

TONSPUR\_collaboration: Yvette Janine Jackson / Bojana S. Knežević /

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*A Chance Encounter* (For 4 Artists, 8 Speakers, 7 Images and 16 Questions), 2019

8-channel sound work, 7-part image course , duration endless

For A Chance Encounter

*Events which pass by in the sky like unidentified flying objects.*

-Jean Baudrillard

The mind is not always a clear mirror as we may wish it to be. Memory acts upon its surface to create tension and topography which refracts concepts back to us as morphed forms.

Straightforwardly, people congregate so that reflection is usable. In gathering, there is exchange and there is also distance, so that the individuals re-commit (somewhat altered) to their differentiated sense of identity; the other appears as a clear player in the "group". So what would it mean if we had no control over what is exchanged? What would it mean if an artist collected parts of our "offerings" and worked strung them together? What would this mean for ego and authorship? The visceral. The poignant. The subtle. The chance encounter. Sonic postcards, like still images in a fluid montage are reminiscent of the time-traveling montage in Chris Marker's *La Jetée*. Janet Harbord writes: "...the image presents a paradox, that seemingly, when the protagonist returns to the same place, and we return to the same image, something will have changed. But nothing about the image has changed. Except, that is, its order in a sequence, its familiarity and its relation to the viewer. Actually, everything has changed".<sup>1</sup>

Images in this work entitled "A Chance Encounter", are rendered as questions, or statements, certain voices, automated, or very human: "Trust is more important than love, I value trust more than love", "What is the sound of a voice you trust", "Trust is not evenly distributed", "I promise, I promise.", "Justice is needed to create trust", "Your voice is a body", "Do I trust?", "They will learn to trust by falling backwards into another person...how many people have fallen in this exercise.", "They will trust that their words have been caught by the others and not let to fall", "I love you I love you I love you". Each statement is a capture, an acoustic still, a sonic postcard, a

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<sup>1</sup> Harbord, Janet, and Chris Marker. *Chris Marker, La Jetée*. London: Afterall Books, 2009. Print. 40.

freeze-frame. Experiencing this artwork which lasts 40 minutes is akin to taking a metaphysical scan, we don't get out of having to ask ourselves these questions, or pose ourselves as protagonists. It gets personal. There is repetition but the kind that Marker evokes in his montage, such that one finishes with this artwork changed, but unsettled, searching further.

We are living in a fertile moment, when the magnitude of information we can process overburdens our capacity to be sensitive with each part of the thing we are perceiving. In this work there is presented a dialectic between trust and blame, with being held and being dropped, between the authoritarian and the vulnerable. These are not mere dialectics but signposts to larger discursive fields which we are re-mapping in an occidental socio-political now.

The artwork was born of an impregnation of time with chaos and faith, chance in the sense invoking risk, and through risk the space opening for trust. I don't see trust as outside of the mechanics of danger or desire, and the artist, Bojana Knežević, with her collaborators, reveals the layers of this potential. In *La Jetée* there is a scene when the protagonist finds the love he has been searching time for; he finds her in a natural history museum. We see this man looking at a woman who doesn't know she is being observed, he catches her and we do too, in the act of lifting fine hair off of the nape of her neck. The erotic of privacy is made clear here. So too, in the work "A Chance Encounter", we have the sense that we are hearing people who don't always know their words are being "caught", their voices become seductive to us, we are drawn in to being at once witnesses, voyeurs, and caretakers; we begin to practice intimacy without even knowing it. Tenderly and masterfully, use of an acoustic foreground and background as well as echo is important in this artwork as it enables liveliness and believability—nothing is static. Above all not trust. As Baudrillard aptly elucidated: "Keep your seduction alive...keep yourself as an other...".<sup>2</sup>

-Josseline Black  
anthropologist & artist  
Vienna , April 2019

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<sup>2</sup> Baudrillard, Jean, and Chris Turner. *Cool Memories III, 1991-1995*. London: Verso, 1997. Print. 152.