

SECOND PART

Many artists can hardly take seriously the idea that art's importance has to do with its anti-functionality, with its eluding attempts to instrumentalize it on the part of the culture industry or direct political action

When we ask, What is the use value of art? today, it immediately sounds like an admission of ontological guilt. Aesthetic enjoyment, still the use of art par excellence, is nowhere to be found, at least not in its messianic form. Art is generalized into production and now works on a much more modest scale; sometimes it makes people think, sometimes it makes them smile, sometimes it makes them ask the right questions, and that's all we should aim for, right?

The culture industry produces unprecedented amounts of fast-moving ideological commodities, in part by co-opting armies of critical-minded, quasi-politicized amateurs, and introducing them to an endless workday of the professional audience. Audiences flood biennials to gain new subjectivity-sensuality-responsibility (these are the key services we provide) that they then reproduce on a lower level. This is the new Proletkult, but one bio politically advantageous to the elite. It re-subsumes any political resistance and forges a new experimental ethic or spirit for white-collar workers.

One way to resist the idea of art's uselessness is to understand that WE are all productivists, factographers, muralists, biographers of things, and worker correspondents. We are living in an age of the total internalization of the production line, its domestication in the home-office, where we work day and night without stopping. And that does not just mean that we are working with instruments captured from communists in a bourgeois factory (that is always the case), but that we have at our disposal a toolbox that we can reclaim with a minimum of effort.

*Group: Chto Delat (What has to be done)
David Riff, When art once again becomes useful*

Thinking about the role of art in society led me to the global politics of water. To research and investigate this problem through artistic means, I developed the collaborative project Violentine's Day.

In the dark times, will there also be singing? Yes, there will be singing about the dark times!

Bertolt Brecht, *A Short Organum for the Theatret*

All theory needs action to achieve its aim. We have lot of social problems at all levels of life. We built hierarchical society, in which there are, gaping inequalities, the powerful nations dominating the weaker ones. We ourselves reproduce this system, where money and property more important then human life, where we are ruining nature, abusing and dominating it. All theory needs to be translated into reality and the value of art is in this translation. Artists are a medium to pose questions about ongoing changes, to question if we are on the right way. To do art is big responsibility; it has the possibility of raising awareness in society.

What will be the objective of the art in this century? Will is merely be worshipping the system, making it stronger, or will it struggle against all the disasters which that result from this existing system. Another question: for whom we are making art. For the intellectual part of society, for the ruling class, or do we have to think about an art that will be for every one, include workers and poor. It has to be simplified in order to reach the goal.

You are responsible for the period of history that you are living in. You have not only the right to choose, but the duty to choose and if you are now surrounded by poverty, by war, by oppression, by cruelty – that is what you have chosen.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *The road to freedom*

These topics will help us to analyze the importance of doing art and how art can help to change the rules of this class society. How can I, as an individual, respond to those issues? How can art participate or intervene in the socio-political reality? What kind of art practices can make people more conscious on socio-political issues?

On the way to developing these ideas inside me as an artist I built the Violentine's Day project.

VIOLENTINE'S DAY

Violentine's Day What is the price of Love?

The exhibition is organized by Melano Sokhadze, an artist from Georgia, with the help of other participants, including:

Vana kostayola (Greece)
Valerio Belloni (Italy)
Agata Nowak (Poland)
Maciej Koper a.k.a. Doctor Koper (Poland)
Tomasz Hanke a.k.a. DJ Tom Hanks (Poland)
Anna "diabolic laughter" Karłowska (Poland)
Elene G. Naveriani (Georgia)
Giorgi Gago Gagoshadze (Georgia)
Dadu Magradze (Georgia)
Orfeo Aurora Lili (Italy, Japan)
Yael Maim (Switzerland)
Maelle Cornut (Switzerland)
Laurence Wagner (Switzerland)
Gene Ray (USA)
Daniel Stain (USA)
Melano Sokhadze (Georgia)
Giorgi Kevlishvili (Georgia)
Joanna Otbert (France)
What's (Vajiko)
Ton van Zantvoort (Netherlands)

Group of students from Geneva University of Art and Design, CCC master department (Critical Cross Cultural Cybermedia), independent artists from different countries and people from different fields, are collaborating under the multidisciplinary artistic project Violentine's Day. This project will question the Valentine Day celebration and will debate its consequences. Violentine's Day project is a multidisciplinary artistic research project that will result in the creation of an exhibition. It will debate important issues of our daily life activities. The goal is to raise awareness about how our everyday lifestyles are tied into the global economy.



Opening: 18:30H February 14th to February 15th
at the Cheminée Nord, Association d'artistes / ex-usine Kugler, Geneva,

Special thanks to
Communauté d'Emmaüs de Genève.



Flyer for exhibition *Violentine's Day*

Experience with working as a one body

When first I arrived at the idea to build the project Violentine's Day, I did not imagine that it could be possible to make such a collaborative project. I first had the idea to make small event and while working on it I decided to talk with different people as much as possible about my idea. I had discussions with lots of people: friends, artists, my collocutors or my classmates.

I come from Georgia and I was working mostly with the group there.

I have had a lot of experience working as a collective, but since 2008 I am here in Geneva and I have found it difficult to work with people living here. As I mention above, for me working as a collective with the different people is nothing more than being ready to overcome permanently your corrupted individualism and seeking the power in yourself to be able to find common ground with other people. It's an existential need of human being to see himself/herself in a collective action and take themselves responsibilities in it.

I found it really difficult from the beginning, in a European country, to collaborate with artists. There was an attempted work collectively, but it never reached a bigger scale. I started thinking that western society has forgotten how useful it is to work together

After a while I decided to involve others in my idea and ask them to help me respond to this problem. On the way I came to understand, I think, that each person likes working with the group. The reason that people do not collaborate is the pressure of competition, combined with lack of experience and understanding of need.

Over three months I send letters and ideas to the people I knew and asked them if they would like to take action. After a while some people began to involve themselves in the project and we started talking about it as an ongoing process. On the way, we learned how to communicate between us and how to find common language. In the end the project was built with the help of all participants, in order to work collectively, take collective responsibility and think together. No one was deciding common things individually. Trust – one of the elements that matter. Working collectively, the focus is not on individual success but on the success of the message for which connected people are working together. This is the one bodywork with lots of organs.

Vana Kostayola, *Where do they come from*
Installation, *Violentine Day*



Valentine's Day project is a multidisciplinary artistic research that results in the creation of an exhibition. It debates important issues of our daily life activities. The goal is to raise awareness about how our everyday lifestyles are tied into the global economy. Using the means of art to investigate the reality behind Valentine's Day, this project tries to make clear how consumption habits in the Global North can have destructive impacts on people and ecologies in other parts of the world. Following the roses sold in Europe back to Kenya, where they are grown, helps us to see how even small consumer decisions can strongly impact the lives of others.

Red roses have become the quintessential symbol of love. This Valentine's Day, boyfriends, husbands and lovers alike will flock to their local flower store to buy a dozen red roses – supposedly an embodiment of their love, passion and commitment.

Thousands of miles away, people in Kenya face a different reality on the 14th of February. It's not one of e-cards and chocolates but an effect of globalization – a side effect of so called 'free-market' capitalism that many are not aware of.

What is the price of Love?



Traditionally, lovers express their affection for each other by offering gifts and tokens. Valentine's Day is the recognized calendar day for the romantic celebration of Love. On that day, giving is made especially convenient. Cards and flowers are on ready display, and only neglectful lovers fail to purchase some for their beloveds. The red rose, with its long cultural and literary heritage, is the unmistakable symbol of Love.

But where do the roses come from? Who grows them and where? How do they get to the flower stand at the corner of the street?

The Violentine's Day art project investigates these questions. Valentine's Day is big business, and hidden within corporate boardrooms and behind free trade rules are destructive social and ecological costs that the lovers of Europe are seldom asked to think about.

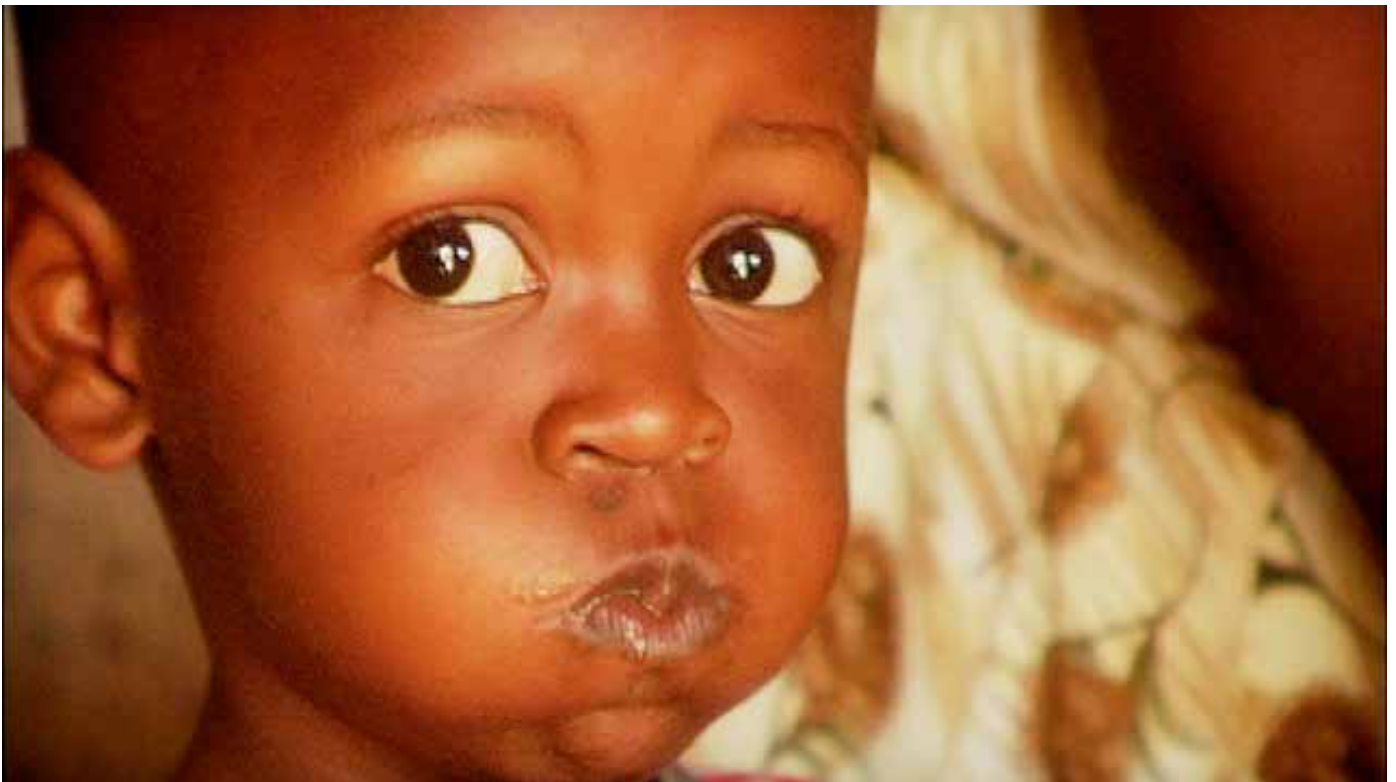
Most of the roses consumed in Europe come from Africa (primarily Kenya), and are produced in factory farms located next to large freshwater lakes. And yet how can a country like Kenya, one of the largest producers of flowers for export, also suffer from severe food shortages?

The Violentine's Day project aims to generate awareness and discussion about the problematic aspects of this trade.



Melano Sokhadze, *Fresh Cut*
Violentine's Day

Locally, rose production creates many problems for Kenyans. Wages in flower factories are higher than the government mandated minimum wage. However, many health and ecological costs are not reflected in the wage relation. To uncover the real social price of the roses of Valentine's Day, it is necessary to dig deeper. First, roses need large quantities of water (like humans, roses are 70% water). Pumping water from lakes diverts available supplies from local small-scale farmers, and desiccates the local environment. Secondly, factory farming requires large quantities of pesticides that contaminate the aquifer and pollute neighbouring environments. Finally, rose production is problematic for the workers themselves because of the high concentration of dangerous chemicals in pesticides. Often, workers handling chemicals are not provided with protective clothing, re-entry periods are not consistently respected. 'Re-entry period' is the minimum amount of time that must pass between the time a pesticide was applied to an area or crop, and the moment that people can go into that area without protective clothing and equipment. Pregnant women have been exposed to dangerous levels of chemicals. In addition, the lack of overtime payments and many other labour problems also result from our desire to say, "I love you". So, one can easily say that the more Western people express their love by buying roses, the more those in exporting countries like Kenya suffer.



a Blooming business
Film by Ton van Zantvoor

The ecology of terror shows us the path to peace. Peace lies in nourishing ecological and economic democracy and nurturing diversity. Democracy is not merely an electoral ritual but the power of people to shape their destiny, determine how their natural resources are owned and utilized, how their thirst is quenched, how their food is produced and distributed, and what health and education systems they have.

Vandana Shiva, *Water Wars*

Resource from : <http://violentnesday.altervista.org/>

<http://vimeo.com/21798765>