

Taking care of immanence: notes about Practices of Being With

By Livia Valle (excerpts from the article), 2014

If for Roland Barthes living together is related to a paradox that he calls “sharing distances” , a pathos of distance is that which instantaneously emerges from the proximity proposed by Practices of Being With: for the stranger that sits with me shares with me that which is strange in myself, that which is strange in the world and also the strangeness that evokes an inevitable negotiation between presences. How to interact with one that I have never seen, in a day in which all the rest was left behind so that a pause can happen?

The sharing makes the I that is usually closed in itself more penetrable, opened to a “traveling psyche”. Torn apart and immediately reinvented, the self is put on a radical alterity. It is in this sense of entanglement that Practices of Being With delivers a problematization to each participant, an uneasiness that is not related to the narcissistic or to the private sphere, as it tensions these categories to emphasize the relational and process-based aspects of being.

(...)

Anna proposes something which breaks the language of acquaintanceship in its verticality and its excess of signification, putting in suspension common signs and weary gestures. And here, in between those who share, complicity is built. In Practices of Being With a delicacy is born between strangers, involuntarily fronting norms that have been harshly crystalized about the process of sharing.

When our ways of listening and saying are flooded by interpretation, subtle violence might make us disregard or extract not only words and affection but the other person’s rhythm. How not to dominate time or the singular expression that happens through this time is something precious, a crafty handle that comes as a challenge during the process. Through Practices of Being With one perceives the unrolling of a composition that is not the search for symmetry or an arithmetic mean between two rhythms. The composition of being with happens as a research, a walking through variation. During the experience, little by little, one discovers how to live in an inherent discontinuity.