

Project Proposal for

Can I be with You?

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Description

Can I be with You? is a project where I invites individuals to share and experience an intimate relationship of their dream with me through intercommunication and role playing. By performing, I will be their intimate partner for a period of time.

The title is a way of asking permission to enter participant's private life.

Background

Intimate¹ “means

1. associated in close personal relations: *an intimate friend*.
2. characterized by or involving warm friendship or a personally close or familiar association or feeling: *an intimate greeting*.
3. very private; closely personal: *one's intimate affairs*.
4. characterized by or suggesting privacy or intimacy; warmly cozy: *an intimate little café...*”

An intimate relationship is “a particularly close interpersonal relationship. It can be defined by these characteristics: enduring behavioral interdependence, repeated interactions, emotional attachment, and need fulfillment.”² Examples of intimate relationship are boyfriend, girlfriend, friend, sibling, lover, spouse, life partner, soulmate, and family member.

‘Can I be with You?’ derives from my previous work ‘My Film’ where I invited individuals to direct a short movie for purely their own satisfaction, using me as an actor, editor, producer, and general film crews. It originated from my need to express my personal thoughts and feelings, but when I arrived at film school with much censorship (for example I couldn't use coarse words or show someone's smoking in our movies, they said it will degrade the institution), many hidden fantasy inside of me are repressed by the institution, as well as society and personal conflict. I believe others are facing a similar problem. ‘My Film’ encouraged participants to fully be themselves, expressing freely without having to concern of the narrow eyes of the society or other viewers apart from the participants themselves (as participants can remain anonymous). Moreover I have always been interested in other people's dream and fantasy, I believe that they say so much about our needs and wants. This project let me understand their intimate stories and be part of their lives. As for me as a person it says much about my psychological needs to be dominant and push my limit and comfort zone.

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intimate> “Intimate | Define intimate at Dictionary.com

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intimate_relationship “Intimate relationship Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia”



Images of myself in participants' movie, playing different roles.

Both of these projects deal with personal desire and fantasy, a fantasy “is a situation imagined by an individual or group that has no basis in reality but expresses certain desires or aims on the part of its creator. Fantasies typically involve situations which are impossible (such as the existence of magic powers) or highly unlikely”³. This work will reflect on participants' desire, their human needs, and social issues. ‘Can I be with You?’ investigates personal idea of a norm or ideal intimate relationship. Role playing is “the acting out of a particular role, either consciously (as a technique in psychotherapy or training) or unconsciously (in accordance with the perceived expectations of society)”⁴, we do role playing all the time in your daily life and this role reflects on how we want to be perceived and our aims. To roleplay one enacts various motives, attitudes, and postures. Role playing can be used to “facilitate personal growth and promote health”, this is called Drama therapy⁵. In this project, role playing is used as part of a tool to reflect on ourselves.

In ‘My Film’, it opened discussion about amateur filmmaking and the effect of mass media, while ‘Can I be with You?’ is more intimate, physical engaged and personal. Instead of me interacting with other actors and the directing participant, I will be interacting more closely with the participant who is not only a director and an actor of the project. The participants and I will experience the intimate relationship first handedly; it will feel more real than in video. It becomes more personal since it is their own self in the performance rather than making a character for a movie.

Both projects also allow participants to be part of the artistic practice, hence creating a more equal role in the project, with guide framework by me. The artworks produced from the project may not be a high traditional artistic standard; an amateur movie and photography but similar to the public art project “Culture in Action” in Chicago, they were “defined not in terms of material objects but by the ephemeral processes of interaction between the local participants and the artists”⁶

Purposes and Questions Addressed

This project is a collaborative work, it encourages individual public to be interested in art and participate in artistic practice. It aims to shorten the distance between the viewers and the artist, or even switches roles. It also raises the question of authorship of the work; the writing, video, photography, and exhibition.

Is it possible to make art in a Buddhist way? Making a visually beautiful object is a form of attachment which leads to suffering and rebirth. I seek here to make art that doesn't encourage any kind of emotional, physical, or material attachment but rather encourage self awareness and understanding.

For the participating individuals, this project creates self awareness and reflection, since this is a path to fully understand themselves, according to Buddhism, to know oneself leads to a happier life. And in law of attraction when you focus on what you want and need, and letting go of all the doubt, the universe will grant you exactly that.

This work also shows people's deepest need as a human being, our intimate needs in the metro world. It will create more understanding of a human being for the viewer, and because this is a real person, viewers can connect with the work

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy_%28psychology%29

⁴ http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/roleplaying?view=uk

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drama_Therapy

⁶ Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another*. Page 104 MIT Press, 2003.

more. More understand of others leads to a less discriminating world. This project shows personal fantasy that many times are private; they are not usually expressed to public nor stranger, this project may raise the question of what should be kept private, if there's such things, or if it's just a taboo fantasy, should it be out in the public? This project is a performance of someone's fantasy, but maybe for both the participant and I, there would be moments where fantasy becomes real, and that moment will eventually end. And some fantasy may clashes with personal belief or level of comfort. This will show limitation of the participants and me.

Finally, this project serves as a final thesis project for Master Course: Art in Public Realm at Konstfack University and College of Arts, Crafts and Design.

Methodology

Preliminary contact

Advertisements will be posted both online, in the media and other public spaces to broaden the range of participants. Project description, contact information and statement of purposes and benefit are included in the advertisements. Participants are encouraged to visit my personal website, klyth.com to read more details of the project and its process, my previous works, curriculum vitae and contact information. This is to show the participant that I'm a genuine professional person and from an educational institution.

List online websites

- Online networking and dating websites such as facebook.com, myspace.com, hi5.com, gayromeo.com , fridae.com, gaydar.co.uk, qx.se, thailandout.com
- Online forum website such as familjeliv.se, flashback.se

Other media: local newspapers and newsletters.

Places: library, school, and university.

The participants answer the advertisement by email or telephone, they will have to answer:

1. What kind of relationships do you want to experience?
2. Why do you choose this relationship?
3. How do you imagine this person, and your relationship with this person?

Participant selection process

I will select participants who are passionate and eager to have any kind of intimate relationships, and willing to share their thought and perform together. First comes, first serves. Though due to a small budget, the performance will take place mainly in Stockholm with possibilities in other European cities and in Thailand. Also if the activities we will experience together cost money, only certain amount can be spend, this is to be discussed with each participant. And due to my language limitation, the participants must speak English or Thai.

The process of sharing

In this process each participant and I will meet and become more comfortable with each other, we will also discuss the process of the project together. The participant will be asked to describe in details:

- The person that I'm going to portray: his/her character, personality, background, feeling toward the participant, etc
- The situation/ the scene that we will act together; it could be a vague description or a scripted scene.

Other issues to discuss with the participants:

- Does the participant want to be anonymous? If not what are the things that they can share with the public?
- How much physical contact is needed? Due to the law, if participant is underage, physical contact will be limited.
- How much money is needed?
- How long is the scene or the duration of the performance? If there's any specificity.
- The date and the place in which the performance takes place
- Modification of the scene or situation, if needed.

- Will there be any objects or materials made during the performance? (Including photographs, video, writing, sound recording, those objects shall be resulted from participant's idea of intimate relationship, such as if we were lovers, the participant's fantasy may include having a picture of us in our mobile phones)

To make participant feel comfortable, I should feel comfortable, be open, friendly and be a good listener. After discussion, I will prepare myself for the performance.

The process of experiencing through performing

During the performance, I will focus on the scripted and description provided by the participant.

Objects and artworks may be created during the performance, for example, photographs and video of the intimate relationship. For as in many relationships, objects usually created as part of the memory such as family photo album, portraits, cell phone portraits, desktop photos, diary and home videos.

Video documentation of the performance may be recorded with participant's consent.

The process of reflecting

After the performance, we will discuss and reflect on our experience. The discussion may be recorded with participant's consent. I personally will keep a journal of experience from my point of view through video, photograph and writings to be exhibit to the public.

- Self portrait in character (video/photograph).
- Video log of experience/ reflective writing.

Exhibition

With an approval of the participant, artworks can be exhibited, with the option of participant being anonymous.

- Sound recordings, photographs, writing, and video during each process may be presented according to agreement with the participant. This media will be presented as documentation or artworks and for further discussion.
- Live reenact performance or guided tour may be available for the public to view and experience. Script may also be created for viewers to perform themselves.
- Sound, self portrait photographs, artistic book or video created after the performance will also be exhibit.

Literature for future reading

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