



THE CORE OF DANDYISM

1/2-2015

Pivani

(Drawing cover: Tessefossen by Hans Gude)

Footprints:

1. ~~Het Zwarte Huis~~
2. Avant-garde melancholie
3. Naar de eigen wereld
4. Inner Landscapes
5. The Journeyer
6. Way to Ullgarid
7. Niflheimr
8. Slot
9. Bos Rand
10. ~~Yggdrasil~~
11. Patriot irrégulière de l'imaginaire
12. SLB2621 (According to my Philosophy)
13. WW211212 (From Wiels to Winterspelt)
14. Vigrid
15. Mijn tijd komt nog
16. Hexameister
17. WVL213214 (Postwinterspelt)
18. Hoge Venen
19. The core of Dandyism



(Sometimes you just have to try-out before you truly know if you make too much compromises or follow your true path. At least it helped me to leave my books behind and make and think in real works again.)

This booklet is not verbeterd by my brother. So here you can wonder about my English level at the time or be irritated.

The Core of Dandyism

The Outsider...

Many snobs of today, under them a small arising subculture of so called 'dandies', think that they have the flair of a dandy, but they misunderstand the concept. Better they call themselves elegant gentleman, another popular appellation in the scene. Snobs and dandies share that they are individuals from the lower ranks who blend-in in the higher ranks; or (like in the dandy subculture) meet at clubs and art galleries. Snobs are however hailing the values of the higher ranks, while dandies have their own reasons to blend in. Dandies are in the core outsiders who disguise themselves and exaggerate in good taste in an ironical attempt to overrule the higher ranks; as the higher ranks overrule the daily lives of the lower classes.

If we translate this oppositions between lower and higher class to the art world the outsider or lower class could be the artist who is not in the commercial or exhibition circuit, the artist without an extensive CV, the artist without certificates, the artist with a sick mind (art-brut), the obsessed who makes a crazy lifework, but also the artist who makes artwork and artcritic that is not considered important in contemporary artistic culture (under them the renewers). We can consider insiders as those who are commercial active, exhibit often and make art which is accepted in contemporary art culture. Nowadays insider artists hit temporal problems and consideration in art or in society and make use of popular newish ways of displaying art, but never make a big jump forward. As insider it is like a very interesting seemingly evolving world, but from a distance we all know that they are not very important, that they make just a constant loop around the same ideas and ideals. Insiders play tennis; they play the contemporary game, echoing today's art questions

and problems again and again. They are not interested in the eternal (like Romanticists), they are very temporary and in such do not much harm. In fact they are nowadays also against renewers, because of their postmodernist stance. They have become contemporary culture. Together they are the art world, they are the higher rank. And those who have success or/and get rich from what they or their art factory (business art) produces are even double in higher rank, as success in what you do and swimming in money are the normal ways to the higher ranks inside society.

In such a dandy in the art world will visit exhibitions, making friends, visiting the salons (today the afterparty following the exhibition) and play the game as if one of them. While in his mind he is very skeptical and is often more interested in the excesses of the art world than in the displayed works. (Or in the attention and money that circulates in the art world.) To be an outsider is one thing, to be miserable and alone is another thing. And here lies the reason why there is dandyism: there is the pride of the dandy's soul, he will always think his own thoughts and make his own art at all cost, but he's not too proud to not benefit from all comfortable and pleasant things which circulates in the art world (or society in general), while at the same time he makes a joke or mocks the people who are part of the system or the snobs who want to be part of the system with better taste or with roll playing. Although many artists will more or less say that they are like this, but the difference between the dandy and the insider artist is that the dandy will rather leave all comfort and pleasantness behind, then to compromise his thoughts or art. He will never leave what he really is: an outsider, his pride is build around the dandy's core. A dandy is an example of good balance between pride's destructiveness and protection. But keep in mind, that if one would truly know if he makes compromises or following his

true path, he has to try-out or go awhile with the flow (or flock). Wisdom is not made in one day, but when the wisdom comes the willpower has to follow.

Of course there are also personal reasons to become a dandy. Like to be afraid to show the outsider in oneself and therefore disguise oneself to blend more in society. But then the dandy is in his exaggeration not really unremarkable. Like all things it is a sum rather than this or that.



(Diktat)

What is within and what is outside the art world is not very strait and varies often through time. As an individual artist you can clearly choose both ways if you go for the extremes, but if you are in between the lines it is often the art world itself who decide you are in or out. In that way the renewers and other outsiders know that they have the potency to be accepted one day, but they don't know when, often too late for a comfortable life. There is however a danger for the contemporary art world, and that is when it flips all over to the other side. This is maybe what the Romantic era truly represents, and some attempts after it (like Cobra), after the rationalists took over again the rudder. Romanticists made the eternal more important than those contemporary rational daily considerations.

For myself I think that I live more or less in the borderlands; I don't want to declare myself a renewer, that is for other people to decide and not very important because the important people are the renewers themselves, not the people who decide you are in or out. I know for myself my truth and I am committed and that is what counts. And I'm not humble about it, in the contrary. Future will tell if I was just too eccentric, not in the right time or a real madman.

My 'Outsiderish' not yet accepted (or unknown) artcritic and artwork...

An artwork as we know it creates a space for itself in the bodywork of the artwork. In the white room of the museal context we see many art spaces together eventually working with each other or working against each other. In the environmental context one art space/work put itself in a relation with the surrounding natural or cultural environmental space. The concept of the white space lies in the extermination of environment in order to see or experience the art space fully

and without distraction other than the other artworks in the same room. This is why museal-context art is the opposite of environmental art. But this opposition against the museal context isn't put fully forward or complete. As long as the artwork claims its own space in the environment, the white room (as environment) becomes merely a contextual space, wherein the artwork makes only a slightly different move. In this way the only difference between the two opposites is the presence of relations. Therefore we can better name environmental art relational art, as the accent lies more on the relation than on the environment. And then we don't even speak about so called land-art where there is no real relation other than the usage of land to make the artwork/space or where the artwork is put into the environment without having a relation at all; as if the environment is merely a white space. That's why I consider land-art a part of the museal context.

No, to become a true opposition environmental art should sink more deeply in the environment. As deeply as there is no distinction anymore between the art space and the environmental place: or the art space should slip completely into the environment, or it should create a complete environment on itself. Both are a quest in my work of art. Why it is my quest? Because I personally hail environments as spaces where my soul lives and find peace. But on an art level I hail the environment as it is the natural way art is and will evolve to. To make an artwork that only have a relationship within its own body/art space is in my vision a thing of the past, a thing for artists who have not evolved, do not care or are not on a professional level with their work. (And I mean here the true meaning of professionalism: which is the existence of a thoughtful relationship between the artist and its many predecessors, not the relationship between the artist and the commercial world.)

In a short definition: 'I struggle against the exposition culture and advocate therefore environmental art; not in the sense of bringing an artwork in relation to the environment, but rather as creating an environment or influencing an environment without that the environment becomes the place of exposition.'

I will now write about three works or work proposals in comparison with the vision above:

LABYRINT

Labyrinth is a proposal for a two floored concrete labyrinth/pleasure garden, build around little and larger temple-like rooms connected with each other through a labyrinth structure. The roof is sealed, which means there is no direct daylight. Daylight comes in via small holes in the roof and walls. The purpose is to create layers of shadow, created by strong light beams in the darkness; which has to create a dramatic effect on the experience, above the drama to be temporarily lost in the dungeons. It is all very symbolic and represents my thought of life, death and my larger scheme of things, but the experience is here more important than the representations within this embodiment of art. I want that the visitor (including myself) feels or experience my theory rather than think about it. And that's very important for all what I make.

(This is why I consider my work more Romantic then rational or postmodern. But even in the Romantic era we've seen only representations of Romanticism in high art. My commitment towards my professional relation with art is also shown in my way to leave the track of representation in making art. In that way I go forward on tracks within the values of high art Romanticism; and thus make Romanticism contemporary

again. I use high art here to distinguish professional art from applied art.)

On an artistic-esthetical level Labyrinth goes (accidentally) on with the evolving movement in painting which tries to find the perfect balance between the abstract/minimal and the figurative (or what I like more: the contextual). Just like Albert Speer would like it, who combined minimalism with neoclassicism.



Labyrinth is thus my attempt to make a complete environment on itself. It creates a place that you can enter and leave; you can't watch it from outside as a spectator and even if you can, you can't experience it except if you enter the work. Labyrinth does not have a relationship with the surrounding environment as such, it is an environment on itself. That makes it true environmental art. Or, as I made my own subcategory in previous books of my booklet archive: domain art.

And no, the proposal status of labyrinth and other works is not meant ironical, the ironical is a postmodern attitude and I am as many times mentioned a contemporary Romanticist. Although for some art critics a kind of so called contemporary Romanticism is even more ironic.

Labyrinth proposals can be found in the archive booklets "Vigrid and other projects" and "Niflheimr."

CONCEPTSTUK (LABYRINT) AND BOOKSLETS

My archive booklets (Footprints) as well as my recent work Conceptstuk are making the same move. They exist physically in the museal-context as museal object or as land-art, but both are saying to the visitor: "I am not the artwork, I merely represent an idea of another work of art." In that way they have an ambiguous relationship with the art space they claim, as they are more a reference but still have a body. It is in this ambiguity that I find it acceptable to show my work in the museal context. Acceptable but not ideal. Part of a compromise necessary to make my art and ideas visible.

My booklets and now Conceptstuk are the steps I take to evolve slowly to larger work, maybe as large as labyrinth finally. As I get more attention and more body in my oeuvre, I hope to

convince potential future policy in order to create the more important environments I developed. It's not important to get it right now, I'm glad if I can slowly evolve to it, and when it comes that far I will have the body in my oeuvre to make it even more splendid and right. Therefore it is also not so important to get as many exhibitions as I can get or to 'make' it, I'm glad if I can realize the work I really want to create. But spitefully you have to 'make' it a little bit, to get a chance and to prosper in life. And so claim space in a world which is not fully yours.



I've talked enough about my booklets. Conceptstuk or in English 'concept-piece' is a work that exist out of two panels (2,4m x 2m) that are stitched together with wooden sticks. On the panels is a layer of cement. In one panel is a gothic portal, in the other a roman. The panels are stitched together in the

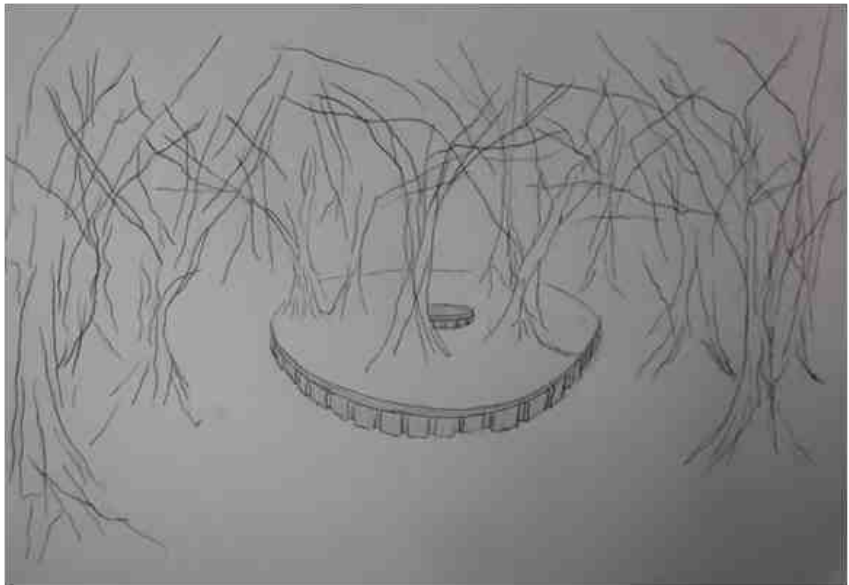
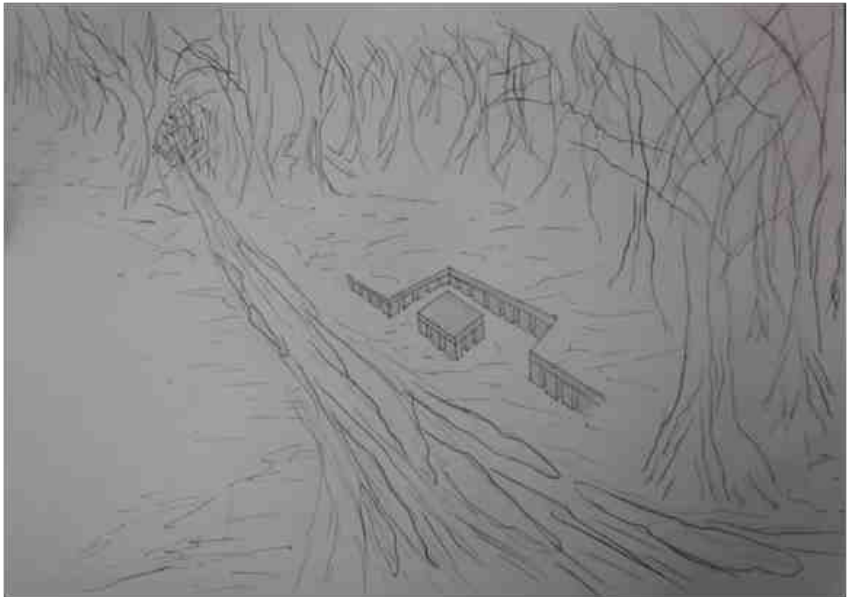
form of a piece of a cake, a reference that the work is a piece/reference of the labyrinth. The gothic and roman portals are a reference for the values of Romanticism as they are many times painted by Romantic artist in that time. Visitors who saw the work thought that the work was still in construction, and so it was meant, as that thought represent the idea of the will to make the labyrinth and the unwillingness to make old fashioned land-art here and now. So is it also with the booklets.

DISGUISE

Disguise is a new proposal and maybe the future of my work in the way that I will make smaller environmental artwork in the future (disguised or not). In this proposal I go hardcore on my will to make an artwork that slips completely into the environment. The artwork is clearly there and change the perception of the place, makes even the place, but one who don't know the place will not think of an artwork, he will think that the construction is part of the environment. Therefore the artwork will work under the level of consciousness. Even if consciousness is activated one will wonder what it is all about. Is the little wall part of a former building, a ruin? A part of a park? Is the stone in the middle a place to sit on, is it a socle, or an occult altar? The function is unclear, history is unclear. Its mystery makes it more a place on itself, rather than some objects or structures in a larger environment.

But it's not only that hardcore commitment that is present in the proposal, also my esthetic world and references have their place: the use of concrete and the way the wall is placed (a symbol for the more tuned/disposed way of life, eternity and labyrinth/portal worlds), the small pillars in the wall (another symbol for the Romantic values), the sideways place it takes in the environment (a symbol for the vagabond which places

himself outside the system in his own moral and esthetical world), etc.



I developed earlier this kind of work, even as early as 2009, when I made proposals for a train shaft. In that work the references went to abandoned industry and with that to a wasteland apocalypse, which has clearly more atmosphere and enchantment than the modernist buildings surrounding the shaft. In the time that passed I worked out my own atmosphere and references, but post-apocalypse is still alluring to me. And when I become ever a real city dweller, this world has maybe a chance to come back in my artwork.

Dandy Pivani...

I don't think I'm a real outsider in art, but I'm certainly not a true insider. I have a master in art, I was an artist-in-residence at Wiels, I'm connected in the Brussels art scene with different small Flemish speaking groups and last but not least I relate my work constantly with the art world, with art history and avant-gardism. But I'm not selling my work, I don't have a gallery and I'm exhibiting rather rarely then often (if we consider my artistic website not as an exhibition). My relation with the art world can however change when I have the chance to exhibit more and when I can make regularly permanent art or architectural work in the environment. As I see it now, selling my artwork is probably not possible as it is and will rather be unsellable. Apart from how things evolve in the art world, my relation to society is from another sort, but has some similarities. At the moment I have strangely enough two houses, one in a small village in the Eifel, another close to Brussels. In Brussels I'm busy with life, and one could consider me an insider of society (although I have no work and a history of small underpaid jobs). But the Brussels' life is rather a compromise as it is only in the Eifel that my soul finds true peace, it is so silent there and I can walk through silent forests and landscapes, being left alone. This means that I am

probably more outsiderish than insiderish to society, an outsider who constantly moves between busy Brussels, but really needs time for himself in peaceful or beautiful environments. I see there a similarity with the dandy. And then there is that other thing, that I constantly perceive other people and society as if I don't belong to them, as if I'm constantly looking to my contemporaries from a certain distance, but that's probably a psychological one. I always have longed to a truly outsiderish life, but there are also things I want from society, and as long I feel the hope to achieve those things I will travel between the two worlds. But then, am I not a wanderer in heart and soul?

Good taste...

There are two kind of dandies: a dandy who mocks people with their taste and a dandy who jokes people with roll playing. We could say that the first one is the old fashion late-Romantic dandy, while the second one is the postmodern dandy. The postmodern dandy will not necessary care about taste, while the Romantic dandy is not totally ironical.

Good taste was how rich people made the difference between them and the plebs, the same goes now between hereditary rich people and the new rich. The art world is therefore a very interesting place because people of all classes coming their together. The art world is therefore also a good place for the dandy to blend in easily, artist or not. Anyway, we all know that the new rich have bad taste. What is lesser known is that most of the hereditary rich does have good taste because of knowledge, not out of merits. They follow traditions of etiquette and decorum.

It is thus the dandy, and alone the dandy (or outsider), who develops good taste. It is here that the dandy is not totally

It is thus the dandy, and alone the dandy (or outsider), who develops good taste. It is here that the dandy is not totally ironical. Why else would he put so much energy in the development of good taste? No, taste is, next to his irony, his second nature. The dandy is truly interested in good taste, it's his way he enjoys and embraces life. (In that way some people of the so called dandy subculture might be real dandies, but most of them are probably, like in all subcultures, snobs.) It is the dandy's outsiderish nature that creates the space in which taste can develop. Because development of taste asks from the developer an outsiderish mind; asks for willpower. While the rich people, certainly the new rich are rich and have bad taste because they have sold their soul. (See next chapter.) Thus in mocking the higher class the dandy is ironical about them, but not about himself. While the postmodern dandy is probably also mocking himself, the Romantic dandy is only roll playing in his willful exaggeration and domination.

Willpower...

Willpower is the power to handle to your desire and your wisdom. Wisdom follows a path of desire and conclusions made in past think-trough moments. While desire has a major influence on the path of wisdom and its conclusions, wisdom tempers desire. Without wisdom willpower would turn man into beasts. Without desire willpower would make man into machines. But without willpower man would be a weak being, as they would not do what they desire and would have no structure to live to and in my theory of existence would not be the survivors. Well, actually they are very good survivors, but in the end they will die in my theory. Only they who will in the end live eternal really matters, they are the true elite (but often not in power).

Much of the good things in life, for example love, starts with fortuitous encounters. It's then a matter of saying yes to start a development to what can end in fortune. But in saying yes, they also make them to follow. If they take this as a life's wisdom and form from that wisdom their defined path, they end up as followers. Because they learn that when they follow they get the fortune. But at the same time without knowing they also become subject to powers which make the choices for them. They lose a soul which could feel or know when they are played or fooled. In the end they are just cattle. For example they think they have taste, but they actually follow a kind of upcoming or marketed counter-movement. Or they think they are free beings because they are not part of an alternative subculture, while they forget that alternative subcultures were partly destroyed by mass-marketing, as those subcultures were too small markets for mass-marketing. While digging in subcultures could be (but is certainly not always the case) a result of developed taste and thus free choice, as we all like to meet people with the same tastes and interests.

A dandy is a very good example of someone who knows when to follow and when to say no. He will say no if his soul is at risk and things lead to bad taste or habit. We could say that a dandy is conscious of the structure he has developed over the years, while followers have no structure of their own. We could say therefore that followers have no real soul. In my theory of multi-solipsism they will not be able to survive the storm of death in which one has to hold on and reform their structure/soul in order to escape the doom. Only followers who follow very strictly a kind of dogma might have a chance. But even for those who think (or believe) that there can only be emptiness after death, it might be just a way of old fashion true pride and honor to live a life of wisdom and willpower, values of nostalgic times.

In this same matter the dandy makes also a stance with the outsider who chooses to make no balance with society at all, sane or insane. The dandy will always be in a test with his soul at encountering society and being tested he trains his willpower all the time and makes from himself a very conscious man. In that way a dandy can work on his structure, make it more solid and refined and can make changes if needed. He learns through life. An outsider however who becomes a hermit of the mind will have a more weak or less think-through structure of his own, staying an outsider would be more a thing of pride than a thing of wisdom. Such a structure would ever be young and rude.

A dandy is always in balance with society and the outsider in him. There is always a danger for him to follow too much the comfort and pleasures of being part of society, but that's the risk of leaving the hermitage of the outsider. But at a certain point he will rail back if he lose his soul too much are for too long. And then there is always a danger for him to hide again in his hermitage, maybe forever. So, let's face the time we have.

The elegant gentleman...

I begun this booklet with the argument that the dandy subculture, as it is a group on itself, is the higher rank, because the subculture makes the values. What follows is that a so called dandy who wants to be part of that group is then actually a snob, because he or she hails the values of that group. The dandy subculture is however small en emerging.

But what if the whole group takes an ironical stance towards the rest of society, what if the subculture itself is like a dandy?

And there is a second problem as well. As the real dandy is skilled with good taste, a subculture of dandies isn't that rare. Wouldn't we not all love to meet people with the same mindset, taste and customs? Wouldn't dandies not enjoy an evening in a gentleman's club? Or would real dandies find this very ambiguous, fake or pompous?

That's maybe why I like more that cultural movement in Flanders and England which I know of (it exist probably worldwide?), of people with the same kind of values, but most of the time older people. I call them the straw-hoods, because they have always a straw hood on the desk of their car or on their head in summer. Just like dandies, they are semi-upper-class and value the esthetic, but then in more rustic environments. They appreciate me when I pass by and I appreciate them. Further they have gentleman-like garments and are regularly equipped with unique wooden walking sticks. They appear as a modest dandy. But then in Flanders is everyone more modest, isn't it? Not like Dandy Wellington anyway!

With these questions I want to end this booklet. What will bring the next booklet? Well there is still the question and brainwork to be done of how I can connect witchcraft with my scheme of multi-solipsism, if witchcraft is even possible within that system. And then there is this other aspect of the dandy: what lies behind the current of turmoil that the dandy conceals (which is partly the theme of the booklet's cover). Or would this concealment better left undisturbed for my welfare?



(Dandy Wellington at The Back Room - Chicago by Rosa Callahan - <http://www.dandywellington.com/>)

