as inevitable story as coincidence
by noritoshi hirakawa
Kati, August 31st, 2001
Cornelia, September 3rd, 2001
Michaela, September 3rd, 2001
Kerstin, September 6th, 2001
At the end of August in 2001, I visited Bregenz, Austria for creating a new series of artwork that was to be shown in an exhibition the following month by Magazin 4 Vorarlberger Kunstverein. By the end of that summer I had been directing & producing a contemporary dance piece for “Danse Montpellier,” for almost an entire year. I decided to remove myself from the chain of stress because of endless work with the production and administration.

The summer was not so hot in Bregenz I recall. I took a flight to Zurich from New York and then got on a train to St. Gallen. A curator of Magazin 4 picked me up from a border town of Switzerland to enter Austria as the train connection between St. Gallen and Bregenz was not so good. Bregenz is a small, rural town that is isolated from the rest of the world. It was easy for me to visit one of the towns of Bordensee as people seemed to like very much living peacefully and sharing a big lake with Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

Since I became an artist in 1988, often people in the art world recognize me as an artist using photography with the subject of sexuality, even though I have been working with variety of media and concepts. I gradually began understanding the function of art in a market that regards only a surface aesthetic value and that is not so much interested in my creativity. The admiration of artwork by the public seemed so detached from the importance and the meaning of the artwork itself. The only satisfaction from creation for me at the time came from the process of art making, mainly the personal interaction with people who were often not associated with the art world.

During the late 90’s I met a priest working just outside of Paris while I was making my art project called “Verite des Vanites.” I was collecting the confessions of priests for this work. The priest was experienced and perhaps in his late 40s. He told me that he was isolated from the world since he was restricted to have no physical sexual relations. He explained it was almost a parody to teach people the value of life without experiencing life himself. The repression made him hope for a change to the law of the Vatican that would allow for priests to have
sex in his lifetime. The priest’s confirmation of living on this absolute right moment with the lack of sharing the ultimate emotion with others – that expression of priest was so real for me and at the same time, the desperation he was carrying on seemingly could overcome by breaking the law belonging to his religious community. 

I believe that it is human nature to desire integration with others and to try to physically experience it to prove its existence to some extent. Perhaps, the final destination of creation is also similar to that process. I was feeling deeply that the art world had lost this sensation when artwork became a commodity working to expand financial value in the bubble economy of the mid 90s. So, the dilemma of art creation became so real because the creation itself lost the experience that it was supposed to bring us: an emotion, a confirmation of living. Instead artwork became a market product meant to increase in commodity value like real estate and financial investments.

That summer, in Bregenz along the public park next to Bordensee, there were sculptures made by Daniel Buren installed as an exhibition. Almost no one noticed it except perhaps a few bureaucrats showing the sculptures as proof of the city’s commitment to support culture. I felt art, overall, was lacking the confirmation of living through the experience and opportunity it offered. I anticipated making art in Bregenz in the summer of 2001 as a way to recover from the process of creation. Therefore, sharing the ultimate emotion with others through human interaction seemed the most important subject of art creation at that time personally. It was also almost inevitable to experience it for continuing my creative activity. Without engaging with this process, perhaps I would not have found the substantial meaning for art creation during that summer.

Quite often, people who see my artwork that contains sexual images ask me how I manage to find people who are willing to participate in the project. I perceive that the majority of human’s interest is about finding ways to intimately interact with others: in a way, longing to obtain personal attachment with others. Subconsciously, humans have a nature to be integrated with others and obviously sexuality is an efficient way for individuals to bond with one another.

The next day I began my exhibition at Magazin 4 in Bregenz. I took a train to Zurich to fly back to New York. When I was waiting to board the plane at the Zurich Airport, I received a phone call from Adelina von Furstenberg of Art for the World. She wanted to set up an appointment at 9 a.m. on September 11th at my apartment in the Wall Street area. I arrived in New York in the evening of September 10th, 2001. It was the day before the 9/11 incident that purposely changed the worldview for many of us. In the long run, this event also made us aware of the substantial structure and function of institutions in the world, under the table beyond the power of individual freedom. The media fictionalized the event by manipulating the information. In believing this information we are living in an illusion. Only a particular neighborhood of Wall Street area residents got the physical impacts of the event: for example the lung associated health problem. But the majority of humans in the world just consumed the information as true, convinced that believing makes reality. We cannot obtain from such a mass media incident a positive affirmation of life as it kills the desire of integrating with others. This goes against the existence of art, as it is extremely negative and destructive to the nature of human existence.

The art project “As inevitable story as coincidence” that I made in Bregenz at the end of the summer in 2001 was created under the trust between humans: by following the nature of our existence. However, up to today almost a decade after this project, the project still remains undisclosed to the public. None of the images have been exhibited or displayed, not a single image has been published. I think because of the drastic change to our belief system that was completely manipulated by the corrupted instructors that exist beyond any recognized community, city or government.

We are now faced with losing our recognition of other humans as a positive existence as well as the empathy between humans without fear. The art project “As inevitable story as coincidence” may remind us of how humans used to play the trust between strangers and uses art as a way to prove the desire of integration between humans. A man who visited a small town in Austria from New York as a stranger created this just 10 years ago on this earth. Like the artworks of the Italian Renaissance in the 16th century, we can confirm through this art project that we used to have a better perspective of human existence compared to 2011.

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