

## Correspondence between Ohad Ben Shimon and Ariel Goldberg, 24 February - 15 March, 2012

Fri, Feb 24, 2012 at 9:26 AM

O: hi ariel

i found your website through the ugly duckling presse announcement regarding the publishing of emergency index 2011 which im also taking part in.

i was quite happy to view and read your thoughts regarding the intersection of photography with performance and text.

hope to get in touch somehow, not really sure for what. you can find my work on my website -[www.ohadbenshimon.com](http://www.ohadbenshimon.com)

best wishes,

ohad ben shimon

Sun, Feb 26, 2012 at 5:41 PM

A: Hello ohad!

Thank you for getting in touch. I'm excited to look through more of your work online. Many crossovers. Maybe we could start a sort of correspondence. The residencies you've done look so great. I want to go back to residency life.

Mon, Feb 27, 2012 at 1:49 PM

O: hey ariel sounds good. i just came back from a performance in paris.

im actually publishing in the next few days some new posts of an online residency im doing at [verysmallkitchen.com](http://verysmallkitchen.com) and me and the curator are going through similar thoughts about the link between art and writing in every post. i think it would be nice if this time or the next post me and you could have this kind of correspondence and we publish it. what do you think? i think its nice for me to take photography as a starting point as i was also educated in art school in photography and kind of drifted away from it. im more into connecting writing/performance to painting nowadays. but eventually i guess all roads cross.

Mon, Feb 27, 2012 at 4:23 PM

A: this sounds great, let's get the correspondence going!  
shall we each think of some questions? i could generate some questions after going deeper into your work. have you read any Vilem Flusser? He is my go-to philosopher on photography right now. Also got the book Photographs Not Taken that just came out from Daylight, essays by Photographers, which is proving to be a little sentimental and disappointing. Maybe you have seen Aperture's Words Without Pictures book that came out of the blog and the events happening in LA a few years back... <http://www.aperture.org/words-without-pictures.html>

interesting, i started in photography school also, turned to writing as the more practical and versatile tool, but always still deep in photography. actually i argue my writing *is* photography. photography is in such rapid change, i think language is at this moment of really entering the game. like caption revenge or something. what is your timeline? this week is insanely busy for me with a big reading on saturday i've got to prepare for and a performance in a Ballez (ballet of lesbians... i couldn't resist). next week would be ideal to write back and forth, but i could also squeeze it in!

looking forward!

Mon, Feb 27, 2012 at 6:00 PM

O: sure next week sounds better for me also.

yeah i know and have read and loved flusser back in art academy. here is a nice link for you , maybe for next year' award - <http://www.transmediale.de/node/12944>

and yeah i have and read the words without pictures one. liked it. mostly walead beshty' contribution.

don't know that new book you mention essays from photographers but i wouldn't count on someone coming from a 'photographers' perspective to save the world. i think its in the hands of the poets from here on.

your writing might very well be (is) photography, i get that. presence/absence etc. what is the object of writing/photography. i also used to identify myself as a photographer without a camera for people who didn't get the picture. but it should go on from there to new and yet unknown territories.

so yeah lets get it going from next week.

be well, good luck and keep up the good work.

Wed, Feb 29, 2012 at 10:18 PM

A: I think putting the world in the hands of the poets is a very good idea. perhaps its is the invisible-ness of poetry that makes me attempt some megaphone microphone guise of photography.

but i am coming around to what you say, i think more than ever.

Just subbed for a class of 18 year old photo students and I felt like why make supremacy out of photography.

it seems like these photographers, and they were very young ones, who knows what they will become, had no hunger for reading/writing as maybe a better lens when the world is over-saturated image wise. past explaining things, settling into writing as a primary medium may be where i have always been heading. perhaps there is some idea of not wanting to give up one for the other. preferably the unknown, as you say.

it seems that flusser was something for me to discover over here in nyc post-school. i cannot believe i didn't encounter him sooner. just the usual sontag/barthes/benjamin.

thanks for the encouragement / engagement.

i'm looking forward to corresponding more soon.

PS: i have a prompt for this emergency index release party to make a piece "from" something else in the anthology.

i'm curious about the medium, if there can be one of "performance lecture" is this a thing? would it be interesting to write back and forth on?

i feel like it is a buzz word right now in the arts. in the arts crossing over to writing. i'm interested in how a faux-expert operates. as a real expert, tonally.

right now i feel overwhelmed by looking through the advanced pdf of the anthology and choosing something as seed for a performance.

okay, i will save any other musings for next week.

as i realize this is getting lengthy and.

Thu, Mar 1, 2012 at 11:33 PM

O: i talked with david berridge about publishing whatever we come up with and hes all for it.

but no need to distract ourselves about end points..

i have the urge to respond associatively to your wanderings. maybe its the time. or the need to reach an unlogical point. for were we to follow the logical method we would end up like flusser suggests in a kind of predetermined-apparatus-world. can we free photography from its contemporary heavy chains of disgust? can we acquire the sense of innocence that once inhabited this medium? without getting all sentimental about it or

perhaps to exaggerate this sentimentality to an absurd point..maybe thats the route. megaphone/microphone guise of photography..nice.

the lecture-performance format deals with a certain academic authority to my understanding. this authority is perhaps the same sovereign authority that the photographic medium has dealt with throughout history. who is telling what to who? who is listening? who's in the picture? who's not? who's smart? who's stupid? who's infantile? i sound like heide klumm in project runway. is that how klumm is spelled?

why make a supremacy out of photography? indeed.

what if we could break all the cameras in the world in one given moment and then glue them all back together to form one uber-camera? what would we see?

about lecture-performance being the buzz word..i don't know about that..i started doing these things in 2008 don't know much about current buzz words in the arts. i choose to not focus on that kind of phenomena. its a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy im afraid. predominantly i think a lecture-performance is a way to designate an exchange between an artist and an audience which is neither an academic (lecture) exchange nor a performance in the normal sense of the term. so its an interesting case of a double negation. like the double negation of writing slipping into art. its neither writing, nor art. neither-nor. if i remember correctly barthes has something on this in The Neutral..ni-ni or something like that.. though im also quite exhausted with barthes and the whole photo-theory-gang. i would blame them for the popular stagnation of photography or photography related thinking but the problem is some of their writing is good.

im not sure where all my ranting is going. ive had another talk with a friend last week, also contemplating about what you say regarding the realisation that writing is/should be your primary medium. but what the hell is a writer? is it someone who publishes books? goes to readings? is reviewed about? i really don't know. for me writing lately comes down to silence. there is a silence when i write. i transform that silence into a certain visible trace in the form of words. maybe its similar to the way a camera brings a certain darkness into light?

as i said in the previous mail. i want more of the world. i want more of artists. i want more of more. there is a certain parodic element in your videos that also surfaces this kind of disappointment/despair from the world. i don't think it has anything to do with art what we are talking about, or what interests we share in common. it is more on the level of a world view, a cry/call-out for something to change. for the camera to stop recording. for the buzz word to stop buzzing. for things to calm down a bit.

theres this myth if i remember correctly of tantalus where he is punished..to be chained to a fruit tree with the fruit always eluding his grasp. the photographic apparatus seems to be echoing such a tale. with reality or the emotional landscape of humanity always eluding its grasp..

time to go to bed. more soon. next week.

all best,  
ohad

Sat, Mar 3, 2012 at 6:05 PM

A:i will write so much more soon,  
as "next week" is arriving.  
all you write above is very thought provoking.  
and relevant.

Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 3:45 AM

A: well here are some thoughts riffing on your thoughts.

you ask "what if we could break all the cameras in the world in one given moment and then glue them all back together to form one uber-camera?"

Like a magician, to break, to put back together. It reminds me of when internet connection goes down. Of when batteries die. Is the uber camera the satellite? Is the broken camera watching it watch us but our wave hello is indecipherable.

I am thinking today about caption errors. About how this seems to be the most dramatic twist, some affirmation of the way blind faith in the surface of an image distorts our experiences (of what?). I read the news constantly, more so now maybe because I started getting a New York Times weekend edition. So the papers just pile up and it feels like I am a worker, like Bartleby the Scrivener, getting through the stories. Do you read the news? Are broken cameras caption errors? There are so many cameras going into the garbage heap everyday, it is the most rapidly evolving and consumer cycling technology it seems, if cell phones are included in the pile of cameras. I like to stare at those bins at thrift stores of film cameras. But I don't want to accumulate them.

If we took this, cameras broken then gluing it back together, and thought about what we would see--light leaks? Literal. We would see the people in the military taking the horrific pictures of the dead bodies their commands are responsible for. This sort of footage of carnage is under constant raps, but so much of it is flowing through the memory cards of the U.S. military. It is dark. But how can I not see that? Are photos taken as part of torture broken cameras?

I see lost images as broken cameras. Ones we cannot get or touch.

I think to see disappointment/despair from the world in my videos of performances is very much what was going on in motivating the text for the performance, or the script. In retrospect it was harrowing being in the moment of the performance's execution. It was hard to do performances in public places littered with tourists for example, and have everyone ignore it. Or who am I to say they ignored it, maybe they saw me holding up picture frames walking around the Golden Gate Bridge but just didn't interrupt the performance to talk to me about it. But I feel a sort of disappointment when it comes to how people are taking pictures of everything and it's sort of blocking our view of our own worlds. I find despair in the way this country is operating. Its election process. Its inexplicable wars. Its prejudices. I'd like to celebrate the explosion of photography into everything as just a new way to see and think about everything, that behavior can be analyzed in its stills.

What motivates you?

Perhaps these words like medium, writer, or they just spurt out, I know it sounds like there is some language pressure to explain yourself in a recognizable mold. Labels are lame. Inaccurate. Even the most fundamental ones. But forget about that. I'll tell you what a writer is, in the sense of how it feels in my daily life: I wake up in the morning and I must write. The thing I am making, are pieces of paper with writing on them. Other stuff grows from that point but I guess it's a crude estimation of my production that I say I am more of a writer. I must write or I go crazy. It is really actually a compulsion. I must write down the things that seem crucial to observe, minutia in photography, inside my many little systems for collecting then finessing this observation into a piece of writing to redistribute back to the world. But it is a struggle. And there is a lot of silence in it. Yes, I agree silence is crucial, something to seek, to cultivate. I guess mostly, a writer is a reader, which is something perhaps you mean you want more of from artists, from the world. I guess I identify with the procedures for arriving at subjects or projects like that of a writer, but also that of a photographer, a photographer who doesn't use film but uses language, because it is much freer. In the economic sense, I think it is important to differentiate between photography and writing.

You write "the lecture-performance format deals with a certain academic authority to my understanding. this authority is perhaps the same sovereign authority that the photographic medium has dealt with throughout history. who is telling what to who?" I mean buzz word in the sense that I see events that describe the content as "performance lecture" more and more the past year. I saw this Rabih Mroué give a "Lecture Performance" as part of a theater festival, called the Pixeated Revolution. There was this event in the Fall where, "Six Non Lectures" will feature six contemporary poets lecturing on topics they have arbitrarily selected for each other and are non-experts in; each lecturer will have only 48 hours prior to the event to receive and prepare their assigned topic." then there was this non-art context thing in [the new york times](#) about lectures at bars being really popular.

I don't know what the point is in acknowledging a trend, other than admitting I may be swept up in it. There is a gross amount of authority in giving a lecture. The power dynamic is strange. You know when an audience doesn't respond to the performer's call for participation, that moment of wanting to just be docile, talked to, is interesting. Yes, the photographer verses the subject. For a while I was obsessed with writing the imagined voice of the subject of photographs, as these sort of dredged captions. Then I was also writing the voice of the

photographer--who sounded kind of like an asshole. I think with citizen journalism, anyone who is there with any type of camera and catches a crucial picture to document something considered news or history, the sovereign power of photography is changing. When it is becoming more and more obvious that people are also taking the duplicate picture of someone else. I guess I imagine a lecturer to perform as, who is an unaffiliated expert, someone who is not an academic, something more where vulnerability is built into it. But urgency drives. Perhaps more people doing "performance lectures" is just a result of the spread of academia into the arts, which it seems everyone bemoans at every opportunity they get. Bash the M.F.A. or the B.F.A.

looking forward to more...

Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 8:51 PM

O: nice. for the first time today i bought a mobile phone. the guy in the shop couldn't believe me when i said i never had a mobile phone. somehow i feel the urge from society to be more available in a sort of freaky way. but alas, i guess its a nice experiment. so now that i am more available, what does that mean?

i feel that in both of our writings photography is always related to technology. i guess the techne and the expressiveness of photography have once and for all merged. or its just a symptom of the dawn of expressionism in photography. was there ever a kind of expressive photography or was it just a haux.

i appreciate your commitment to treating 'photography' as your subject matter. or at least it feels like that. like a stage in which photography is a kind of prop, a miniature.

the news..difficult one - 'I would prefer not to'.

the other day i was checking my external hard disk. somehow all of the icons evaded my sight, so i thought all my material was lost. minutes later i scrolled to the bottom and found them there. i immediately had the urge to make a back up of my back up external drive. i had (or i thought i had) 5 empty dvd's with me so i sought out to burn them with back up material. when i discovered i had about 200 giga bytes of material i had to make a difficult decision of what material i am going to back up to the back-up' back-up. i went for the private photos. family, friends, etc. it made me realize some basic underlying desire. it created for me a priority, a hierarchy. private comes first. no room for the rest. i don't know what im trying to say with this. just that i figured out for myself my data-back up priorities. and maybe its emblematic of my general priorities in life.

a cheap psychology moment..is your disappointment of people taking pictures all the time of everything a disappointment of people not taking pictures of you?

you describe your paying attention to the world on a daily basis. would you like to be treated by the same token? wouldn't we all?

what motivates me? kinship. maybe thats why i contacted you. i sensed a certain kinship. which is strange. i mean we are total strangers.

i saw rabih mroué in utrecht. i liked his approach. i also sat behind him just before and after his performance in the audience. i thought of taking to him and congratulating him for an interesting performance. but then i thought to myself. wait. you are israeli. he is lebanese. i felt like anything i would say would be disrespectful. maybe something i did or said would be interpreted by him as offensive. i felt guilt. i rather remain silent and appreciate him from a distance. and so i did. i especially liked the informal manner he treated highbrow guests that were sitting next to him in the audience (dutch museum directors/curators or something like that).

yes, spread of academia into the arts. sure. where are the budgets then? where is the health insurance? where is the monthly salary?

there is a bit of an element of fooling around in a child-like way in your (and mine) writing/performances. maybe that foolishness is our way to maintain the innocence we once experienced as related to photography? maybe photography is a funny medium. a fun-ny medium.

more soon. im in need of some rest. or food. or both.

Ohad

Wed, Mar 7, 2012 at 2:37 PM

O: <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20120306-information-overload-fears>

Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 3:40 AM

A: re: that article in the bbc, are we "techno reactionaries"? i want to read that book about the future coming too soon. Alvin Toffler, have you read any of him?

it is almost all about self-control, which sounds creepy like a diet plan or something. i wonder about our writing being related to technology. is the mirror a technology? is the audience a technology? "judging" cameras and how people use them, or fascinated, or betrayed, can you do this without judgment?

it will definitely feel interesting and different to have a mobile phone. cell phone sounds much more cyborg. come to think of it. i am curious how it feels. i left my cell phone charger at the studio--it's been 8 hours my phone has been off and the feeling is unbearable but i am going with it. of course the feeling is a little liberating! and i am still able to call and make an acupuncture appointment from my computer.

i understand the "urge from society" you mention. i am not on facebook, and this is a reminder every day. after i gave that reading saturday one of my closest friends said, you should join facebook--for research, and i was thinking no, i should not join for my sanity. also, isn't there such a thing as the cultivation of a voice in the absence of something? i do interact with the interface time to time, eagerly, i look at people's profiles or watch my friends as they click through it all. the interface and the handling of photos there seems both important and temporary. the main reason i cannot handle it is the ads, and how i fear it would suck my time. i recognize all the usefulness of connecting people. i see its potential in the intent to correspond, but there is email right? i mean, i am no luddite, i am online. i own a digital camera. however much i prefer to use a film one when "taking a picture." i recently invested in a voigtlander 35mm rangefinder. it is very exciting, and a recent turn for me back to the lure of photography. there is a little bit of embracing wonder.

i've spent some more time with your performances, or the documentation of them, the mirror stage in particular, and then when two people come together, giving a reading, and the interview with chris clarke. i have this urge to ask a long string of questions and observations. which you can choose to answer or not.

how did you learn about ugly duckling presse's emergency index? i guess part of me is interested in how our paths have crossed/converged.

i wish i gave no image for that emergency index thing--my piece was a performance script for watching pictures and cameras and i made an image of the script but i am certain it will be blurry because i had to make the text so small. if i had no picture it would have stood out like i was going to the dance stag in some pre-gay silence. where was my brazenness?

i was curious about the image in your the documentation of the mirror stage--how it only shows one image, and the whole performance cycles through many many images. did you choose that still for the picture on the screen? is there hierarchy or can there be of "good pictures" when you are showing them as a mass? are favorites possible? is a "good" picture becoming obsolete when there are just necessary or de-facto pictures?

do you bring a little kit for your performances or are they built from whatever equipment that is there? that lamp, and the desk. I have this urge to use no technology--have no tek needs that is, for upcoming performances. or if there is a photo or a text people need to see they hold it.

i was interested in chris clarke's question about integrating "your pictures" after doing performance talks readings without images and how you said you experienced a "distrust with photography"

investing yourself, your production of whatever in banality. i wonder how that is a net that must also include the playful childishness. yes photography and innocence.

and the mirror stage is reflective we are striving for a unity a feeling with the audience taking these fragments--there is something about vulnerability. what do you think about vulnerability? is diary a misnomer? i have been thinking about handing people work, literally, the page that i first write about something on (and i edit a ton when it transfers into type on the computer) the holding of a piece of writing as performance.

do you know stephen ratcliffe, the american poet's work? i think it would interest you. how it all begins with a date, as numbers, he write form the same place, mostly, everyday, a sort of same sounding poem.

can we make an analogy of anything to photography? is it that far and wide?

do you prefer to sit than stand while reading to an audience? how much of that do you premeditate?

i love the way detail is handled, how the story of the bike is being told in giving a reading, i loved the reporting on the picture of the bike and then how it led, not without false promises, to you being reunited with your bike.

there was this great feature in the new york times ( i think) about magnum, how the backs of the photos in that agency, how there are all these codes for information, mostly caption.

there was this great caption error in the paper this weekend about a eugene smith photo of a factory was actually of the wrong factory from the wrong year, and it was because it was mislabeled on the back of the photo in his studio. i am trying to figure out how to research caption errors so i can write my next talk on them.

some notes on the mirror stage:

what falls outside the art event festival: mostly the social or the personal . it seems like a great capture of things that are as much for inspection or presentation that sort of fall off as white noise.

it is amazing you went in to the bathroom to write while everyone was celebrating their work in the show.

have you seen marina A's moma catalogue from that retrospective? have you considered doing one of her workshops?

"There isn't electricity" what suspense?

"I charge my computer and my camera"

"either everyone left or they are all asleep"

"there would be another opening before the opening...it gives hope...predictable future..."

"after i got really tired and went to bed"

"wax earplugs...were used"

"come into the frame and say my name and I leave the frame"

"zoom function on my digital camera I use from afar to take a picture of the angel of death guy"

"this kind of banality...is it interesting enough to present to the public?"

"i must accept life as it happens"

"after i won i got really tired and i went to bed"

"i download more pictures from my camera as people wake up"

i could see the kinship at work with how you told the events of your days. i enjoyed how you handled dialogue, speech, in a sort of monotone. it all flows together well.

and at times you slip into theorizing on a thing, like openings, or being a tourist, perception, missed or lost.

do you know new narrative writing? Bob Gluck? Camille Roy? Kevin Killian? Dodie Bellamy? I think it matches up with what you are doing. Kevin takes a ton of pictures out and about.

Your pictures changed every 3 seconds right? and they didn't start repeating until 22.30 in the 27.& something piece. so how many? let me guess with rough calculator= 440. now tell me how close i was. over five days? that's how many you took? what about over the past five days? were you taking the pictures knowing you would show them, and then taking more or less? what is your camera? does it matter? i think the slideshow completely enters our bloodstream while watching and the out of order or linking up later of what matches in the text and image works well, better than any exact sync up would. i am so happy when i see pictures and they are not explained directly. it is some form of address-- of the text talking to the pictures.

Do you edit the diary? Really? How many languages do you speak? forgive me, i am very verbose by nature. i cannot seem to edit this down. i want it to be real/rawe.

perhaps i am so interested in correspondence, and interviews or other topics for criticism is that i must have something to bounce the photography focus off from or else i'll get bored with it. i might. i might stop the obsession but it is alive and well now. i am not done. and i am not discovering but collecting. maybe afraid of losing to cope with real losing. talk about psychology! for motivating procedures for making. i love what you say that my writing on this topic is like a miniature for the medium. but there is this thread of me feeling outside of it, and inside of it something at the same time, especially this book length essay i am working on--the estrangement principle, on the label "queer" on to art, for segregating or movement-izing work.

i like getting glimpses of the big time difference between us. how your bed time, or meal time, with when i am reading. correspondence, even over the internet, guarantees some delay, like the delay i think i am most attached to in photography.

Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 10:56 AM

O: you know this feeling in the morning when your brain is still kind of numb but its the best time to write? quite a paradox, no? do you have this kind of time thresholds for writing? i only discovered it more precisely whilst doing a residency in barcelona in which i set off to write something everyday. i never put that attention before. i guess you have. so i have this time slot between 9 and lets say 12:45 or 13:00 at the latest. and then i have this 17:00 o'clock thing, in which i get some kind of after-death boost. and sometimes rarely, 21 or 22:00-ish but that has to be accompanied by a beer. so does the 17:00 slot. the morning slots coffee is essential. its strange no? and what does that say about writing? maybe writing is a kind of organic bodily thing? like the body writes. i guess that could be a link to performance or performative kind of writing. the night/day cycle. writing the moon. writing the sun down.

yeah and there is this delay that you interestingly mention. indeed! just like in photography! i also like the delay very much. the more 'serious' photos i take i store the film for about half a year until im in tel aviv again and i develop them in my favorite lab. its the only lab i develop film. so the status of my analogue photography is always tied to this lab, in which the owner died from cancer about 2-3 years ago and since then his son has taken over. they have nice punk concerts there on friday afternoons. i once took my father and brother and we had a nice time. we drank arak. do you know arak? its this kind of anis.

well anyway. thanks alot for your reflections about my works. it felt like i had a solo show. you know this specific attention to specific works and details. you dont imagine that you can actually have a solo show online, depending on the attention of the viewer.]

ok, so where was i. the new narrative movement. interesting! i never heard of it. the closest thing i got to it was creative non-fiction which some other nice writer from ny pointed out to me. i'll have a read of it.

i learned about ugly duckling through..facebook. im only now starting to realize the revolutionary approach of it in a way. like bypassing the usual mechanism, the usual apparatus of publishing. a detour.

in the mirror stage performance there was no real hierarchy... and i was never a kind of fanatic digital photography producer of images. i guess im kind of choosing texaggeratete the medium to see where it will break. breaking the medium by overusing it. the camera i used for that performance actually did break. i was with a new friend i just met iAmsterdammandnd she went on the roof of heapartment.t. then she asked for the camera to take a picture of us hanging around the balcony. then it dropped and never opened again. did i morn it? i still have another one with me. i never buy cameras. i somehow manage to receive them from someone who doesn'tttt need them. so its like a ready made. i treat the cameras i use as ready made. the only camera i bought was a second hand 6x4.5 mamiya in germany for about 100 euros because the one i was using of my friend broke down. i was told the guy who owned it died and his wife sold about 50 of his cameras to the shop.

anyway..i get drifted away all the time.

today is the international women' day and i was wondering how being a woman is related to your text/performances..im sure its quite significant. its nice to discover that our approaches are the same in a kind androgynous way. i mean to say all this technology and monotony and the rest are kind of a-sexual. until now i only met a few guys who were doing this kind of pseudo news reporter lecture-performance things. i feel now like i felt with rabih in a way that because im not a woman i might say something wrong in a non p.c manner. is that a pressure to perform? ok enough about this guilt-trip thing. so how does being a woman relate to your technique of performance?

no, i don'tt have a kit. i try to have only the pieces of paper. i find the rest on site. or someone arranges it. i actually want to stop using photographs also. in 2010 i made a performance without images (my pen died). i think conceptually that was stronger. so i understand your desire to not put any images in the index catalogue. but its nice also experimenting with things youdon'tt think will work so that you can see the difference

afterwards. i always have this thing when i have to get somewhere i always get lost. i always walk in the wrong direction and then realize i was walking in the wrong direction. but i think unconsciously its a way of my body to check both options.

where were we, im lost..

vulnerability is an important quality i believe yes. i mean to a large extent its also the subject matter. how our lives are so fragile and how human relations are bond to change and transform. and the technologicalal 'monsters' seems to be so robust. i mean maybe thats thfrustrationon with photography or with cameras. that they seem so robust. so strong. and we/i seem so weak. no, not weak, but fragile, yes fragile, vulnerable yes. so yes this vulnerability should also come out as a way to deliver these pieces of texts or performances because its mainly about it. you know what i mean?

captions seems to be quite dominant in your work. do you understand captions to be some kind of textual snapshots? the back of the photos yes.

i like how you take out pieces of my performances. like you are actually photographing it/me/my voice/the text. i understand you do that often. create a kind of mash from your own writing with the writing of behaving of others. a kind of self dissolving in others, others self-dissolving in you. authorship issues, etc. but also a kind of fusion. not necessarily with people but also with inanimate things. do you want to become a camera? are you a camera. wasn't Warhol busy with this as well?

on the way back from the the toilet and fixing myself a little breakfast snack i was thinking about this delay again we have with the times of writing. so when i wake up and write you are asleep. when you usually write im usually already asleep. and then i was thinking of this male/female thing. so maybe this correspondence is a kind of way to create a whole. to unite day with night, male with female through the apparatus of writing and/or photography.

i had 358 images in the mirror stage performance. you were close.792 mega bytes.

i didn'tttt join or think of joining marina abramovic' courses or whatever. she did though appear in our exhibition space in amsterdam during the show and you can even get a glimpse of her in one of tphotosososs in the mirror stage performance.

i prefer ulay. he came to my house once. a kind of arranged studio-house visit. he was nice. very low-key. thats why i like him more. people talk of him failing in comparison to marina' success but i see it differently. also in the way he talked it was clear he chose for this more behind-the-scenes path. ok we're getting into gossip whicshouldn't.'t.nt. i feel like heide klumm again..

is this emoticon a portrait of a person ? → :-)

who posed for this icon? is this how this smiley guy is called? emoticon? is he a guy or a girl? and why is he standing on his cheek?

ok where were we? i scroll down and back up.

i don't usually edit the diary. i manage to fool some people that i speak about 7 languages but in fact i only speak about 2 and a half. hebrew, english and ok level of dutch.

ok im losing the focus a bit. its that time slot thing. today its coming early. 11:00 o'clock. shit.

ohad

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Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 11:08 AM

O: the buzz...

[http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/?&click\[jd\\_news\]=163](http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/?&click[jd_news]=163)

Artist Rabih Mroué presents the lecture-performance, *The Inhabitants of Images* (2009) to mark both the receiving of the 2011 Prince Claus Award and the release of the artist's first comprehensive publication, *Rabih Mroué: A BAK Critical Reader in Artists' Practice*. ....

Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 5:57 PM

A: i find the morning writing time to be crucial and something to protect. that numbness, a perfect fit for untimed stares out the window, is in some way a judgement or clutter free state, one where obligations or logistics can get suspended, if the time is of course predetermined as protected. i find the establishment of quiet in the morning, allows me to remember my dreams, and even if the smallest conversation happens, like oh no the alarm didn't go off, there will be a ticket on the car because it is parked in a metered spot, i then cannot focus all morning. sometimes even the first ten steps from the bed is a period of time the dream goes away. i find if i don't have a chunk of time to write with coffee in the morning, about nothing, it is always just the journal then, that my mood is very strange and fractured for the rest of the day.

i am so incredibly excited by the prospect that mental energy and physical energy won't be taken up by teaching starting this afternoon, whenever i finished writing assignments for the week i get back. i am going on the semesters' spring break. but every day of it is more busy than the next, as i'll fly to san francisco, attempt to have a little trip to the mountain beach, then take care of business out there, as it is only since september that i moved here. i need to figure out what to do for this reading at this new series out there. these consecutive performances are exciting. but i wish i was off from work to manage it with more depth.

instead of attempting productivity this morning i've begun to cook a big meal of chickpeas and cabbage and kale.

as for the emergency index thing, i would like to propose that i cull a text also from our correspondence this week and last, with maybe a focus on me asking you about your mirror stage performance, for my 5-8 minute thing at the emergency index release. i think there are so many great nuggets, dynamic back and forths that is. if you have ideas about how this would be executed (i feel committed to a low-tech operation right now...) meaning me behind a microphone "just the papers" i have this feeling of not quite figuring it out, the foggy stage of an idea. do you have any thoughts on how the different voices (yours/mine) could be read. i was thinking like the reading of a script, maybe initials or our names read before each commentary. i could get a proxy to read your voice. phone sounds ambitious for the small time slot.

i am very interested in the way you process your film. at this one lab. a mamiya 6x4x5 for that price is amazing! film to me is this intense selection process. i think about even the offhand snapshot of things arranged in my home intensely. sometimes when i am holding the camera i get so satisfied by that feeling of the echo of a camera, the insides of the machine clicking and turning reverberating into my palm, that i then take more, a little string of pictures. one night recently i set up my slide projector in the studio and shot film pictures of the slides because i wanted to finish the roll of film but

also didn't have time to scan them--it turned out the digital ones i took that night were much better, of course, because it was dark and the border and empty space needed to be excised. i forgot really that the shadow coming in from the window and then edge of my projection screen would just be black in the exposure. i forgot when i was setting up the shot that what i saw through the viewfinder was not what i would see as the picture. that my eye wasn't the camera.

i would like to read that book about Mroué. here is a link to an online journal of that new narrative crowd:  
[http://www.sfsu.edu/~poetry/narrativity/issueone\\_toc.html](http://www.sfsu.edu/~poetry/narrativity/issueone_toc.html)  
and this book of essays on writing : biting the error is also very very good.

captions are a major formal aspect of my work, and inspiration, and theory, in a way. maybe i want the caption to replace the photograph temporarily, as a way of acknowledging the overexposure of the photograph.

only recently did this poet who is quite amazing, steve benson, point out to me, after we met after corresponding over the past year, that my process of writing is like that of the process of photography. vulnerability, the robust machine. i know what you mean. i find i am often disappointed with cameras, also. i see writing as doing much more. it's like the stunt double and the set and the crew. i find it fun to make unfitting analogies. or rough ones. i make analogies like leaps, sloppy moves. i just watched the private video of the piece i am in called a ballez, it's of the firebird. but the chance to be an untrained dancer dancing is just so perfect.

it's so great you ask about the being a woman thing. i actually don't identify as a woman. i identify as a feminist who is queer. i identify as a little butch dyke. your questions about it, and the awareness of your questions coming from a male perspective i find really provoking and touching. i am not surprised that you haven't come across the performance thing i am doing with other women. what about sharon hayes, or is she more the affectation of the street protestor? do you know her work. anyway, i have given an enormous amount of thought, through a sort of insane experiment of poetry/criticism where i position myself and problems within the label "queer art" it is very much almost finished for the time being. i pry mentioned it in this email exchange already as i am trying o finally print it, even if it just looks like an 8.5 x11 printed essay, to give to 50 people. i'll mail you a copy, or if you want the electronic one i could send that.

what is your address so i can mail it?

i must run to work. i wish i could keep writing. but i am glad i wrote something. apologies it is in haste.

Sat, Mar 10, 2012 at 1:33 PM

O: <http://wearethetime.info/wp/>

more soon.

Sat, Mar 10, 2012 at 2:39 PM

O: see notes: <http://perfectlecture.wordpress.com/>

indeed a proliferation.

good or bad. Both.

Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 1:33 PM

O: sounds fascinating. im gonna watch it now: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=8k91WwJlh8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8k91WwJlh8)

Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 2:19 AM

A: yes! i will watch this somehow, sometime.  
i enjoy getting these links.  
traveling to san francisco tomorrow morning.  
this country is so big. it is amazing.  
i've reread out emails and began putting a back and forth together of  
certain threads and questions.  
it's been fun.

Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 11:05 AM

O: travel. motion. an important component of writing somehow. at least for me. the displacement of the physical body always begs the wandering of the creative 'spirit'/drive. and maybe its no coincidence that the word 'drive' is used both in a libidinal sense and in creative forces. we drive somewhere. we go. we cross. we map and are mapped. we at times conquer something or somewhere or sometime. some times it has bad consequences ( in the form of a national drive) but most often in a personal sense it has good consequences. so i wish you a safe, pleasant and creative drive to the west of the west.

u can find my address at the bottom of this email. whats yours? i'll send you a small publication of the mirror stage performance or the whole catalogue of that festival for that matter.

im drinking coffee now. i have 2 cups actually. one is white (with milk) and the remains i put in another second cup without milk. so i have this white coffee and black coffee on my table next to me. its standing at the corner of a glass table. it looks almost like a black and white photography of cups of coffee. maybe i should frame it somehow and put it on the wall? no. i rather drink it.

nice you are editing the correspondence for your performance. i think i personally like no editing. im getting attracted to the idea of no editing at all lately. its a bit like some kind of monster that gets out of control and i think that how writing should be. but sure its nice you manage to compress it for your talk. i actually don't have any idea how i could contribute to that without my voice. its a certain castration to not have a voice. or maybe in this case its more of a circumcision which is maybe good. maybe its fine that I don't have a voice. that im mute. so i leave it up to you how to do that. feel free using the exchange in any way you want.

all best

Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 9:22 PM

A: thanks ohad,

my address is  
147 freeman street  
#2L  
Brooklyn, NY 11222

i have flown here, and am soon driving off the grid to a place called point reyes, for some head clearing before the big events of the week out here. a solo journey indeed. first i will go to greatest supermarket in the land...rainbow.

i don't have a choice but to edit our communications for the ugly duckling thing! i will only have five minutes. as for the actual words i change nothing, just the order and the selecting that is. i am grateful for your agreeing to be a part of the brief piece, and i will of course frame the performance with what it was/is in its original form. whatever happened with the blog post from our correspondence! and send it to you in the next week!

it is raining and will continue to rain everyday of my trip. oddly cleansing.  
hope you are well with multiple cups of coffee, there is no other way to be!

Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 9:32 PM

O: its been real nice communicating with you. wish we can manage to continue this correspondence in some form or the other. ill have a look of the notes we made and send it over to david berridge from verysmallkitchen and see what he thinks of it. hes quite a good reader so im sure he'll handle it appropriately.

keep me updated about your moves, your transformations and your overall journey to the other side of the lens.

warm regards,  
ohad

Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 12:42 AM

A: Yes. It's been invigorating writing back and forth. I think the correspondence will find a new way now that the week is up. To the other side of the lens!