

Meeting With Mary Ting

I had a lovely conversation with Mary Ting, my studio advisor last weekend. She had some interesting suggestions of artists to look at, and other intriguing leads. One person whom she mentioned is the conceptual artist Bas Jan Ader, who died during a Transatlantic voyage in a 13' sailboat. Without going into too much detail about this extraordinary approach to art making, he also investigated the act of physically falling and made several pieces about it. I am looking forward to watching a film which Mary suggested, *Here Is Always Somewhere Else*. The film is about Ader's life and his final fatal voyage, which he called *In Search of the Miraculous*.

We also discussed madness. We explored how in some cultures madness is not viewed as a sickness, but as a connection to another reality, access to higher more subtle energy states. In many cultures it is the mad who through training and initiation become shamans and guides. Their madness is not seen as irrational, but as something with extraordinary potential. Mary mentioned that perhaps one reason the mad are confined and isolated in our modern cultures is that they are a potential threat to our consensus reality, a zeitgeist which is necessary for social structures of power and control to wield influence over citizens.

We also discussed street art and non traditional ways of disseminating art objects and performances. I am interested in the element of surprise in street art. I can compare it to Philippe Petit's walk between the twin towers. One day it is there, without warning unlike most art shows or theater performances. Mary and I discussed that one of the most powerful elements of Petit's performance was it came completely unexpectedly. She thought that if it had been planned and sanctioned, for instance like Nik Wallenda's walk across Niagara Falls, there would be a possibility of a cynical (especially with New Yorkers') response to the performance. There is a power to the individual's initiative when he acts outside of a structure of power and consecration that short circuits elements of cynicism.

Anyways, I have much food for thought and am grateful to have such a great studio advisor, thanks Mary!!