

*Refusing to get used to the new normal.*

When asked to do the Global Art Talk I had a few presentations in mind that I had written before and thought would make sense for such a presentation. One sounded very optimistic – like me believing in art and trying to give art and our practice all the hopes and the imagined possibilities we all teach and preach – that art is important and relevant to society. I would have said sentences like: perhaps as artist I am naïve, but possibly this naivety gives me the strength to keep on doing what I do; keep me believing I / we can see and think the world differently, we can change the world around us with/through art. Some part of this talk was written first for a conference at MMCA in Sydney on art as a motor of change.

But then last year for ruangrupa's gudskul in Jakarta - I wrote a different take - where it was about the ethics and the hypocritical morals in contemporary art: art as a pure luxury commodity, art as a fig leaf, and whitewashing. Artist as a henchman. Art in the context of Aichi Triennale and its weak position in Japanese nationalistic society; art in context of the Sackler family's blood money support; Warren Kanders / Whitney teargas Biennale.

It could have been the same talk, but two different versions - the blue or the red pill. But then today sitting here I am not sure either makes sense?

Today is September 7th and the virus has captured all of us since almost half a year; and it does not look like things will return to the life and the world we knew. My life has been turned upside down in many ways and I can get myself to get used to the new normal.

Last week my performance piece (together with Michikazu Matsune) was scheduled for the Taipei Arts Festival. Since the global travel restrictions, Matsune could not come to Taipei; we decided to screen the work and in addition we created a new story which I performed live alone on stage. The piece is made of letters we wrote each other reflecting on art and our situation in times of Covid-19. Perhaps it would make sense to read one or two letters from this.

As guest tutor to the Global Seminar my course would have been an intense 2 weeks in Kyoto but to the our new normal including the partly closure of the university campus I decided to stretch it to several month. A series of online talks with the seven students of my class. Since June we have been in regular two weeks contact.

In times of distance I feel I have become close and part of this group.