

## **I Became Me, I Didn't Like That.**

*"These canvases don't critique, complain and they don't lean left nor right. They have unintentionally healed me."*

*"Today's radical artists are tainted with their own hypocrisy, they are the sole workers of the nepotism exploited in the arts. They are the bourgeois snobs with cowardly needs for sectarian control. The radical has become today's SALON."*

The two quotes above are mine, plucked away from this writing. I have pasted them back in, and on the top, to manifest my self-importance and how damaging that is to me.

For Copenhagen.

Ullet Road in Liverpool and the negativity that I derive from it, is a personal problem. Ullet Road has pushed my narcissistic behaviour, and it's resulting material, to an all time high. Losing control over it, and the material in Copenhagen, was never part of any plan. I respect my paintings, but I don't respect what they may ultimately represent.

Whether my paintings will have any historical relevance in the future is, to me, completely irrelevant. I question much of the art being produced - most art produced today is *sur plus to requirement*. I read a book on the 10 Irish hunger strikers that died in 1981. I can make a sculpture inspired by that book. Why should I do that? If I did do that, the title would be *"There are No Problems Other Than Your Own Problem"*. Why mention this? Simply because I want to distance myself from producing such surplus art.

I will insist that this work, the canvases, is not surplus work created for sale or for the white cube and its many hypocritical shows. My two-faced attitude of sending the work to Copenhagen is questionable. Am I desperate for another mail-out to the many people that I don't know?

I have, over the phone with Copenhagen, uttered a few vague wishes regarding the hanging, you know, how, what and where. It's all out of my control. Other than that, I want the work back, as I always do. Where I then store the work is what I drastically need to change within my practice. Art being stored for the future is questionable indeed! - I will come back to that at some later stage, this is not the time, but it has to do with surplus and self important behaviour, and it needs to stop.

When a young inexperienced animal chases a bird and it actually catches the prey, the game is over. The bird is dead and will be eaten. But, the game is truly over for the hunter, who now masters the hunt. And that is what we all crave, becoming and being seen as the master.

(Second week into residency of self / d.o.m.e. Berlin)

I feel numb, but I might get out of bed today. I have trapped myself in a luxury cage, a prize winner's crib. 3rd floor. 130sqm, Schöneberg, Berlin. Renting. Price? Non of your business.

19:07, 17 oct. 2015, I had just got off the U Bahn and was standing on the corner Potsdamerstraße / Kurfürstenstraße. I was on the phone with a friend, and out of the corner of my eye I saw a man with a walking stool, with wheels, pushing it and himself into the road, the traffic was intense, I thought, 'bloody oafish drunk'. I hung up as the man looked over and started talking to me in German. I thought, why me, why do they always have to talk to me? I answered, I don't speak German, yet. He quickly switched to English, and good English at that. This was a schooled drunk, is what I thought. He asked, can you help me cross the road. I uttered a superficial, yes I can. I was on my way to an art opening, and the friend I had spoken to on the phone had mentioned a second opening, so I was on my way to two separate art openings. i.e. very busy.

He, the drunk, was a tall man in his late 50s, curly dark hair. He was wearing jeans, a knitted pullover and a dark stained duvet jacket. His face was slightly misshapen and he was in need of a shave. He looked at me with quiet, small, dark eyes, desperate eyes, and said, thank you. The penny dropped, I asked, do you have MS? Yes, YES, I've got MS, he answered.

The light turned green, I took his arm and started to walk. To my amazement he was not able to walk, only drag his feet along the ground. His walking chair, on wheels, was in a poor condition. We reached the middle of road and the light turned red. We had to walk back to where we had started. As I tried to turn around, he pushed the walking chair in the other direction by accident. His feet were cemented to the ground. The next thing I knew he was starting to fallover in the middle of Potsdamerstraße. I was losing him, his arm was slipping out of my grip, the cars were coming from all directions.. He was heavy and becoming heavier. Holding onto both him and his chair at the same time was a hopeless endeavour. As a matter of fact we were now both falling over. I looked around, panicking; I was in need of urgent help. A man of Indian descent, a man that sells roses on the street to people in love, saw what was going on. He rushed out into the busy road and assisted us.

Finally we found our way back to the corner where it all started. The cars were rushing by. With help from the rose salesman, I got the MS-passenger onto his homemade seat; this was not a wheelchair, but a wobbly walking chair. The light turned green, I started rolling him over Potsdamerstraße. He explained how it should be done. One wheel onto the pavement at a time and come in from an angle. As we approached the other side of the street. He lifted one hand and placed it behind his head, like he was protecting his skull. I had to be gentle to avoid tipping him over and crushing his skull on Potsdamerstraße, that simply could not happen.

We made it safely onto the pavement of Potsdamerstraße. I asked him in what direction he was heading, hoping he just wanted to buy an apple at the turkish market on the corner. I want to go two streets up, he answered. Two streets up Kurfürstenstraße. meant that I had to wheel him and his cobbled walking chair by one of the art openings, at a trendy Berlin gallery. Or, more precisely, I had to wheel him through the actual crowd on the pavement outside. Crap, was the first word that came to mind. I looked down, at the asphalt, looked at my feet, well placed on mother earth. This is it Mr Boulet, wheel him with pride through the beer drinking art crowd. Who cares, just help him.

So I started to pushed him along Kurfürstenstraße. The seat was mounted inside the walking chair, so he was facing me like a toddler as I was pushing him. His feet were resting on a homemade bar and they occasionally fell to the ground and was dragged along Kurfürstenstraße. I walked with both arms outstretched to avoid tripping over his feet, legs or knees. I felt extremely uncomfortable with the situation, especially about the way I looked, leaning over this sick man. Why me?

We approached Gallery Tanya Leighton. There they stood, the artists, on the pavement, free beer I passed them with my art piece, *Untitled* (MAN WITH MS / FOUND CHAIR, WHEELS) 2015. Not one single person looked or paid attention to me, him, my jacket, his shoes, my glasses, the chair, the walk, his hair, my belt, his jumper or my Lee jeans.

My passenger and I arrived at the second street corner, Kurfürstenstraße. and Blumenthastraße. Here we are, he said. He grabbed his right leg, just above the knee, and lifted it onto the street, and then did the same with his left leg. I took his arm and helped him out of his wobbly chair, he stood up and thanked me for helping him. I nodded and said It was a pleasure.

I quickly turned around and walked back the way I had come. I entered the gallery, the newer space, which is on the other side of the original gallery. An art film was being screened. I had a quick peak round, saw a familiar face, exchanged some superficial words, and crossed the road into Tanya Leighton's original space. This all took less then five minutes.

I walked back up Kurfürstenstraße, turned right into Blumenthastraße, crossed the street, thinking about what I was going to eat tonight. I passed one of many building entrances on that street, and

there he was again, the man with MS. This time he was desperately hanging onto the door and his bloody chair. I stopped, and helped him back into his chair. I asked, can I do something for you, his answered, no, not really, I'm just not sure if I have come to the right address? His project was so impossible and idiotic in my eyes. I looked at the names next to the doorbells, and read them out loud. No, it's not here, maybe the next door down, he said.

I poked my head out and looked down the road, thinking, ok, that is not too far. I wheeled him to the next entrance door. He was facing towards the street, so again I read the names of the residents out loud. I started from the top left and read them row by row, until, finally, he said *JA*. Thank god we found the right place. Neuwirth / Albrecht. I rang the doorbell. Waited for the German voice, but no flipping answer? I rang it again, this time with a slight panic, please answer, if not what will I do?

Then the man with MS turned his head towards me and said, I think they might be waiting for me at my place. What, really? I said. Yes, you see, they wanted to come and see me, but I wanted to walk up and see them, I wanted to visit them. Bloody stubborn bugger, is what I thought. He said, I will wait here till they come. Ok, I said. He thanked me for all the help. I smiled, nodded and left.

I walked down to Eden Eden, Bortolozzi's second space or rather her project space. I visited Eden Eden when she had her first show there, the space was truly different then, I remember. I strongly disagree with the changes she has made, but there is still a little of the old space left intact. That corner, Blumenthalstraße and Bülowstraße reminds me of Oslo for some reason. And that it used to be a pharmacy, I like that.

At Eden Eden I recognised two men that came with the same U Bahn as I did, from Kotterbusser Tor. The show was noisy and smelly, I liked that part. I bumped into an acquaintance, a nice person, we exchanged hellos, small talk, I asked if she wanted to meet up for coffee, since I was in Berlin. The answer, or how I understood the answer, was that we could maybe have a coffee in December. In other words, we could have a coffee in two months. Someone else grabs the artist's attention, I nodded and went on with my business. Forget the coffee, doesn't really matter, and I understand. What I saw as a good art piece at that show, was in fact not part of the show. I even took a picture of those bunkbeds.

Half hour before I helped the my MS passenger on the corner Potsdamerstraße / Kurfürstenstraße. I was climbing the stairs at Kottbusser Tor to get the U Bahn to Kurfürstenstraße. I had two men on my right, and I crossed in front of them just as I got to the platform floor. I recognised an English accent, a London accent to be specific, the other fellow was German. I didn't turn my head, but I slowed down, to see if I could catch a few phrases. I picked up that the German was offering something from his rucksack and that the Londoner was bothered, but at the same time wanted what was offered. I understood that they didn't know each other that well, and that was why I got curious. I walked on and decided to spy some more from distance.

The U Bahn arrived, we got on. The doors slid shut and I walked two carriages down, towards where the same two were sitting. I decided to stand opposite them and listen in on their conversation. The Londoner looked up at me twice, he reminded me of Chiwetelú Ejiofor. They were dressed rather similarly, both had a cap and a rucksack. I don't like caps. They had that familiar cool urban uniform. It struck me, of course, they must be heading to the same opening as me, they looked the part. 8 stops to go, what could I do? I noticed that the Londoner used the word *like* too often when he spoke. I decided to count how many times he actually used the word *like*

The Londoner got a bottle of Coke Zero out, he drank some, or almost all, and then handed the bottle to the German, who wiped the top and then drank what was left. Not sure I would have done that. They talked about DJ-ing, and that some friend of the Londoner in London had been ripped off. He had DJ'ed for three hours and was paid £75. The German reacted by turning his head and uttering, really, was is das 75 pounss, whass number is das? They laughed, because what I think is that they thought they had a similar moral standard regarding what one would accept or not as payment. However, I would put money on the fact that both of these men would have played that same gig for less than £75.

The train approached Kurfürstenstraße station, The Londoner had used the word *like* 57 times. And I can't remember any more from their conversation, multi-tasking is a challenge.

Victor Boulet  
Berlin 2015