

MARIA ÅNGERMAN

I would like to invite you for breakfast,

one of these days at 10 o'clock. Just tell me which day suits you the best, between the 6th and the 18th of May, and I'll prepare a special one just for you. You see, I would like to enjoy breakfast out in the open together with someone during the following mornings. I would need to know about it beforehand, though, so what you need to do, is to send me an sms with your name and preferred date, or make a phone call, at least the day before. I'll set it up behind the Múcarnok, just on the backside, in the part further away from the metro. You'll see it. (M Hösök Tere)

Maria, 06 70 29 40 243

BREAKFAST PROJECT _ BUDAPEST 2002

A snap-shot of me having breakfast was used on the front of a flyer and on the back there was a text inviting people to make a reservation for breakfast. The flyer was distributed in various places around Budapest. The project was carried out in the park behind the Műcarnok (Kunsthalle) during a one month residency at Studio FKSE.

The essential part of the project was the gesture itself, as exclusive as it is to meet up with one person every morning. Not the resulting documentation, but the meeting itself with this particular person that made the effort to come. We did have conversations, but I didn't expect it, as I myself am not very talkative in the morning.

The idea came from a sincere wish to have someone to share my breakfasts with, that intimate moment in the morning when you're still not fully awake - and knowing that there probably are others with the same wish. This project is perhaps the best to illustrate a certain predisposition that can be seen in a great number of my works, a willingness to, if not serve, but dispose myself for someone else.

WEDNESDAY MAY 8TH

Hi...
Yes...its *Maria*.
Hi...I am Z. I saw your invitation in the Goethe institute.
Oh, so you would like to come for breakfast?
Yes, it looked like a funny thing.
So when would you like to come?
On Saturday, because I work, you see.
Ok, that's good.
Where are you from?
From Finland.
Oh, you don't look Finnish.
...well, I'm a Swedish-speaking Finn, but that probably doesn't tell you much.
So you are not from Helsinki, I guess?
No, I am from another part, from Vaasa.
I don't know that. I was in Helsinki, for two hours once...
and... I wanted to ask you, what is your aim of this project?
Just to have breakfast with someone.
To have fun?
Yes, that's basically it. And to see if it can work.
That's good.
Ok, so see you on Saturday, then, at 10?
Yes, see you.

I have booked my first... guest, would maybe be a good word. Z. After three days.

I started on Saturday, by making the invitations and placing them in Trafo. There's both a gallery, a dance and theatre scene, which means a more diverse audience. But no one phoned.

Yesterday I went around to several galleries, and an

opening in the Ludwig museum, to leave more invitations. Today and tomorrow I still have some openings.

When I walked around, asking in galleries if I could place some invitations, I was thinking that it might be better to do the distribution in another way. But that other way would be more subjective. Then I would choose the people and not them me, which is what I want to see, if people actually do it. Well, at least Z did.

But it was also better when I could talk to people. They saw who I was. Then there's already a connection. That's why I put my picture on the invitation, so they at least would have some reference.

Would there be another way in between? To stand in the street and to give it to just anyone passing by, without looking too much?

My idea was to have breakfast with people who actually see a modest flyer like that, and have the courage to phone and make a reservation.

If I chose the people – which would also be nice, from a completely subjective point of view – there would be no surprise.

But I really had to refuse a few impulses to give invitations – to the cute guy in the shop who did the copies; to a charismatic old woman in the street; a young woman who sat next to me in the metro – she looked exhausted and down; a beautiful black woman opposite me in the metro, and to the guy who sold me the ticket for the dance performance, he had a great smile.

If I had given it to them, it would have been more of a

direct flirtation (now it's only a latent one), or attempt to help (the young woman, to brighten up her face).

But it would be playing it safe.

Of course, just to have more fun, one could do both: give a few personal ones, without mentioning it in the concept... like Sophie Calle. But then, I'm much more straight than her.

Dear Maria, this friday (10th of May) we could have breakfast together if it also fits you. E

FRIDAY MAY 10TH

I didn't sleep very well. Nervous for my first breakfast, I guess. When I woke up I saw that the weather was not too good. I packed my things and walked off, though.

I put up the tent half-way, hoping it wouldn't rain, but it didn't look promising. I made the table and sat down to wait. Maybe she wouldn't come? The weather looked bad.

After a while I saw two girls coming around the corner, wondering which one it was. But I saw almost immediately that it was the second one. She started smiling a little. Yes, it was her.

We were both quite shy. Well, she was, and I was a little nervous – it was my first breakfast after all – and her shyness made me more nervous. Eventually we started talking.

She was pretty, and quite young. But already married. It surprised me, and since I'd noticed that also other young artists were married I had to ask about it.

They got married because they were christian, but I realised it had something also to do with the Communist era, where the family was the foundation and concept, that society was built on. That's the case also in Finnish society, but marriage itself is not as important.

After just a few minutes of talking, it started raining. But it was actually quite cosy. We ended up sitting there for quite a while, waiting for it to stop. We talked about this and that. What was interesting, was that she deals with similar themes to myself, in her work, but she does painting: about everyday gestures and routines that we have, focusing on small details: like the colours of the cups and boxes... she liked my choices and asked where I'd bought them... Suddenly it felt like a Tupperware party.

Hi Maria, I am Z, and tomorrow morning (saturday) at 10 am I hope to see you, regardless of whether it rains or not! BYE

SATURDAY MAY 11TH

It was interesting to observe myself today. I am dead tired in the morning. I dislike making the bag and everything. Walking away with the tent, having people looking at my odd appearance is no problem – it has already become a routine. But when I get close to the park, I hate it. I don't like the place very much. But that's not relevant. What I am doing is making the intimate public – behind the Kunsthalle – as intimate as it can be meeting a stranger in a public space.

I was late with making the table, tired, in a bad mood, but the weather was ok. Then he arrived. He didn't look like I expected him to. He had a pale face, but kind of interesting. Blue eyes, wide apart, and blond, a bit red, curly hair.

I almost heard it in his voice when he phoned, that he wouldn't be the kind of guy I would pay too much attention to in a bar or so. If he would start talking to me, I would make some short polite conversation and excuse myself. I do that very easily. Dismiss people. That's why it was an interesting experience having him there. He chose having this breakfast and not vice versa. I had to make an effort. Not that it was a big effort, but still, it was different.

He was an interesting guest. He talked a lot about himself. About his family, his job, but also about politics. What I am doing now, writing about it, is intrusive. I thought that taking pictures during the breakfast would be intrusive, but this is much more, if I would publish it somewhere.

He made a photo, though.

When he arrived, he said that finding this invitation came at a very appropriate moment – he was having some bad days for some reason – and when he left he thanked me, and said it was a good start to the day. That made me pleased, and I said so, because that was the original purpose of this project, well, one of them. He talked a lot about his grandma. She was a linguistic genius, spoke lots of languages fluently, but she also was a bit crazy, was a bitch to his mother, and destroyed his family because of that. That's why he was the only child. Lonely, who kind of made up his own imaginative world. I got the impression of him being a very lonely person. Recognising that from myself. That of living in your imaginative world. But I think he's still looking for some solution, which is a poor word, that maybe I have found.

I think that this breakfast was a precious thing for him. Even if I at moments felt, not bored, but I didn't know what to say. I let him do his monologue. For me it was much more interesting than yesterday, partly because he wasn't an artist. With artists you end up talking about the same things in the end. A bit pre-



dictable. Artists are also more aware of the situation. Even if I say I do it just for enjoying the breakfast, they don't really believe me.

I wouldn't mind if it would be just silent. I would like it if someone made a reservation, just came for the food, and then left again, without really talking. A really normal morning in a bad mood, or just smiling at each other – sori, ai don't spik inglissh – I would enjoy that.

Now I'm not nervous what might happen anymore, if someone would come on to me or do something strange. Since it's in public, that wouldn't be a problem. You just shout. But I also think Budapest is safe. More than Spain. There I would feel more vulnerable.

He said he phoned because he thought that I was someone who was interested in people. Otherwise I wouldn't do such a thing. Well, he was right. I am interested in learning about similarities and differences between them and me.

Partly this is a social study. And thinking of the tourist project, which a friend said would probably turn out to be a sad experience, I think it's not such a bad idea after all. Of course I might be disappointed. But I think that's part of it, to fail. That's when you learn.

Exclusive experiences, where I meet people in two person situations, is something that I will continue, though. It's about encountering people. Briefly. And serving. It is about that. That is why la Pensadora is so good, why she works, why that project is something I am

still proud of. I thought that when I left Z, I would have liked to give him a Pensadora. He seemed to need one.

He talked about Kundera, that he had written some book about slowness. I guess I mentioned something about being slow, and he was saying that it can also be good to do things fast, to forget.

I never want to do things fast. I want to be able to remember everything. Well, not like Borges' Funes... But I would like to be able to remember these breakfasts better – what they talked about and so on. Even though they can be weird, or boring, they are very precious. And I guess that's why I am writing. Then it is about the memory, keeping notes to support it – not about documenting.

SUNDAY MAY 12TH

Sunday, and no guest. So I made myself a more Hungarian breakfast (no luxurious items).

I am surprised, because on a Sunday everybody's free. Maybe I should've made breakfast by my own in the park, since I started my project now, but I needed a day off after Z. It was very demanding, and I guess I also needed to think a bit about how to continue, the work afterwards.

I realize there are some cultural problems involved here. While talking to some people I understood that my invitation would provoke an uncertainty among



guys. Of course I am playing with the reference to a flirtation, that's part of it. But one guy said that guys probably are afraid that it might be a joke and be seen as fools if they phoned. He said that they probably feel very vulnerable in that situation. But I am the one who is vulnerable!?

So it is a big step for guys to make. This also has to do with how much self-irony you have – I think Antwerp would be a great place to do it in.

That's why I would like to do it in other places – like San Sebastian and Antwerp – to make a comparison. And also to see how it changes when I have to do it in a language I am not as sure of as English, but they can do it in their mother tongue.

...i want to come for breakfast, too. For me any day is good. Is Monday still free? K

MONDAY MAY 13TH

"Oh, shit! I forgot the matches. Well, maybe she is a smoker."

K came along on her bike, with an orange t-shirt, and a turquoise earring. How could she know that were the basic colours of my dishes?

– Hi, how are you? Do you smoke? No? Ok, just wait here a minute, and I'll go to look for some fire...

I took the camping stove with me, and started with asking the bus drivers who had parked behind the bushes if they had a lighter. Well, I pointed at my object, and made a gesture with my hand to lighten it up... When they finally understood, they just said they didn't have a light, I think. I tried like four of them, and then a huge group of American – loudly speaking – tourists came along, mostly elderly people, and with the kitchen in my hand, I started asking if any of them had a lighter... some of them didn't even look at me, but looked frightened. Did I look threatening with that thing? I felt only ridiculous, not the least threatening.

Someone said that there should be some smokers down the line, and I kept on asking, with the same kind of reactions mostly, not even looking at me... until one woman said that yes, she had a lighter. Since I felt a bit ridiculous with my camping stove and wanted to chat a little, I said I was going to make a breakfast, but I forgot the matches...

– A breakfast? Can we come? She said and laughed.

I was sorry that I couldn't invite her. She seemed nice.

I said to my friend yesterday, that next time I will make it more obvious that I want guys to come, but this is part of it; the disappointment. That is directing it too much if I ask only guys. Too direct. What I am interested in is the uncertainty as well, even if it is more exciting with guys, of course.

Hi, I am W. I am wondering about the breakfast thing... is it a joke? No, it's not a joke. I am making breakfasts for people in the park. Good breakfasts. It's an art project.

So people phone and reserve a date?

Yes, and then we have a talk and a nice time, mostly.

What a wicked idea!

Wicked? I think it's nice. Wouldn't you like to come for breakfast?

Well, yes.

Well, Tuesday is still free, or Friday?

Tuesday will be fine...where are you from?

Finland, and you?

Germany.

See you on Tuesday, W.

TUESDAY MAY 14TH

I like sitting there imagining what he or she will be like. But I'm not thinking about what to talk about at all. It's more about having a quiet moment, like meditation while making the table. But today I was sitting there waiting for quite a while, worried that W wouldn't show up. What a pity that would be. He sounded very nice – like we would get along well.

10.08. I've been sitting here for 20 minutes already. But it's ok. It has become a routine already after 3 days of practice.

Then suddenly a red electricians van appeared seemingly from nowhere and stopped just beside the building, on the other side of the path. Two middle-aged men stepped out, watching me suspiciously. Maybe I will invite them for breakfast if W doesn't show up...

or is that him? A middle-aged suspicious looking guy came around the corner, walking on the lawn instead of the path... could be German... but he didn't look at me like he would be looking for me. Thank God. That would've been a short breakfast. With him I would've made up new rules. I would've been the one to say when it was over.

So I was still sitting there for a while, afraid that he wouldn't come, and then when I was almost giving up hope, I saw a cute guy in a bright yellow t-shirt coming around the corner, from the other side, with a I-don't-know-howcome-I-am-so-late-but-I'm-very-sorry-gesture.

He had the most perfect nose I had seen in a long time, so I didn't mind at all. I just said I was happy that he finally appeared.

It was funny to see his reaction to the table, like he hadn't seen a nicely made table for ages. He had the wow-look on for a long time, also when I made the orange juice myself, the coffee, and batted the milk. He almost had something religious in his gaze.

After a while he told me he'd been without money for some time, so then I understood that maybe he hadn't had at least fruit or honey in the last few weeks.

I couldnt help watching his beautiful features, almost all the time. The more I looked the more perfect was the shape of his nose. I got so embarrassed I some-

times had to look behind him, at the people walking by on the pavement further off. And had to ask, sorry, what was that you were saying?

He mentioned he had been doing martial arts... so my eyes just gazed over at his arms... and I had to force myself to listen to what he was saying again...

Told him an ex boyfriend had been doing that, too, but I never understood that Japanese, Asian philosophy of respect, that always goes only one way, from the younger to older, from less experienced to more etc.

I noticed many times how I started babbling, about myself, my work, well, he asked me about it, and I got carried away, which I didn't with the others. And I talked a bit about this project and briefly of what kind of people had come to see me.

– So, do you tend to stay in touch with your... guests?

– Well, normally I don't – but since I wanted to hear the following, and it was true – yesterday there was a girl that said I can phone her anytime if I want to go out, as I have her number already.

– Then I would like to invite you for dinner one night. Is Thursday ok?

“Breakfast, oh, i would like that, but at 10...then i'll be late for work. Never mind, is wednesday ok for you?” Z

WEDNESDAY MAY 15TH

A very beautiful young woman, with a classical face, but with a nose a little bit too long, which makes her look more interesting. Blondish long hair, dyed though. When I see beautiful women like that I wonder what men think. Though sometimes it feels like I can even watch with the eyes of a man. Not that I felt attracted to her. But I enjoy watching beautiful women, too.

But I was sitting there, waiting, wondering if she would come at all. I knew who she was, so it wasn't exciting. I knew she is that beautiful girl, artist, that smiles a lot. I was even wondering if she would intervene with my project and decide not to show up, or even better, send someone else, because she had to go to work.

– Hi, I am A, a friend of Z. She couldn't come so she sent me instead. Do you mind?

I was also wondering that if she doesn't show up, I'll ask someone that just walks by... like that handsome tourist, probably American, that walked by a couple of times. Maybe he was lost. I could've helped out in more than one way. Showing him the way after inviting him for breakfast, I mean. I know this area well by now.



But then she phoned and said she was half an hour late. Half an hour? I was starving. But said politely that of course I would wait for her. After a while I started making the coffee, and by the time I had battered the milk, she came.

The breakfast thing had become a routine by now, which I like, that I prepare everything much faster, and don't need to be very present while doing it. and I didn't even forget anything anymore. Remember it all, even the matches. Which is the least problem. I think it would be a bit more difficult if I had to walk around asking the tourists for a camping stove or a cassrole.

MARIA! We would like to come to breakfast next week on wednesday. We are I&L drop us an sms if its ok. Thanx!

I and L, I am happy that u would like 2 come 4 breakfast, but u see the invitation is personal, for 1 person, and wednesday is taken. Both tuesday n thursday r still available. Let me know what u decide. Maria

Thursday 16th is good for me. Then it will be only me, I, at 10 then on thursday. ok? should I bring anything?

THURSDAY MAY 16TH

I came to my place under the tree, so familiar by now. I almost don't need to look where to put the table and

stools, it came automatically. The grass is even a bit worn out where we sit.

Today I forgot the napkins, and the table looked like shit. Had honey all over it.

I just gazed back over my shoulder while putting down the camping kitchen, and saw a young woman coming, waving. She is here already!

She came up with a big smile on her face, stretching out her hand to say hello. Beautiful looking, with dark long hair tied back. Bright colors on her clothes. Big rings in her ears.

Immediately when we started talking, it was like we had known each other already for a long time. When I heard her accent I felt at home. I had to ask if she had been in the States, like a polite question, even if I knew the answer was positive.

– Actually I grew up in Canada, Vancouver, but my parents are from here, so we came back some years ago.

I wondered if she was pleased with being here, and she was more than happy for that decision. Every time she goes back there, it makes her nervous.

I actually have relatives in Vancouver, but I was still never there.

One of the first things she mentioned was Paul Auster. We also had that in common. She was studying literature, and Auster was the main study at the moment in her course... I mean, when you meet people with



whom you have something like that in common, you know that you are family. And it wasn't just that. She was a translator, but also a writer, and when I asked her what kind of things she writes, well, it was more or less what I do, just in a different media. Almost scary.

She actually also lives only 10 minutes away from my breakfast place, but on the other side of the main street, close to some hotel with a sculpture, or relief over the doorway of a woman with a long hair, like offering something ... have to see that. Sounded very Baroque. But I liked the image of her imitating it.

She told me she went on a literature train from Lisbon to St Petersburg and back to Berlin, as a stow away.

She asked about Spain, said that she liked it a lot, but hadn't been to Barcelona. I said that she could've been Spanish, just from her looks.

– Well, I have Italian origin, actually. And I guess it's the big earrings that refer to Spain.

She talked about Kaurismäki, and especially the movie Gathering (drifting) clouds, which is also a beautiful title (I like it a lot in Finnish too: Far the clouds drift off) ...and how similar that also is to “our” way of working, where the details are in focus.

At first she was about to come together with her husband, L, who's also a writer, so they were wondering a lot about how the breakfast was going to be, what was

the catch, there had to be something (she was very surprised to hear there was no catch), and what kind of food etc. Her mother thought she was crazy who was going for breakfast with someone she didn't know.

– So is this part of a project you are doing? What is it about? Will you let me in on it? and I started talking a bit about my work, these everyday routines and behaviour we have... that I was bored with the way I was working, and bored of the representations, that I was more interested in the real thing, in real events ... and I guess that's when I asked her what she was doing.

I would love to read something she has written.

And I think I have to go and buy a Paul book today. It was so interesting listening to someone that studies it, analyses it, even if I am just interested in enjoying it.

We talked about the project, or more of the invitations themselves, where I placed them (she got it from an Estonian girl who liked the idea a lot, but didn't want to go, since she had already met me) and I explained my problem, that few guys contacted me, which probably thus far was a cultural problem. She said that since I had put my picture on it, they kind of knew what they were getting, and that of course it could be taken as an invitation in another sense.

– I kind of like the idea that it can be seen in different ways, that it is not certain what it is. That there is an uncertainty, and the reference of a potential flirta-

tion. Like the guest I had the other day, is inviting me for dinner tonight.

She looked quite surprised, like ... oh, you go that far? And I said, that I guess it's more social people that that answer to this kind of invitation. She said, well, it would be weird if someone just came and didn't talk. I said: I wouldn't mind, actually. We could use mimes and gestures and smile at each other...

She didn't take me seriously. And said, that she is not very social, but shy actually, and preferred these kind of situations with one person than many. I was very surprised because she was talking all the time, almost, and in a very relaxed way.

And I loved listening to her, to her Canadian accent. It sounded very homey.

TUESDAY, TWO DAYS EARLIER

We'd like to have breakfast with you! (anytime, when it's sunny = no rain) We hope to see you soon, Szil & Oli-via

WEDNESDAY

Hi, I am happy 2 hear that you would like 2 come 4 breakfast, but I am afraid all days are already taken. But if you would like to invite me for a coffee somewhere, just feel free. Maria

I was happy to have people wanting to come for breakfast, so I thought about it and why not let the couple

invite me. I just turned the game around. I was curious of who they were, and wanted to meet more people. If they don't answer, then there's no harm done.

I felt like I was inventing new rules for the game. Or that's when I started thinking of it all as a game.

Tomorrow at 5pm at the market at Lehel tér – let's meet at the main entrance, opposite the church! Hej-hej!

I was happy they were playing the same game, and wanted to see me. I would reserve like an hour, or max hour and a half, as with the breakfasts. But Lehel tér I didn't know at all. Ok, then I'll see something new as well ... but hej, hej? Who are they? Olivia could be Swedish, but how would they know that's my language? There was something weird here. Maybe just the weirdness there is in sending sms to strangers ...

THURSDAY 16.40

Dear Maria, a little change: pls go through the park next to the market hall, & look for Bulcsú utca (theotherendofthepark) 21perA – ring “Lévay-...” Waiting, Sz.

I received it just twenty minutes before 5, before I was supposed to meet them. It made me nervous. Meet somewhere else suddenly? In their home? Weird. Who are these people? Or Sz? Isn't the woman there anymore?

It is more and more becoming a game, and now it's not me setting the rules anymore. I didn't feel comfortable, but after some minutes I sent a message.



THURSDAY 16.50

Well, I'll do my best to find it, but I'll be a bit late then. Maria

I was very late, but didn't care. It had really made me nervous. I'd had very positive experiences with the project so far – I was surprised there were no strange things happening, or strange people coming to see me. Maybe now was the first one.

What could happen? Anything. In their flat. Or they were just playing, to see how I would react. But I didn't like that they changed the rules, in my game. It didn't make me feel comfortable at all. But I had started this, so I had to continue. But if I felt very unsure at some point, I could just leave. There was no such compromise.

I was thinking of sending a message to my friend, that if he didn't hear from me after an hour, then come to this address. But, that's silly. Maybe the worst would be that they would set up something that they would film, and show it in their exhibition.

I came to Lehel tér... no market really, but I found Bulcsú utca... and no. 21 was close. A nice looking house. Neat. And there was Lévy... I pressed no. 41, and a light male voice answered.

– Yes?

– Hi, it's Maria.

– Hi, come in.

But there were two doors to enter, and the other

one was closed. Maybe they would come and get me... I was waiting, looking at the other names. Nothing, so I pressed it again, to ask where the flat was, and he just said.

– Come in, it's open.

I entered the other door, but still didn't know where it was and started looking at the names, to figure out in which floor it was... and saw someone moving higher up on the terrace corridor... It was a woman and a child.

– Come, we are here. Our name is not on that list.

I felt so utterly stupid! But relieved. A woman and her child.

When I arrived to their floor I was still completely shaken by the adventures in my imagination, and it took me some time to feel normal and at ease.

After a while, after showing me the market from their terrace, and asking if I wanted to have coffee there or to go out, then she asked me if I was surprised, what I had thought before coming. Olivia had been sleeping, so that's why they couldn't meet me at the market.

– I thought when I wrote the sms, poor Maria will think there are two wierdos waiting for her. But it was kind of part of it, too, don't you think, a little exciting?

– ...yeah, I was more than nervous actually.



Hi, it's A.

Hi, how are you?

I am fine. You know, I would like to come for a breakfast with you.

Great. Is Friday ok with you? It's the only day that is still free.

Friday...yes, but I would like to come really early in the morning. Is that possible?

(Me, knowing I was going to meet W the night before) ...well, you see I set the time to 10, to make it into a routine, and I am already getting up quite early in the mornings, to prepare myself and be there, ready at 10, but maybe I could be there at 9.

Well, I guess 10 is ok, too. Yes, lets say 10.

Ok, see you.

FRIDAY MAY 17TH

A looked sad when she arrived. She told me she had seen a small abandoned kitten with blue eyes around her house for some days – she has two cats already in her flat that had been abandoned – and was thinking about taking care of it. This morning when she went out of the house to come for breakfast, it was lying there in the street, driven over.

She had been in the UK, making money by doing portraits for tourists. She met so many interesting personalities, like the Prince of Benin, who invited her to his country, (his harem?), an almost naked Australian, well, he had some sort of thing hiding his most private parts, and made good money, too, A, I mean. Why didn't I think of that before? I would do it for free, though. Just to meet interesting personalities.

She said that she had been planning to go to New York this summer, but hadn't found a job, so she wouldn't go. But maybe she would come to Bcn to see me.

Maybe we could even do portraits in the Ramblas. But I would do it for free. I guess I wouldn't be all that popular among the other artists. Because I would do it as a project. Not as a summer job.

Hi, i am A. A friend of mine told me he found this invitation of yours in Goethe. Could you tell a bit more about it?

Well, basically I am making breakfasts for people, it's like a personal invitation, in the morning, just behind the Mucsarnok. And you just need to say which day you prefer to come. But now I just have Friday or Saturday free. Would you like to come?

Yes, it sounds nice.

So when would you like to come?

Well, Wednesday would be good for me.

I have a breakfast then already. You can choose Friday or Saturday.

Ok, Saturday is fine, too.

Ok, A, see you then.

Bye.

SATURDAY MAY 18TH

He phoned while I was preparing it... – Hi, it's A. Where shall we meet? – Well, I am behind the Mucsarnok already, waiting. – Ok.

His voice reminded me of that stupid guy I met the other night, who thought that he could treat me like some hooker just because I made these invitations. Well, I can leave if he gets very annoying. But I guess it was just the accent. Hungarian.

A turned out to be a nice guy, though. A musician. Plays the trumpet. Classical and jazz.

He told me he and his friends had a Wednesday habit, of having breakfast in a place beside the Danube, but at 7 in the morning, before going to work. They always make a race of boats made of coloured paper, that they throw off the Margit bridge.

He also told me about a project they did at the Keleti train station, where there is a plaza in front. He had gathered some friends and well, I don't remember everything, but one part was that they set up a huge soap blowing place. People were asked to pay 15 forint, which is nothing, just a symbolical sum, and "blow out", in Hungarian, also meaning "to relax".

There was an old woman of maybe 70 years that had been so happy about the idea, because she hadn't done it since she was a kid.

When he left he gave me some of the coloured papers they use for the boats on Wednesdays.



ENCOUNTERS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

Martí Perán

One of the first works presented by Maria Ångerman is a video showing her smiling face in a close-up during seven minutes and forty-six seconds. It is a clearly staged smile, not responding to any real stimulus; in fact, it is more like an offering, the evidence of her predisposition inviting us to find someone on that side. On various occasions her work seems to reflect a certain self-absorption, an introspection within herself. The same applies to the interpretation of e.g. the abundant self-portraits; nevertheless, her interest lies totally elsewhere. Much more important than this self-exploration – not at the least lenient – is her immediate inclination towards her outside, towards the space occupied by others. In the animation "Looking back", for instance, you see her backside profile walking to the distance, but instead of going away progressively, at the end she finally turns her face towards us. For the same reason, in the work "And the geisha returns" she uses such a significant characterization of an offering and personal service as a geisha is, to

present herself in a revering progression, which we know is reversible. And in a quite different context, we can mention the subtle wall drawing "You are here", where once again her precise portrait on the wall is not a practice of exhibitionism but a demonstration of what we need from others in measuring our standing point. This indication of a sincere offering takes on another more explicit character in the ironic "La pensadora"(the thinker) – a small fridge magnet in which the body of Ångerman is reproduced in a posture of seclusion with certain irreverence towards the classic iconography on melancholy reflection – so that the user of the piece may symbolically empty out their worries onto this body.

The latest works of Maria Ångerman no longer imply the presence of someone else, but they happen explicitly with someone. At first it seems that her incidental companions, were thrown haphazardly towards her vital perimeters; nevertheless, it is she who offers

the possibility for the creation of authentic encounters. After all, the question is to consume here and now, within our own first names, that overall natural predisposition of the first works. A work that can now help us to unite these two moments is "Are you comfortable, dear", a simple print of a flyer with which she offers herself to the new visitors to the city for their landing orientation. Once again it is a work, which overwhelms with the previously identified offering, only now it is directed to find a specific voice. As a matter of fact, this does also apply to the "thinker", but here Ångerman is only an enormous drawer where you can save your personal mental ramblings without any possibility of replicas; no not now, here she offers herself totally to help in concrete doubts and expectations needing a response in each individual case. Thus, lets talk about encounters, joint presence and, still further, also about dialogue.

As a matter of fact, the encounters provoked by Maria Ångerman are authentically consumed once their stories are opened up by each affected participant. "Devoted to magic" is good proof of it. One Christmas Eve she happens to meet Fernando in a train. He is a peculiar person with whom a vivid dialogue leads to good vibrations; some days later she suggests to Fernando that they repeat the trip and even make it longer, but this is not possible and the reencounter is reduced to a dinner during which Fernando explains the

true and incredible story on his arrest and fast liberation during the time of repression in Argentina. The meeting between the two of them – totally accidental but clearly provoked by this "predisposition" – is converted to a clear demonstration of the rich and amazing features of reality, which can, moreover, bloom in the best of forms of exquisite fictive literature. In "Breakfast Company", the dialogue obtains a choir-like dimension thanks to its simple strategy: she distributes flyers inviting a different person for breakfast every morning in a park in Budapest. The result is no more no less than the accumulation of real-time chats in which, once more, each party has a first name and, probably, thousands of stories to tell.

The character of this type of suggestions gives the possibility to underline the importance of offering services instead of previously adorned products; of giving the possibility of free speech instead of only speaking pretentiously; of constructing real situations, even though occasional, instead of everlasting shams and, as a summary of it all, it is a fact that fortunately, including occasional drawings, art is not cut out from our lives.

DEAR FRIENDS _ WEB PROJECT 2002

Dear friends,

You're surprised right, that I write to all of you at the same time. Well, so am I, but I wouldn't do it if it wasn't for a very special reason. And I am sorry for the late date, but you know me... I've had more than one problem along this way.

You see, I have this exhibition coming up, and I would like to include you somehow. Well, some time ago, I was actually planning to do a project outside of the gallery, and ask some of you to exhibit your pieces inside, but there wasn't enough time organizing that, the distance and all. And the fact is, I would like to include you all. You see, lately lots of things happened, changes, things that are just part of life, but when they all arrive at the same time, it just gets too much. Or leave, maybe I should say. People come and people go in this city at a rate of I don't know, and the fact is, I seem to do the same myself.

I have this naive dream, though, to be able to gather all of you in the same place, to live, I mean, to have you all close, so I wouldn't have to say goodbye all the time.

I might not keep in touch with you all the time, but I carry you with me, and I know you think about me once in a while. So what I, well, together with this brilliant friend of mine, Bas, who is a genius, what we came up with was this:

I would like to ask you to send me photos of places, people, situations... that remind you of me. If you feel more comfortable with words you can write, just describing something from your everyday that might connect us.

I do hope you will be able to spare the time it takes and help me doing this, because any closer I don't think I will ever get to my dream.

Maria

The letter was sent out to all the people I considered my friends during a time I was living in Barcelona and making a show in Helsinki at Kluuvi Gallery.

The images could be uploaded to a site created for the occasion – www.mmmaria.com. The images were projected to a big screen as in a slow-moving slide show. The collection of images was updated each day, and accordingly changed from day to day. When seen as a slide projection, the collection of images tells a completely different story to every person watching. The following images are part of that collection. The project reflects on how each object, place and image provoke memories.

On the following pages there's a number of those contributions.

The project was in collaboration with Bas Horsting, web-designer and programmer.





FROM: Atsuko Arai
DATE: 03-07-2002 11:09:07
LOCATION: barcelona. spain

Maria Alonso C. de	50
Maria Antonia C. de - 50	70
Maria Auxiliadora C. de	87
Maria Blanchard C. de	814
Maria Blanco C. de	06
Maria Bosch C. de	N15
Maria de Guzmán C. de	04-010
Maria de Molina C. de	H13
Maria del Carmen C. de	M015
Maria Domingo C. de - 194	75
Maria Encinas C. de	013
Maria Eva Duarte de Perón Jardines de	111
Maria Francinea C. de	012
Maria Guerrero C. de	07-08
Maria Guzmán P. de	711
Maria Guilhou C. de	012
Maria Ignacia C. de	78
Maria Isabel C. de	15
Maria Isabel Navarro C. de	45-82
Maria Isidro Trav. de - 406	40
Maria Jimena C. de - 668	013
Maria Jesus C. de - 82	80
Maria Juana C. de	89
Maria Juana Trav. de	89
Maria Lombillo C. de	017
Maria Luisa C. de	89
Maria Luisa Parque de	00
Maria Malbrán C. de - 283	711
Maria Martínez C. de - 184	78
Maria Moliner C. de	018
Maria Nistal C. de	H10
Maria Pantoja C. de	04-010
Maria Pae Uroiti C. de	N14
Maria Pedraza C. de	78
Maria Figuerola Gtz. de	H12
Maria Sevilla Duago C. de	00-021
Maria Torri C. de	713
Maria Teresa C. de	H10
Maria Teresa Acosta C. de	15
Maria Teresa Madrazo C. de	87
Maria Teresa Saez de Heredia C. de	215
Maria Zambrano C. de	014-018
Maria Zambrano Trav. de	015
Maria Zayas C. de	19
Maria Zayas Trav. de - 294	83

FROM: Oskar
DATE: 03-06-2002 10:11:51
LOCATION: Helsingfors



FROM: Albert Brühl
DATE: 03-21-2002 15:29:04
LOCATION: nyckelby, Finland



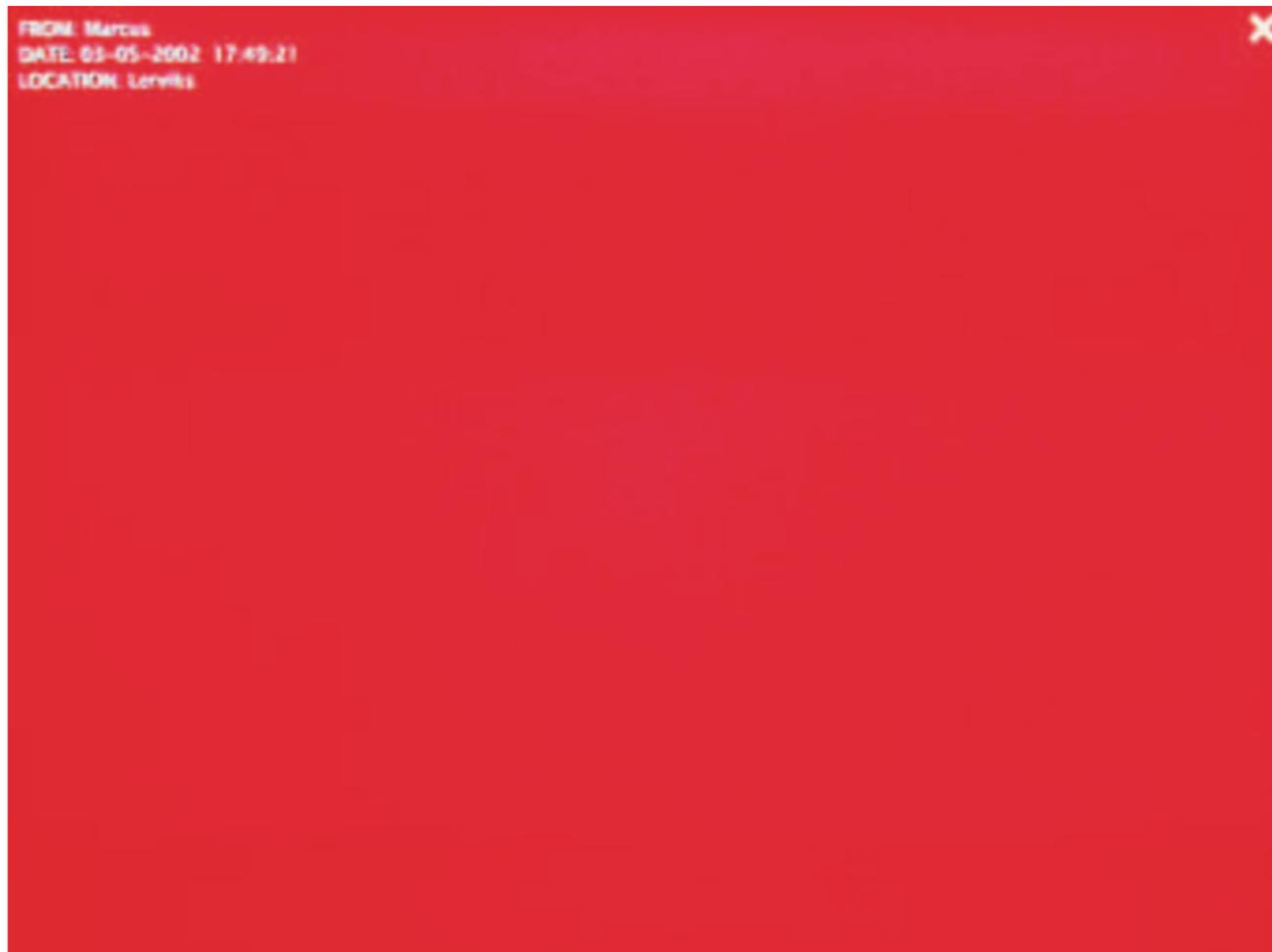
FROM: marc
DATE: 03-07-2002 21:35:45
LOCATION: barcelona, spain



FROM: Stephanie Hagedorn
DATE: 03-10-2002 16:53:00
LOCATION: ???



FROM: Marcus
DATE: 03-05-2002 17:49:21
LOCATION: Lovvika



ARE YOU COMFORTABLE DEAR _ BARCELONA 2002

The idea for the project 'Are you comfortable dear?' came from seeing all these lost tourists: not knowing Spanish; being robbed in the streets etc. The idea was to offer my help for this particular group of people arriving in Barcelona where I was living at the time being, and knew quite well by then. It included a typical blue collar dress with the logo "Are you comfortable, dear" sewn on the back of it, some business cards with my name and number on it, and certain working hours. I was supposed to stand by the airport bus stop in the center and deliver business cards, especially to those looking like they needed help.

This project was another strive to erase the borders between art institutions and the public, and a wish for encountering people from the outside within the projects. It was also a follow-up on Pensadora, a magnet with a female figure sitting in a similar pose as 'the Thinker'. The magnet was supposed to be used as a mental target, where the users could load their worries onto her and thereby let go of them.

*Are you
comfortable
Dear*



LA PENSADORA _ BARCELONA 2000

have you own private **pensadora!**

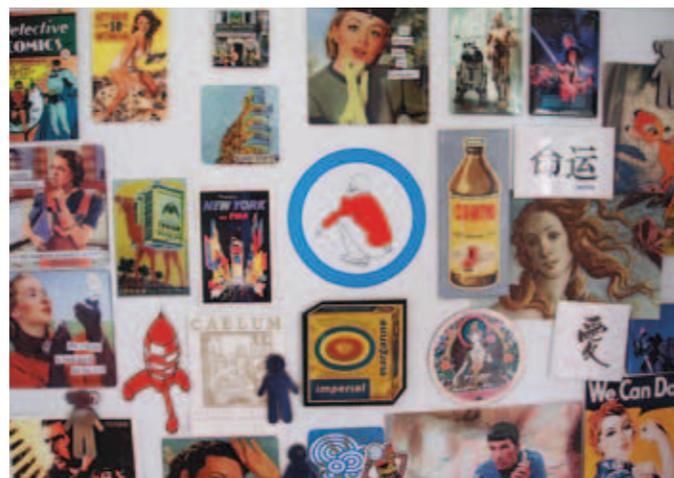
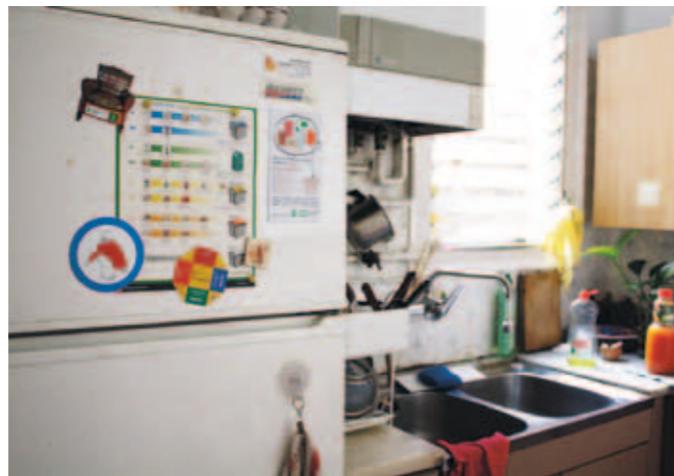
There are lots of people out there that are spending too much of their time worrying about things. They're wasting time wondering about things that they can't influence anyway. They should be enjoying themselves and having a good time, while a pensadora could do the worrying for them.

how to use the **pensadora:**

You put the pensadora in a place that you frequently pass (the fridge, for instance), and every time you see it, you load your troubles onto her and let her do the worrying. After some time you will notice how your worries are decreasing and that you are actually more and more able to enjoy every moment of your life.



A magnet with its instructions - mass produced and sold in various museum shops in Barcelona and Helsinki. (La pensadora='The thinker', feminin form)



THAI DINNER _ BARCELONA 2002





Disappointment. A huge one. Like when you were a kid and didn't get what you wanted. I know. I am ashamed of myself, but I was a little drunk in the end. I felt disappointed anyway, long before that.

There was just no connection. I mean, that's what happens when you meet people. Either there is or there isn't. Some people are very sociable even if there's no connection, and you can talk anyway. The problem here was having expectations, as always. And them not being met.

I was nervous of going to that opening. I so badly wanted to meet him, without really knowing what to say. I had just thought that he must be a great person. I took for granted that if I got the chance to start talking to him at some point, we would get along.

So imagine how happy I was when it turned out that he was coming to have dinner with us, instead of with the other artists, the big group. That's when I started thinking – I will get to know him! We even went in the same car, which he drove. And I sat in front next to him.

First I tried some small talk... it didn't work. Then I tried the easy one, a connection to his work. "You did a show in Barcelona a couple of years ago, didn't you?" I connected it to my own passion for food and told him I was so happy to find a really good cookery book on Thai food in the installation, and that I had even written down a couple of recipes. He smiled a little, but didn't say anything... so I continued in the same way, asking what he thought about Spanish food. He liked it... but that was about it, which made me

continue babbling... about how much I loved Italian food, making comparisons with Spanish... but since this wasn't working, I soon shut up. And felt stupid. Ok, so food isn't important to him. What do I care? A lot.

I thought, maybe he's tired, or bored. He looked more bored than tired, though. When you are tired, you kind of excuse yourself... don't you? And then we stood there waiting for the others for quite a while, and he did seem bored. He asked why it was taking them so long. He was the foreigner, right? And me, being a foreigner living in Spain, knowing how it was, when you had a meeting, having to organise something – "it's always like this", making sort of jokes. I do that in situations when I feel uncomfortable. I exaggerate, in a way that is meant to make the other person feel more comfortable, but it just sounds like a complaint, anyway. I heard it, and shut up, again.

That was when I gave up, I think. When we finally got to the table, I ended up sitting beside him, but it was mostly to give him support. I know what it is like

when you're in a group of people who speak Spanish and you don't understand a thing, because most of them don't, or don't want to speak English. At least not in a big group. So it was out of pure politeness, empathy, but we didn't really talk. The food was delicious though, so I was completely absorbed by it, happy to have a reason not to talk. They served fresh fish, simply made, one sort after the other. We were out on a terrace in the harbour, with fishing boats, so the setting was perfect.

When we moved on to have a drink, I deliberately took a seat at the other end of the table, thinking I didn't need to make more of a fool of myself. But then, after people had moved around a bit, I ended up having him opposite me anyway, at the end of the table, so I was constantly reminded of his presence, and my defeat.

In other words, I had acted like a pitiful art scene groupie, though maybe it wasn't all that bad. But I think I wasn't the first. And probably not the last either. I won't go down in history because of not really connecting with Rirkrit Tiravanija.



CUCUMBER AND PEARL ONION SAUCE
WITH CHILI 4-6 p.

- 2 CUCUMBERS
- 2 ONIONS, WHOLE
- 2 " SUNK
- 1-2 " CHIN SAUCE
- 1/2 ^{RED} ONION, FINELY CHOPPED
- 1/2 CUP FRESH CUCUMBER
- 1 CUP PEARLED PEARL ONION, CHOPPED
- 2 TABLESPOONS GARLIC
- 1 TABLESPOON CHILI
- 1 TABLESPOON FISH SAUCE

- WASH AND SLICE THE CUCUMBER GO
- MIX THE WHOLE AND SUNK IN A
BOWL WITH THE CHIN SAUCE...
ADD THE CUCUMBER, CABBAGE,
THE ONION AND THE CUCUMBER...
LEAVE IT FOR ABOUT 45 MIN.
- JUST BEFORE SERVING, ADD THE PEARLED
ONION, CHILI AND FISH SAUCE.

FISH CAKES 4-6 p.

- 500 g WHITE FISH FILLET
- 3 TBLSP. CORN FLOUR (OR RICE)
- 1 " FISH SAUCE
- 1 EGG, BEATEN
- 1/2 CUP FRESH CUCUMBER
- 1/2 CUP FRESH RED CHILI, CHOPPED
- 3 TBLSP. RED CURRY
- 100 g HANICHOZ VEGET

- 2 SPRING ONIONS, FINELY CHOPPED
- 1/2 CUP OIL
- TRAI SAUCE -->

- MIX OR PROCESS THE FISH, ADD FLOUR,
FISH SAUCE, THE EGG, CUCUMBER, RED CURRY
AND MIX WEL. THEN ADD HANICHOZ &
ONIONS, MAKE CAKES...
- HEAT THE OIL, FRY THEM UNTIL THEY GET
A DARK GOLDEN COLOR. DRAIN ON PAPER...

- HEAT OIL, FRY ONION TOG. WITH CURRY,
ADD COCONUT MILK AND BEANS TO FRY
- ADD CHICORN, HANICHOZ, WASE LEAFES
-> 15-20 MIN ON LOW TEMP.
- ADD FISH SAUCE, LIME JUICE & SALT,
SHAKE
- BEFORE SERVING, ADD THE CUCUMBER
LEAFES

GREEN CURRY CHICORN

- 1 TELESPAN AL
- 1 ONION, CHOPPED
- 1/2 TEL. GREEN CURRY
- 1/2 CUP COCONUT MILK
- 1/2 CUP WATER
- 500 g CHICORN FILLET, CHOPPED
- 100 g HANICHOZ VEGET
- 6 WASSICEWINE LEAFES
- 1 TBLSP. FISH SAUCE
- 1 " JUICE OF LIME
- 1 TBLSP. CORN ^{STARCH} FLOUR
- 2 " BROWN SUGAR
- 1/4 CUP OF FRESH CUCUMBER

TRAI SAUCE

- 1/2 CUP SUNK
 - 1/2 CUP WATER
 - 1/4 CUP WHITE WASSICEWINE
 - 1 TBLSP. FISH SAUCE
 - 1 RED CHILI, CHOPPED
- BEANS TO FRY
AND LET BOIL
5 MIN WITH MILK.
LET IT COOL A BIT.
- 1/4 CUCUMBER
 - 1/2 CUCUMBER
 - 1 TBLSP. FRESH PEARLED ONION
- FINELY CHOPPED





'Thai Dinner' started with an encounter with one of my favorite artists. The encounter evoked a text about what happened. Eventually I decided to arrange a dinner for my friends to compensate for the defeat. The food was based on recipes I had found in an installation of the mentioned artist two years earlier in Sala Montcada, Barcelona.

DEVOTED TO MAGIC _ BARCELONA 2003



On Christmas Eve I entered the train all sweaty – after running like crazy to catch it – with the cell phone in my hand, ready to send a message to my friend that I had actually made it and was on my way... but I was searching for a word and glanced to my left where I sat down. I saw an old man that looked like a local.

'Excuse me, can you tell me what "pig" is in Catalan?'

'I beg your pardon?'

'I'm sorry, I don't know the language very well, but I'm trying to learn, by at least writing messages...What's the word for "pig"?''

'I'm sorry. I don't know Catalan.'

'Oh, sorry, I first thought you were a local.'

'Where are you from?'

'I'm from Finland. And you... you are Argentine, right?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Well, I like the accent. I hardly know any Argentines. My main references are the movies, actually.'

'Yeah, you like Argentine movies?'

'Well, I saw a few lately that I liked a lot, especially the ones with...'

Not until now did I look at whom I was talking to, because I had mostly been concentrating on trying to finish the message, without succeeding, and was just making conversation. He had a kind of beautiful face, nice bones. An old man with greyish hair, probably around 70. When he smiled he had long, profound wrinkles

spreading all over his chin. What caught my attention was his exceptionally humble attitude that reminded me of my grandpa. Probably from mostly speaking to guys my own age, I found it out of the ordinary. Well, it's supposedly quite unusual for Argentines, too. Anyway, I was just listening to that nice accent, like a mixture of Italian and Spanish – that sounds so surprisingly familiar, even if I don't know anyone from there – without really hearing the words...

'Sorry?' I was trying to look as if I was listening, but didn't understand the precise words...

'You are really lucky to have such a well-organised country. I mean, we never read about it in the news... Actually I would like to visit it. Ever since I was a kid I was fascinated by it, I don't know why. It has been somewhat of an obsession. A friend of mine was the ambassador there; quite a long time ago, but he enjoyed it a lot. He said that...'

While talking to him, or listening, my gaze became fixed on some dirt from his eye, stuck in the lower eyelashes of the left one, close to the corner of it. I tried to listen, but my eyes kept being drawn to that same piece of dirt all the time, over and over again. I really made an effort not to. But when he was explaining the current situation in Argentina, which I with genuine interest had asked about, the dirt seemed to conquer the political situation without any problem.

'Actually, my ex-wife found this recently – that I thought was lost – and sent it to me, and now I always carry it with me. It's my press card from the 70s, when I was working in the newspaper.'

He handed me a small square document, with a light brown leather cover. I opened it carefully, and saw a face so familiar, but at the same time a completely different person. It was almost scary. I hardly looked at his name, or anything, but the face. It was him, but then it wasn't. There was nothing of that humbleness that was so striking now. He had a harsh look. Of course it was just one photograph, taken in that particular moment, but still, there was something weird. I couldn't say anything. So we stayed quiet for some time, and then I wanted to say something before he was leaving.

'So, you're going to a big Christmas dinner then?'

'Well, not that big, this friend of mine and her children, and a couple of friends more. These friends actually all have in common that they lost their husbands. They disappeared.'

'Disappeared?'

'Yes – during the dictatorship. Lots of people just disappeared. Like in Chile, you know, maybe not as extensively, but still.'

I hesitated a little. I felt awkward for speaking about very trivial things... but I already had this amazing image before me:

'Well, I was actually just thinking that I would like to have a really huge Christmas celebration, like... you know Ingmar Bergman?'

'Are you kidding? He got his first huge award in an Argentine film festival in the 60s. I saw all his movies at that time.'

'And did you see Fanny and Alexander?'

'Of course. It's so beautiful! That's the one that plays with memory, right?'

'...I can't really remember that. I was just referring to the huge Christmas party they had. All these crazy people, lots of kids and food, and just – so vivid.'

The dirt still maintained some of its attraction.

'You know, I actually missed the train I was supposed to take? And now I've been sitting here, talking to the first Finnish person I ever met. It was really nice meeting you.'

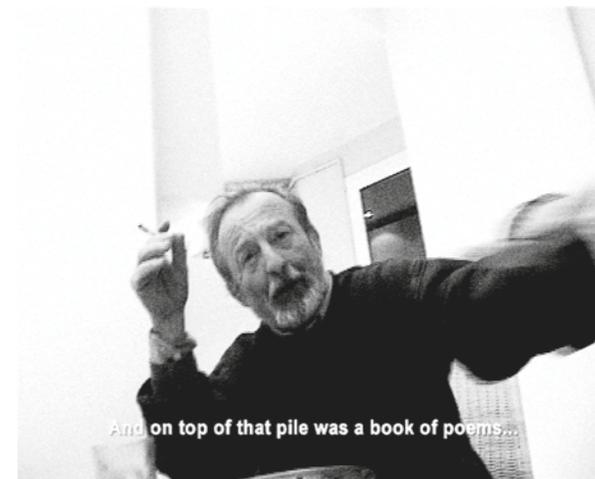
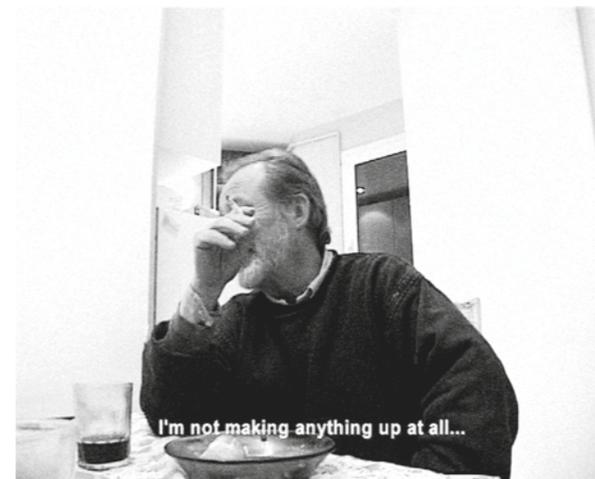
'Nice meeting you, too.'

He gave me his phone number so I could invite him if I would do an exhibition, and then he got prepared for getting off at the next stop. Meanwhile, I picked up a book, but couldn't really concentrate on reading. I glanced at the exit, and saw him standing there: an old, very short man. I didn't notice that while he was sitting down. Suddenly he seemed so old, almost fragile. Then the train stopped, he raised his hand a little and mimed a 'ciao.'

'Devoted to magic' is an installation of a short story and a video. The short story describes a random encounter on a train one Christmas Eve, where a young woman and an old man turn out to have more than one thing in common. In the video the man tells a story from his youth where he was arrested to be put in jail, but was released by an incredible coincidence.

The text is either done as letraset, printed like a big size long letter hanging on the wall, or printed in a leaflet.

Length of video 3:17. Can be seen at www.mariaangerman.com/previous/devoted



Encounters on your disposal

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ENCOUNTERS AT YOUR DISPOSAL