think about it, to reflect and engage with it. Secondly my work tries to encourage true exploration, not the simulacrum of it that society provides, but exploration that actually goes towards the unknown. I believe exploration is the purpose of our existence and that it leads to active happiness, it is only through this endeavor we can become all that we are. Passive happiness on the other hand is what enslaves us; it is what prevents us from seeking active happiness. The biggest problem is that passive happiness has been commodified, we are constantly told that if we have this or that we will be happy, ironically when we get it, that happiness experienced is temporary, it slips through our fingers like sand. One needs nothing to experience active happiness, all one needs is to achieve a certain perspective. However I believe for us that are born in this society, achieving that perspective is immensely difficult, one needs to turn everything one knows on it's head and reject our overwhelming desire for passive happiness. I have seen active happiness, but I have not reached the point where I can hold on to it, nevertheless every day I struggle towards it, trying to avoid the snares of passive happiness and encourage everyone else to join me in that endeavor, because I believe in my heart that for humanity to survive into the distant future and for us to evolve towards beings in harmony with ourselves and the universe than that is the path we must take. The path of passive happiness, that I believe society has put us on, is rapidly leading us to our own extinction and or regression.

Tell me this dear reader, how do I touch the heart of people that only know passive happiness, how do I tell them that there is more to life than passive happiness, how do I tell them that it is worth their time, how can I tell them all this when they cannot perceive the colors in which I have painted my work?

How do I communicate my thoughts without preaching, how do I convey that the beauty of my work does not lay in it's surface, but in its intention. How do I tell them that my work is not about aesthetics, spectacle, concepts, culture, fashion or current affairs, but that it is about actively engaging with the artwork I create, either through reflection or exploration?

My work is an attempt to create inspiration, encouragement and contemplation towards fulfilling the potential that is in every one of us.

Active happiness cannot be bought it can only be discovered.

Notes:

Passive happiness is not sinful, bad or wrong. It is like a hunting rifle, it can help sustain you by putting food on the table or it can be misused in a way that damages. It must be said that only knowing passive happiness is like giving a loaded gun to a baby.

By achieving active happiness I believe one will never intentionally or accidentally be able to misuses passive happiness in a way that damages yourself, or is destructive towards the balance of our surroundings.

Active happiness needs to be learnt, not that you need a teacher, but in the way that you must reflect, think and explore yourself and your emotions.

In conclusion by knowing active happiness one can safely enjoy passive happiness and experience a heightened sense of it. Furthermore by knowing active happiness one is able to find pleasure in everything, as one is able to perceive beyond the immediate, the preconceived and the physical.

There is no right way, Only Your Way| 2016-03-29

I wanted to look at some words, phrases and ideas I use repeatedly, mainly because they are important to me and embody a strong essence of how I think. After that I wanted to see how they connected in a condensed form, from which four new words arose all of which were connected to various forms of truth. Every text I write is part of my personal exploration, reflection on why I make art (/work), search for active happiness and why I believe in what I have to say. Each text is chopping away on creating the same spear point; each time is an attempt at making it pointier, sharper, more focused and deadlier.

Exploration: Is the purpose of life. To seek out and discover oneself, the world and others.

Truth: It is forever evolving.

Discovered Truth: Is a truth that exists only in the moment it was found. The 'real' moment.

Shadow of Discovered Truth: Is the truth we are able to show others. The photograph of the 'real' moment.

Final Truth: Does not exist, if it did it would negate the need for exploration.

Natural Fool: The person who cannot help but be a fool.

Licensed Fool: I use this expression with two alternating and seemingly similar meanings. 1. The person who takes on the attributes of the natural fool, he uses it as a tool to explore. 2. A description for anyone who has searched for their own methodology, gone against the status quo, but most likely would not have perceived themselves as licensed fools.

The Hero: A Licensed Fool, can be of either the two meanings, who explored and was able to share what he found.

The Tyrant: A Licensed Fool who became a Hero and a Hero who became a tyrant because what he found became the status quo.

Want: When you follow what you want you are regressing as a person. Want is connected to what you know you like.

Need: When you follow your need you grow as a person. Need is connected to what you do not know and it is impartial to if you like it or not.

Passive Happiness / Being: Is of the body. It is determined by exterior forces stimulating your senses, manipulating how you shall experience.

Active Happiness / Being: Is of the mind. It is determined by interior forces, such as how you chose to perceive what you are experiencing.

As humans it is easy to want passive happiness, but we need active happiness to fulfil our purpose as humans. We can achieve active happiness by exploring, there are many ways to explore, and one way might be to truly use all our senses to experience the moment. Another way we can explore is to take on the attributes of the natural fool and become a licensed fool. The different ways one chose to explore will give different results, and by using methodologies one might be lead towards predetermined outcomes, therefore it is important to find one's own way of how to explore.

No matter how you chose to explore, I believe one's exploration can lead to the discovery of a truth. At which point we can return to our fellow humans and share the shadow of our discovered truth, it is a shadow since we can only experience discovering a truth by exploring for ourselves. We can try to share our methodology for exploring, but the more rigid that methodology is the more likely what is discovered is also a shadow. If the people embrace the shadow of our discovery we become the hero. At this point the hero and their discovery risks becoming the tyrant, it can happen if we profess that what we found is the final truth, and present the shadow of what we discovered as the real experience and hinder others from exploring, in turn taking away the purpose of living. The shadow we shared with the people was meant to encourage exploration, not to be represented as the final truth. Even if the hero does not become the tyrant, others can turn the discovery into the tyrant, in particular people of influence who have not explored them selves, but wish to maintain a status quo, because it perpetuates their passive happiness, often they will do this by assimilating the new truth into the old truth or vice versa. The hero can avoid becoming the tyrant by not becoming the hero in the first place. Instead letting people find him, and because one must explore to find him, those who do might be able to see a discovered truth. The paradox is that our history is littered with fallen heroes on which bones tyrants rule the world. Every person who has seen or glimpsed a discovered truth knows the tyrants are leading humanity to our doom, but cannot say it without risking becoming a tyrant. As I have already suggested giving a methodology for how to discover a truth, is practically the same as giving the shadow of the truth. I believe if the methodology is not rigid and gives endless room and possibility to make it one's own, then there is a good chance that one can find a truth. This can be improved further if that methodology gives room for other ideas to exist alongside it, even if they should contradict. I believe the licensed fool is such a methodology and that is why it is a central part of my work.

I have long struggled with the need to reach out and connect to people because, I have glimpsed a truth and can see the tyrant's rule, which has given me an idealistic desire to direct humanity away from regression and or self-destruction, instead I wish to point us towards a path that I believe will lead towards evolution. I have been frustrated that most people do not have the ability to see. Only certain minds are able to perceive, but I have never been interested in making work for them, because I see preaching to the converted as futile. However I have slowly come to a conclusion that even though the people I make work for never get to see it, I must continue to make it, for if it is discovered by people instead of forced upon them than it fulfils its purpose and stays what it is meant to be without becoming the tyrant. The less support and encouragement I get, the purer, rawer and more honest my work becomes. By coming to this conclusion I feel I might be closer to active happiness.

I believe that I have something to give people, that is more important than pop culture, religion, porn, politics, fashion, entertainment, and broadcast sport. In short anything that is formulaic and stimulates passive happiness. I must admit that I have believed this since the age of 18, maybe younger. It has taken on different forms, but at its core I believe it was always the same. What I have to give is not mine, it is not my idea, I do not own it in anyway, it is of humanity, it has existed as long as us. It is exploration and active happiness, we all have it, but society is taking it away from us. All my work is to varying degrees focused on stimulating, encouraging and advocating the return to exploration and active happiness.

If I ever become successful in my endeavour, I risk becoming the tyrant, but worse making the ideas tyrannical. But here's the thing, the concept of exploration and active happiness are not possible to commodify, one can make simulacrums of the concept, which is practically the shadow of the truth, but they will still exist as evolving and changing truths, that are relative to each individual who seek them out on their own.

Turning an idea into a commodity is making it into passive happiness. The more successful it is as a commodity the greater it enslaves us from our true purpose as humans.

To me Art is work that encourages you to explore, when perceiving such art you cannot be passive, you must be active and therefore it stimulates active happiness.

Women were once perceived as passive, they did not explore, they were considered objects to be owned by men. Then came feminism, women took ownership of themselves, said that we can be active, we can explore and they did. One could say that feminism has already done what I am advocating. However I believe feminism has become the tyrant. It has found itself in a self-propagating loop. The methodology though wide, has become restricting. I believe some feminists have tried to create a patch, by saying that feminism also includes all genders, which whilst being true, does not solve the problem, as perceptions are hard to change. I see feminism as one good step in the right direction, but let's not stop there. At first I thought a counterbalance was needed, that we should look at male identity. Women did it, men should do it to, explore our selves, reflect on who we are... However I soon realised this would be just the other side of the coin, and in time become as problematic as

I perceived feminism to have become. Coming to that realisation was how I gained the belief that every one of us should work towards active happiness and exploration, under the banner of that we are all human and not one specific gender, race or nationality. Said like that it sounds like happy go lucky nonsense or mouldy residue from the hippie culture. But if that is how you feel, then I fear you are not able to perceive what I'm saying. Maybe the hippie culture was another attempt at taking a steep in the right direction, but unlike feminism, that still has some positive to it, I feel that the hippie culture totally collapsed in on itself and became commodified to the extent that it lost all meaning. Let me put it in another way, have you ever listened to a band that was only cool to you, used a computer that nobody else used, read an amazing book that only you and a handful of friends knew about? And then one day it became popular, and you noticed that people just bought it because it was popular and that those people completely missed the point or the magic of it. Then some months later, copycats emerged who also did not understand the heart of it, until it lost all meaning. That is commodification, and that is where passive happiness leads to, meaningless. That is what I mean when I say: "not able to perceive", because you are not exploring for yourself, you are following the crowd, when you should be going down your own path.

I presume it is clear by now that I perceive our current society of capitalism to be at the core of our problem and that it is a beast that turns anything good into a heaping pool of stinky brown shit for us to roll around in. I do not know what would happen if the majority truly explored and strived for active happiness, but I believe that together we would be able to create a society that works better than this one, a society that fosters growth instead of regression. Most importantly I believe we would be able to avoid turning society into a tyrant, because there would be no trends, fashions and popular culture, instead everyone would explore in different directions, find their own voice, not the platitude of it that we see today, but individuals without signifiers, truly being encouraged and enabled to go where no one has gone before. The key thing with active happiness is that you cannot buy it, it cannot be given to you, nobody can tell you how to perceive it, you have to find it and perceive it for yourself. If the majority achieved active happiness... then our current society would be void.

There is no right way to explore or method to achieve active happiness, only your way, and if you are told that there is a path to active happiness, know that is always the wrong way.

Taking of with Aliens | 2016-04-14

The statement 'I am nobody' is impossible, everyone is somebody, to be nobody is to not exist, however this is changing with how our society is developing and how society defines existence. I believe society more and more defines our existence by confirmation of ego, the more acknowledgment of our presence is confirmed the more we become somebody, social media is at the forefront of this. Facebook likes, Instagram likes, YouTube likes, Google + likes, and not to mention numerically cataloguing amount of views and followers. This is nothing new; it comes directly from how value is perceived in business. The more money you have the more weight your opinions and views have. Ok it is not new, but we are taking another step down a path we should have turned away from along time ago. Not everyone can be rich, because if everyone were rich nobody would be rich. The most crucial factor here is that I think the potentiality for everyone to become rich has exponentially dried out. When a well dries out we, look for another and the new arena is the potentiality for everyone to become famous for their individuality. What I believe is happening is this: We are commodifying our individuality to such a degree, that the pool of varying personalities is drying out, something like monopolisation, one company and one brand, representing what used to be a multitude. Success in business is formulaic either you have a good idea or you copy a good idea. The easiest is certainly to copy as that is a proven path to successes. Because we want so desperately to be somebody we take the easy path and copy what we perceive to be working. We are not on a path to become a more diverse society we are on a path to become a homogeneous society. Which is dangerous because a homogeneous society is a one track path that leads to stagnation, in contrast to diversity that pushes us forward by presenting alternative ideas.

My path has always been my own path, walking my path has broken me, or maybe I was always broken? I have started to wonder if I had anxiety attacks as a child? Was I depressed as a child? I certainly never displayed much enthusiasm. When I was a child I overcame my fear of the dark easily, by befriending the monsters, instead of perceiving them as creatures with evil intent, they became evil creatures that looked out for me. Similarly with the idea of death, instead of it being an inevitable end, it became the potentiality for being the greatest or shortest journey to embark on. However I have not been able to befriend the emotional storm that flows through me. I have not been able to find a sense of equilibrium, I might feel that I get close, that I'm inches away from holding it but it slips through my fingers, time and time again. I believe my issue is closely related to what I perceive as the problem with western society, our desire for confirmation of ego, which is closely related to passive happiness. I have a strong desire to be heard, I have a strong belief that I have a perspective of immense importance for humanity. I believe my thoughts have a greater value than porn stars, sports stars,

celebrities, religion and pop culture. These thoughts are dangerously close to a desire for confirmation of ego and being narcissistic in nature, but for one thing. It is not about me, but the future of humanity. I don't want to be heard to stimulate my ego, I want to be heard because I believe in my voice, my work, and that my perspective can help us towards a better path, it is the difference between being arrogant and having a conviction. It is not about me, it is about us. I cannot create work for myself; it is not in my bones, making work for oneself is in my eyes pointless and self-indulgent. Do not mistake how I often use my body, my history or my gender, in the work I create, to be about me, it is not, I use who I am as a tool to talk about us. It is the most reliable tool I know, it will never let me down when I'm ready to use it. But how can you tell the difference between an artist who draws a line from conviction and an artist who draws a line for money? You cannot, because the difference is not in the work, it is in the perception of the viewer and the intention of the artist. The only thing the artist can control is the intention, as perception is never static, you can achieve an alignment between the two by making work for the here and now, but it's relevance is then tied to that moment, unless it reflects on themes that are recurring, such as death and love.

What if Earth was visited by aliens and they declared to the world that I was the only person they wanted for first contact, what would happen? Everyone's attention would be on me, and the question would be why him? My work would be scrutinised, my online accounts would most likely be hacked, and information would change, Facebook would earn millions in advertisement revenue from my account, media would harass people in my life. Everyone would be coming to look at my work for all the wrong reasons and asking the wrong questions. The question should not be why him and not me or how can I do what he did? The question should be, how can I explore, how can we free ourselves, how can we evolve, how can one achieve active happiness, how can I walk my own path?

How can I know that this would be the reason that alien's chose me? I cannot, this is a thought experiment created to illustrate a point.

I would imagine that the Aliens contacted me before they made the announcement to the world. My question to them would be how could one inspire humanity to walk towards something of high value, without it being exploited, in that it is turned into a formula for success? Imitation is not the greatest compliment, it is one of the most misguided actions we can take as humans. When we imitate we become pale shadows of who we are. My work is not about creating something that has mass appeal, it is not created to

stimulate our want, instead it is created for our need. If I gained sudden success, or recognition and validation from aliens, my work would become want and not need. The perception of my work would be altered and take on the form of commodity. I believe that the aliens would tell me only the minds that are ready will be able to perceive your work, and our minds are ready, we can perceive it, what does it matter that most of your society cannot perceive your work? Come with us. It matters because if most of society cannot perceive, then our species is doomed for regression and extinction. I'm not the first, I'm not the last and I'm not the only one to formulate the thoughts I have. I believe there have been human cultures, that have followed similar ideas to what I present, but they have all been swallowed by the concept of want, because it is the easy path. The ideas that have gained traction have been coated in formulaic primer and can no longer be compared to the original. Maybe it is only in sport that we still understand that we must take the hard path to train our body, then again that may no longer be true. I don't desire to see humanity fail, I wish to see humanity prosper, grow and evolve beyond the stars, because I am of humanity and I know that everyone of us can. Stupidity is a choice, no one is stupid. Sadly most have chosen stupidity, most of all those who base value in commodity, power and or fame, of which a small percentage of them are steering our society over the edge of the world, the best part of this analogy is that the boat they are sailing is made out of us, we are the planks and nails that keep the boat afloat. We do not want to come apart or take our own paths, because we are given what we want, a path that is laid out for us on a platter. It is this desire that casts a blindfold over most of humanity, leading our minds a stray, disabling us to perceive the prison that surrounds us. If one could see the prison, one might be able to perceive my work, if one could see the prison one would not want to imitate or commodify my work, because that is how the prison is created. How then can one survive as an artist? How then can one be heard within our society? When the system itself will destroy the essence of the work, the system that brings ideas to the people? What could the Aliens do? Nothing, because we are the ones that must change, we must choose the path ourselves. In conclusion Aliens cannot change the course of our society, not even if they bring attention to ideas that might have the potential of pointing us in a direction from where we can individually explore, because the system itself will subvert the idea.

The problem is similar to that of the chicken or the egg.

The people themselves, need to find the path themselves, and they can not be told about it's existence as that will defeat the point of finding it for oneself. A paradox has seemingly occurred, this text is talking about the existence of a path that can only be found if one does not know about it, does that mean that the reader cannot find the path, because it's existence has been revealed? No,

to not know about it, is to find one's own path, in contrast to seeking a path that has already been revealed which is to become a shadow and finally a shell of what it is to be human. Ultimately then, what is the point of my work? It is created from the desire to inspire people to explore, but if my work gains attention the intention of the work will be subverted and what will be perceived will become a primer for commodity, only through the minds that are ready can perceive my work for what it is, but those minds are already exploring.

It is in the pointlessness of my endeavour that I find success and if ever Aliens arrived on earth and chose me to be the voice of humanity, I believe that together we would come to the conclusion that humanity is not ready for Aliens, I would then chose to leave earth along with what I imagine to be many other artists and thinkers. The only thing we would leave behind would be our work, in the hopes that enough people would find it and perceive the work in a way that encouraged evolution. Whilst our exploration of space alongside the Aliens would be a metaphor for the exploration we began on earth.

In Potentiality we Trust | 2016-04-16

I am an unhappy man; I have failed to achieve passive happiness, which is closely connected to the stimulation of ego. Our society is all about passive happiness and in our struggle to achieve it we have lost sight of active happiness, a form of happiness that stems from the ability of controlling perspective. For someone that has grown up in our society active happiness seems like a poor substitute, because it requires nothing, you already have everything no matter who you are. Those who struggle for passive happiness and either feel happy or not in their endeavour are living in a prison that they are unaware of and therefore unable to evolve. Those like me who are struggling towards active happiness are aware of the prison and therefore unable to be happy until they achieve active happiness; in this endeavour they gain the potentiality for evolution. However several realisations might occur during the struggle towards active happiness, such as: I am aware of the prison, I'm not living in a illusion, I'm walking in the right direction and I have chosen a path that is my own. Such realisations might enable one to find happiness in the struggle. However I am still unhappy, because there is no way to reveal the prison to those who are only seeking passive happiness, they must perceive it on their own. I do not consider myself separate from humanity, I cannot be happy knowing that most of us are walking down a road that leads to regression and destruction, with the knowledge that no matter what I do to bring attention to this fact, is an act of futility. It is not in me to only care for myself and the immediate people around me, when I perceive all

of humanity as one. The realisation that there is nothing I can do to inspire people to strive for active happiness, that it is something they must find for themselves is the nail in the coffin, giving purpose to the idea of suicide. If I were alone it would be a realistic option, however I have a responsibility to the people close to me, to endure.

We fear the finality of death; it gives us reason to mourn, because it is the end of the potential that individual had. In comparison to a good friend moving to the other side of the world never to be heard from again, the friend still exists and so does his potential. Even though potential can be predicted, it will always be an unknown. Henceforth everyone has the potential to be able to perceive the prison. It is hear then that one can find happiness, not in the struggle, but in the knowledge that there is no final truth, even in the inevitability of death.

A question still stands, why continue to make work that is futile, that will never achieve its intended purpose? By not accepting that the task is futile; one is pushing at the boundaries of truth. However this perspective does not provide happiness, and its elusiveness still persists.

Philosophy and Art in a Fashion Classroom | 2016-04-24

I show a projection of a digitally drawn line, and ask the students what they see. Then I draw a line on the whiteboard, and ask if it is the same line?

I tell them the difference is the intent; one is just a line without thought or purpose the other is something more, it was drawn with passion and purpose.

Is it just the artist who drew the two lines who is able to know that? No the viewer can know from the context it is presented. For example if the projected line was presented in a gallery, the question that might present it self to the viewer could be: why is this line considered important? If the viewer actively thinks upon this question and tries to find an answer he is actively thinking.

Then from my point of view the work is successful. Think of this in comparison to placing a technically well-executed photograph in a gallery, what would your first thoughts be? Responses like it is technically well executed, it is beautiful or it is sublime are frustrating to me, because you are passively responding to the image, the viewer is not asking questions, trying to understand what is going on. The work in that case was a failure to me.

Take note of the words active and passive, I will be coming back to them later.

I am an artist, because I believe we are living in Plato's Cave (Plato 423 BC - 347 BC)

Imagine a group of people imprisoned within a cave from birth. They are chained and confined in such a way that they cannot move their heads. They have befallen this fate because an unknown force wants to control their perception of reality. Which they do by presenting reality only as shadows, they do this by creating a fire behind the prisoners and placing objects and sculptures in front of it much like a shadow theater. One day a prisoner gets free from his chains and turns to see what is behind him, he glimpses the objects that cast the shadow, but they appear alien and unknown to him, then he is blinded by the fire and experiences pain, finally he turns back to what he knows, believing that the shadows are a clearer representation of reality. Some days later the same prisoner is forced out of the cave and into the light. He kicked and he screamed. Outside the cave and in the light of the sun he found himself in scrutinizing pain. His eyes slowly adjusted, at first he was able to only see reflections in the water, and then the objects themselves, trees, flowers, animals and other humans, at that moment he realized that up until now he had only been seeing the shadow of reality and not reality itself. He then looks up towards the sun and realizes that it is the sun who enables him to perceive reality, without it his eyes would be of no use. Furthermore it dawns on him that the cave and the chains is not the prison, but the fire in the cave that is nothing more than a simulacrum of the sun. The prisoner feeling a sense of duty towards his fellow prisoners, would wish to return to the cave, so that they to can be free. However when he enters the cave he is now stumbling around like a fool, as his eyes are no longer accustomed to the light of the cave. Worse still the prisoner is now unable to communicate with the prisoners, when he tries to describe to them what he has seen he appears like a bumbling idiot. The remaining prisoners can but conclude that leaving the cave is the worst thing they could do.

I perceive myself as the escaped prisoner, seeing it as my responsibility to humanity to reveal this truth. But I am facing the same problem, I'm not able to tell anyone about what is outside the cave as the prisoners will not believe or understand me unless they come to the conclusion for themselves.

Descartes (1596-1650) has a similar allegory to Plato; about an Evil Demon who is misleading our senses, creating a world that is an illusion. The updated version of this is the thought experiment of the Brain in a Vat. Imagine the brain connected to a computer that is projecting a simulacrum of reality. This

story is littered across popular culture, with countless varying spins on it. Some are very literal like the Matrix, Dark City, The Thirteenth Floor, eXistenZ and the Truman Show, all from 1998-99, make of that what you will. One could also say that many dystopian stories follow a similar idea, a sinister government is creating an illusion for it's subjects and one prisoner wakes up to this truth and brakes free or attempts to break free, chief among them being the book 1984 by George Orwell, followed by films such as Brazil, Equilibrium, The Hunger Games, Divergent, THX 1138, Rollerball, WALL-E and many more. We can stretch it further and say that there are two forms of stories that can, with a stretch of one's imagination, be connected to Plato's Cave theory and Descartes Evil Demon. The stories about the hero who wishes to prevent us from being placed in the prison, example Star Wars 1 to 3 Anakin is fighting against the Dark Side that is threatening to imprison us within the cave, but at the end Anakin joins the jailor Palpatine and plunges the galaxy into darkness, and then there is the story about the hero who wishes to free us from the prison, example Star Wars 4 to 6 Luke Skywalker a prisoner within this universe, breaks free and brings back the light.

One might wonder why so few chose to leave the prison when there are so many stories subtly encouraging one to do so. The answer is simple, seeing these stories can be equated to when the prisoner in Plato's cave was able to see the real objects and the fire in the cave, but chose to turn ones gaze back to the illusion.

I would like to present my perception and or version of Plato's cave, which starts with how I determine the difference between passive and active happiness. Passive happiness is of the body and connected to the ego, we are made to feel happy by exterior forces, through compliments, acquisition, entertainment, nostalgia, rewards and pleasure points on our body. Our culture is built up around the pursuit of passive happiness, I will argue that this pursuit is the same as being confined in Plato's cave. One is not experiencing the true nature of happiness. Furthermore one is receiving imputes like a brain in a vat; the brain is being stimulated by an exterior force, maybe by Descartes Evil Demon? The brain itself is not perceiving happiness for itself, which it could do through active happiness, a form of happiness that is connected to your mind and how you chose to perceive. You need nothing to achieve active happiness; the ability to do so is within everyone. But we are trapped within the cave, when we hear about active happiness, it does not make sense, when we see someone try to talk about it we perceive him as a fool and conclude that it is better to stay where we are.

I believe that the purpose of living is to explore, but when one is pursuing passive happiness one is not exploring, instead one is presented with the illusion of it. By pursuing active happiness one is exploring, because you are actively thinking, you are not being passive and stimulated. It must be stated that by approaching passive happiness with an active mind one is able to achieve active happiness from what can be considered passive experiences. The difference lies within how we chose to see, do we perceive by staying in the cave or do we perceive by leaving the cave and allowing the sun to illuminate the reality, instead of the simulacrum of the fire.

Let's return to Star Wars or the traditional story of good versus evil, but in this framework good and evil is not what we traditionally think. Good is active happiness, every individual seeking and exploring for themselves, coming to their own conclusions and evil is passive happiness, every individual provided for, stimulated and told what to think. Normally in such a black and white world the two can never cross over, but within this line of thought good can never be evil, but evil can be good. It is all a matter of perception, as an individual you have the option to passively or actively perceive, what you perceive is in itself neutral even though it might create a range of sensations from pleasure to pain. Imagine being in the prison, which I have attributed to passive perception and evil, however you have the option to actively perceive and if you are able to do that you are experiencing something good, even though you are physically imprisoned your mind is free and in a good place. The opposite is not possible, living outside the cave and actively perceiving cannot be evil or passive. I can see that some might argue against this, and say that even though you are free you can be passive, but then you are missing the point, because if you are passive you are not free.

I believe our society, culture, fashion and art are perpetuating the idea of passive happiness to varying degrees. Resulting in the regression and potential destruction of humanity. We can only evolve by leaving the cave.

I believe the artists has the ability to inspire us to leave the cave by making work that demands we perceive it actively and not passively. That is the kind of artist I have chosen to be. I'm not saying that it is only the artist who can do this; in fact most forms of human communication have the ability to inspire us to explore. Fashion being one of the few exceptions I can think of, because of the nature of what it is. Fashion is the produce of striving for passive happiness; fashion is about creating a fantasy, or the illusion that when we buy the product we will be happy. Because we never reach the happiness that is promised, we must continuously chase after the next thing. However any human product that normally falls under fashion, such as clothes and

accessories, have the possibility to inspire us towards active happiness, but our society has only given it one viable arena to present it self, which is within the construct of fashion. When clothing has entered the arena of art, such as Iris van Herpens exhibition at Atlanta High Museum I believe we are shown that clothing can be more than fashion, that it can also be a text. Because it becomes a text it must then be interpreted, which is an active activity. However I have a problem with the tagline for the show "Transforming Fashion", because I believe it is becoming something other than fashion, fashion cannot be transformed without changing the meaning of the word. Another example of clothing becoming more than fashion is the work and persona that is Daniel Lismore, who is currently on show at SCAD FASH. The tagline for this show I find more appropriate "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken". But what does that mean? First of it goes against the core concept of what fashion is, to follow a trend. To be yourself you must be active, you must explore and by doing that you are leaving the cave.

Whilst talking about these ideas to a Fashion Marketing class, the distinction between style and trend was presented to me by a student. It was suggested that style does not follow fashion, but trend does as it is closely related to fashion. Having style is something one actively ascribes towards, whilst being trendy is about passively responding to what everyone likes. Maybe the word style can be an alternative to fashion, the idea of actively pursuing clothes and accessories in a coherent and explorative manner.

Concluding thoughts | 2016-07-15

I'm the escaped prisoner

I like to perceive myself as the escaped prisoner, who saw the outside world and returned. The truth of it is not so straightforward, most of the days within the cave I succumb to striving for passive happiness, wanting it so badly but failing with every breath I take. It must be said that knowing of active happiness is not the same as experiencing it, and I ask myself how can I talk about striving for something that I cannot grasp my self? One answer can be that success is not in achieving active happiness, but lies in striving for it and trying to inspire others to be who they are.

The idea of Plato's cave has been central to my work from the beginning, since my first steps towards becoming an artist. In 1999 Kristian Sinkerud and I made the film 'Reality' at Danvik FHS, it was about a family living in a dark room, worshiping a projection of the future, never wanting to leave for the fear that they might change and in so doing lose themselves. The curious thing is that I do not remember the first time I heard about Plato's cave, maybe it was

in the book *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder, though I disliked the book and did not bother to finish it, I think I found the narrative structure repetitive. I do however have a sense of the first time I found myself outside of the cave, sensing something 'more', I was three years old and in a red car, looking out of the window, seeing the Norwegian landscape passing by. There was a moment of knowing, that vanished as the red car violently crashed into a truck.

Connecting the dots

The Natural Fool has seen what is outside Plato's Cave, active happiness, but is not able to communicate what he has seen to the prisoners that are living with passive happiness. The Licensed Fool takes on the attributes of the Natural Fool to enable him to see the outside of the cave, and then to return and communicate what he has seen. The methodology that I use to take on the licensed fool is free association, to create performances, drawings and photographs. I directly try to inspire people with the licensed fools workshop, together we use the methodology, but individually try to find our own truth. In contrast to Plato I don't believe in a final truth, rather an evolution of truth more akin to Thomas S. Kuhn. I believe Kuhn would see the shift from fire to the sun illuminating reality as a paradigm shift, and that the sun is just another prison or paradigm. Though it might not be that easy, the key is active thought (happiness), by actively thinking you are constantly striving for knowledge, in that regard Kuhn and Plato might agree. Then there is Camus idea about Sisyphus, it is in the struggle we must imagine him happy, can we attach that to the struggle for escaping the cave? We want to stay in the cave, but need to leave it if we wish to evolve and fulfill our potential. I have not attributed the idea that you already have everything you need, to a philosophy, because that is not where it was presented to me, but within Vedanta, which in turn is connected to Hinduism. There are two reasons I have not mentioned this before one because I do not have a firm grasp of it's ideas and secondly for it's connection to God, whilst I do not deny the possibility of God, I do have a problem with the concept as it suggests a final truth. I see all these ideas as connected to exploration, which in turn I believe to be the purpose of living.

Purpose

My purpose as an artist is not to create beauty; that endeavor is much to connected to passive happiness, it is not to create social commentary, to be timely or to have a political agenda, for me that is to take a moral high ground, and it suggest that there is a right way, though it is true I might skate the border of doing this, it is the paradox of having a conviction. I create work to inspire people to leave Plato's cave, to explore, to enter the unknown to seek knowledge that is forever evolving. Idealistically I believe if everyone

would undertake this journey we would see human evolution exponentially develop. In this endeavor I struggle against my own fears and anxieties, constantly believing people will let me down, do not want to hear me, ignore me, value me according to their perception of success, or are not able and or willing to perceive my work. I often relate this point of view to my personality, I do not show enthusiasm, project energetic vibes, stimulate egos or bullshit. Instead I strive towards being honest and pragmatic. Because I repeatedly perceive my fears to be confirmed, that I feel I do not have a platform to present my work, I get caught up in apathy, which in turn leads to passive consumption, depression and an inability to reach out to the world. In essence I do not have a personality that forces my self on to you, ultimately I have a persona that will inevitably fail, because I continuously perceive myself to be invisible. These are my failings, these are my chains, and if I'm not able to leave them behind they will pull me under, until that day I shall endeavor to endure, because I have conviction.

The how

As far as I can see there are only two things that can be gained from copying, replicating, tracing or following a receipt and that is a guaranteed outcome and acquiring a craft. Which is important in and of itself, but ultimately it is a tool or a starting point for something greater, exploration. In our culture it is sadly mostly used for the endpoint itself and to guarantee commercial profit and passive being / happiness.

It is said that: The best compliment someone could give you is to copy you. I would disagree, it is a sad world when people would rather copy a success for profit than create something original. The creators and the consumers are then chusing to stay within the cave and opting for passive happiness. They are choosing not to live.

Inspired, now that is something else. That is the greatest compliment. To enable another individual to go out into the unknown and explore for themselves is the most powerful gift you can give to another human being.

I wish to Kindle, Unite, Nurture and Stimulate Thought. KUNST - the Norwegian word for art.

When making art, the idea is the starting point, never the goal. I do not wake up with an image in my head and attempt to physically manifest it. For me

that is no different than copying. In between the idea and the finished product there must be exploration.

I feel it goes without saying that all the ideas from the previous chapters are closely connected to my practice and how I make work, but I wish to end with a practical look at how I create.

When taking a photograph I look for the unseen, or the image that hides from you. The sublime, the spectacular or the obvious images on their own rarely interest me, they are shouting to be seen, drawing everyone's gaze to them. I would describe them as skin deep celebrities with overblown egos or pornstars showing of their assets. I feel you are blinded when you run after the image that everyone is looking at. The concern becomes about having the same experience as everyone else instead of the image itself or connecting with the moment. The sublime and the spectacle becomes interesting when the facade is striped away and one can find the meat that was hidden away. There one can find the soft and uncertain voices that I'm drawn to. When I see those images I stop and whisper with them and we are one. These images have more to say, dig into them and you will find a well of feelings, ideas and information.

I find it difficult being a photographer in a world where everyone has a camera in their pocket. Imagine what would happen the day that everyone is able to turn stone into gold. No one would be able to tell the difference between real gold and manufactured gold, and the commercial value of gold becomes that of a common stone. We live in a commercial world and they are the laws that govern us. But let's look at a different scale, a humanitarian one, then value is practically reversed. There is no difference between a stone and gold to begin with. The difference is no longer between the availability of the objects - but the individual and personal connections we make with the object. So then as a photographer it is my job to connect with the image that I'm taking, but I have no control over the viewer, nor should I, all I can do is hope that they take the time to connect with what I create, to be thoughtful and actively consider what they are seeing. In my experience there are only a handful of people with this ability, though I believe everyone is capable of it.

When looking for a backdrop for my performances I am drawn towards landscapes and spaces with a strong voice. There are two reasons for this, one is to give the viewer a access point into the work and secondly it creates an immense challenge for me as an artist. I'm battling to find a voice that sings in

harmony or stands as a stark contrast without being overpowered by the space. I have similar thoughts when installing work into spaces. A white gallery space has no voice, it is all about the work and the artist. There is no dialogue. These spaces have a value and a function, but I'm a lot more excited about spaces with their own voice, who I can attempt to have a dialogue with.

I recently read a book about vortexes, spaces that give you strong connections. I'm not disputing the possible existence of vortexes. But I have several problems with the idea and how it is presented. First of I believe with the right mindset one can connect with any space. Secondly it is presented like a commodity, travel here, spend money at our gift shops and resorts, because it cannot be experienced anywhere else. Thirdly the idea that a space can give you what one wants, if one is able to connect with it, I find abhorrent, as I believe what is connected to passive being /happiness - the desire for outside forces to give you experiences. In contrast I see connecting with a space or a person as a dialogue and equal exchange of emotions. Something that is best achieved without preconceptions and expectations, instead be present in the moment and actively experiences it.

When performing for a photograph I have a variety of approaches. Sometimes I will sit in a space for hours before entering it, other times I will walk into a space on a gut feeling. The same can be said for the composition sometimes it is considered other times it is instinctual. I have worked with, interval, timer and a camera operator. Ultimately I try not to be a slave to my own methodology. But one thing holds true I work with control and relinquishing control.

When performing I'm not interested in going through predetermined actions. I look for a starting point from where I can explore, the space, objects, my mind and or the audience.

Free association with as little self censorship as possible is how I approach performance art.

I believe we need spaces for exploration, spaces where there are no rules except that we still consider the space and the people we inhabit it with. Beyond that there is no right and wrong, you do whatever comes to mind. I try to create these moments with an event called licensed fools workshop. I believe it inspires, bonds, destresses, helps with depression, anxiety, creativity and

social skills. How? Because it is playful, liberating and non judgmental. There is no magic, superstition, hokus pokus, science or religion involved, you won't be enlightened or receive blessings and good fortune, instead anything you get will come from your self, determined mainly by what you put in.

With every action I take I aim to inspire exploration, active being / happiness and human evolution.

Live

If you appreciated this text and agree that I have something to say, then I am happy for I believe I have either inspired you to explore or you are already an explorer. I believe we must help each other if we have the opportunity - the future of humanity and our continued evolution depends on it.

- Together we must support each other in our strive for active happiness / being and exploration.
- Endeavour to inspire friends, family and strangers.
- Let others know about our work, ideas and/or inspirations.
- Inform each other about what can be improved in our work, endeavours and/or ideas
- Inquire about buying each other's artwork if we have the opportunity.
- Let each other know about opportunities that would fit our work.

I wish for every individual to explore, strive for active happiness / being and for everyone to find their own truth.

I'm not telling you how to live, I'm telling you to live.