

Interview with Maryse Andraos, Iceland

I) What comes to mind when you hear the expression “crossing the threshold”?

I think of going to the unknown. Going somewhere it is fearful and that you are not going there unless you can offer your self to it. And I also think of going toward the other.

II) What do you think about the phenomenon of fear? Do you believe it is something about being not connected to others or the world?

Yes I do. We do n´t have any knowledge about nature and the machines are really disconnecting us from nature. The feeling of being disconnected is about not seeing the link between things. Native people see how everything is connected. We do not see the farmer who feeds the animal we eat anymore. We do not have a link to this process. I think anxiety in modern societies has to do with not knowing how you can sustain yourself, how you would survive in this world.

III) Is there any experience in your life, which opens you to your art practice?

Writing for me is survival, because I do not feel adopted to this world. I feel that it is not bringing what its promises. It is not bringing this sense of being complete. I felt this in childhood very horrible. I had a childhood with a lot of violence and I had to escape from this. The only way to escape was going in the imaginary land. I began by reading and I felt I also have to create my own words. This was my survival, it was all about reading and writing. And this is still true today. It is not that I am creating a utopic world when I am writing, not at all. It is just about not being powerless in this world.

III) Is there a special precondition or preparation for arriving at your artistic process?

I need to not have any routine when I am working. I really need to have unknown experiences that arriving to break anything may become stable. I just go with intuition and never ever force it. And I need to liberate my body, so I will go for a walk. I have to accumulate living experiences in order to write. If I stay too long in the same place there is a moment where I cannot write anymore. That's why I am traveling. I need to change my context.

IV) Do you know the feeling of something like a rift within yourself, or us and the world, and does your art have a special way to deal with this ...

Yes. So much so much. I wrote about this yesterday. Do you know the weeping women during the funerals in Egypt? It is an ancient tradition, which is still going on. It is interesting for me, because they are basically payed to express the suffering of other people and also to allow them to let out what they have to experience, or live or feel. What is interesting about them is that they do not know the person who died. They are payed to feel an emotion. It is catharsis. I think that all artists are healing by putting emotion out or back. Creating intensity they are healing a wound

that is a society wound. That is theirs but it is also the others. That is for me how they create community as an important political act. If we think about people doing protest it is really useful, but in the same time we need emotion, we need all this different perspectives. And art is one of these perspectives which is really essential for this healing.

VIII) Can art help to create methods for a healthy and positive life?

It is a survival strategy, not a strategy as making fire in the wood. It is how art creates community. Literature can help people to reach other people in a way that is really sensitive.

IX) How can we strengthen the human quality of being connected through art?

Art is supposed to be empathy. It is supposed to be something, which is communal. We need philosophical and spiritual nourishment. How can the artists fulfill that - by sharing, sharing what they know.