



Artie Vierkant &lt;avierkant@gmail.com&gt;

## Conversation starter

7 messages

**Artie Vierkant** <avierkant@gmail.com>  
To: Alex Da Corte <alexdacorte@gmail.com>

Tue, Apr 30, 2013 at 3:47 PM

*( Hey Alex, sorry for the delay--you know how things get*

*Perhaps this would be a good way to start, we can just keep a thread (or two) going to have a linear conversation and bounce back and forth? I think otherwise, if we sent a packet of pre-arranged questions at each other, it might not flow so well?*

*So here's what I had to start. Seems like it's an easy start that can branch off into some diverse issues--)*

I'm interested in the display grids you've been using in your work lately. Earlier this year I saw you speak at NYU and you seemed to say you had a moment where you realized you were less interested in creating objects as looking at the relationships between them and the negative space forming around them in a room, an exhibition context. I was curious about literalizing that back into singular pieces through something like the metal grids you use, which are explicitly utilitarian objects used for the display of goods. Displaying a network, rather than enacting it. This is the subject for instance of the Joselit essay everyone was on about in 2009, where he pulls that quote from Kippenberger about how "Simply to hang a painting on the wall and say that it's art is dreadful. The whole network is important!" This always seemed strange to me, because for me I interpret Kippenberger's meaning to be that the art is more in the distribution of related objects (or non-objects) in different spaces. That the art couldn't be distilled to a single object in a single space; and then Joselit kind of continues on to speak about some work that could either be considered under the tradition of artist-as-archivist or as kind of weak data-visualization. So I suppose I'm curious about what this means for you, if these grids relate to any of these ideas, because it seems that so many of the materials and images you put together are in some way symbolic?

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Artie //  
<http://www.artievierkant.com>

**Alex Da Corte** <alexdacorte@gmail.com>  
To: Artie Vierkant <avierkant@gmail.com>

Fri, May 3, 2013 at 4:08 PM

hi artie-since this will be a back and forth - im not going to over edit now-but maybe just free form a bit- and keep it loose- ive been installing my show all week in vancouver so sorry for the delay - but hopefully we can rally more this weekend--aaaaaaa

I agree with you in thinking that art is more in the distribution of related objects over time, and that somewhere in that dispersion lies "the work." I started working with the grids after spending plenty of hours in second hand stores and noticing how the employees would arrange and rearrange the items in the store on the grids. The ways in which the works were displayed would be based on simple logic- color, value, size, and form. For each employee, the system they adhere to is different, defined by intuition and desire, and forever changing- as the stock is always in rotation and being shuffled about by customers. I care about that cerebral space the "work" occupies- the ways in which one arrives at a solution from a given set of problems, and how that solution reflects one's mind at a particular time- similar to the cube, desert, horse test we did the other day. It is important to say that arriving at a solution will and should give way to more problems, and we go onward. The grids are a system, an equation- with the work shown- all of the weaving of disparate parts- to conduct, or to unravel, whatever symbols or mysteries are embedded within the objects at hand. The language of the system is forever changing and collapsing on itself- and to me it seems like we would be at a loss , if we limited our understanding of that system to the space within the frame....

I'm interested in the display grids you've been using in your work lately. Earlier this year I saw you speak at NYU and you seemed to say you had a moment where you realized you were less interested in creating objects as looking at the relationships between them and the negative space forming around them in a room, an exhibition context. I was curious about literalizing that back into singular pieces through something like the metal grids you use, which are explicitly utilitarian objects used for the display of goods. Displaying a network, rather than enacting it. This is the subject for instance of the Joselit essay everyone was on about in 2009, where he pulls that quote from Kippenberger about how "Simply to hang a painting on the wall and say that it's art is dreadful. The whole network is important!" This always seemed strange to me, because for me I interpret Kippenberger's meaning to be that the art is more in the distribution of related objects (or non-objects) in different spaces. That the art couldn't be distilled to a single object in a single space; and then Joselit kind of continues on to speak about some work that could either be considered under the tradition of artist-as-archivist or as kind of weak data-visualization. So I suppose I'm curious about what this means for you, if these grids relate to any of these ideas, because it seems that so many of the materials and images you put together are in some way symbolic?

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**Artie Vierkant** <avierkant@gmail.com>  
To: Alex Da Corte <alexdacorte@gmail.com>

Tue, May 7, 2013 at 8:50 PM

*(hey, sorry to drop off--putting up a show here too and just got it together today. Maybe we should set a day where we can dedicate ourselves to sending a ton back and forth, maybe during the day? Frieze NY is this weekend and the classes I'm teaching are wrapping up--maybe we can dedicate some time at the beginning of the week? More compressed time and less likely to be expanded out)*

I know what you mean about what a loss it is to limit the work to our understanding of what can happen within a set frame. I think this is the impulse that made me start intervening into the space of my installation views. We're very used to assessing an image for its content, the objects held within it, imagining what the "actual" viewing experience would be, and I wanted to disrupt that space. And then the form of the *Image Objects* really rests on reinterpretations of the same elements--overlapping squares rearranged, or warped over each other, maybe in a similar way as how you're thinking about stock changes or in general how we sort things. Do you ever re-use items? Does some object, for instance, appear in a photograph of one work which is later disassembled, and then become used for another?

[Quoted text hidden]

**Alex Da Corte** <alexdacorte@gmail.com>  
To: Artie Vierkant <avierkant@gmail.com>

Thu, May 16, 2013 at 10:43 AM

yes totally- objects get reused all of the time until they have a reason to leave my studio- for me, one object can have several lives- and i am often intersecting those objects on their second, third, and fourth lives-- so in the studio they can be photographed and floating, then peeled away from that image and grounded in a space where it is taped and melted to other objects- recently i have been making these plastics paintings in which i embed or trap objects behind adhesive vinyls and plastics, pressing and flattening the object against plexiglass- in this way the object is split into two- the image- a two dimensional, crystalline kind of cartoon graphic- and the object which sort of puffs, blobs, hangs, and drags on the back.... they are confined to the space of the frame in a sense but the framed plastics painting has two sides...







Apr 28, 2013, 3:06 PM

Hi hi  
Do you wanna send me some questions to start a flow and we can go back and forth

Hey yeah, sorry busy few days. I'll send you an email tomorrow?

Yeah no worries  
Im kind of busy too but it would be good to get it going a bit

May 7, 2013, 4:05 PM

How's it going artie

May 12, 2013, 4:34 PM

Happy mothers day  
What day can u do a back and forth for the art papers thing

May 13, 2013, 11:59 AM

How's your Wednesday? I can do any day Wed-Fri for an intensive full convo

Of after of course, but sooner the better!

\*Or after

Yeah lets try fo thursday  
Im in nyc on wednesday  
So we could meet up ir!

Oh that would be great!  
Thursday it is then. Let me know when you're in town and we can figure out where to meet up

Ok word



May 15, 2013, 12:27 PM

So im not gonna make it up today but lets go back and forth tmrw

Ah, bummer. Sure thing tomorrow is good. I usually get up earlyish so any time you wanna start is good, just shoot me a message

Ok yeah i dont have internet but ill head to a coffee place in the am and we can email back and forth  
Or ill text u stuff tooo

Sounds good, we'll make it work

May 16, 2013, 10:28 AM

Hi artie  
Im buy the internet if you wanna start

Awesome. On in a minute

Awesome. On in a minute

May 16, 2013, 11:53 AM

I have to run to the store for a minute  
-in the meantime  
Can you send me a list of images- i want to build a sculpture poem- with the materials you send  
Ala haim steinbach maybe

Just as an exercise

Translation works are the ones i make with other peoples works

Sure thing no prob

I feel like reusing the works frees them from Commodity -or complicates it in the context of the ica or some other non profit- can you sell a paul thek that has been spray painted and covered in shampoo that rests on someone elses painting, a cardboard box, and a karen kilimnik knock off birds nest- yes you can maybe but probably not I insist on covering and dipping these things in liquid, or resting them on stages of soda, or piling and mashing so that the piece when separated are no longer the work-

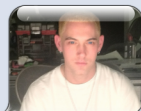
May 16, 2013, 12:36 PM

In 2006 i began a series of photographic sculptures called Activities  
As a way undoing this seal of my studio- and inviting in chance and complication and absurdity by way of these men who would participate/collaborate in making a "sculpture" by responding to a material prompt  
I guess after years of working that way i understand that my desire was to expand the idea if the readymade or the found- whether that be someone on the street , or another persons artwork- for me this was a way of flattening sculpture- by way of dissection - "taking a closer look"

The photographs troubled me because the "work" lied in the tension and compromises made for both parties involved in the activity in the small confines of my studio- the image that resulted in the activity was absorbed and flattened into something less about those complications and more about beauty -which for me was a problem

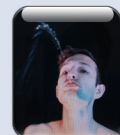
complications and more about beauty -which for me was a problem  
And something that i had initially wanted to deconstruct-beauty, the frame, the system etc

May 16, 2013, 12:46 PM



Marisol did this really beautiful thing over and over again which addressed the flatness and the cube and the shifting ideas of image/self/icon as if one solid clunky sculpture could unravel and unfold over time or as one walked around it the way a film does over the course of its viewing

May 16, 2013, 1:03 PM



May 16, 2013, 1:22 PM

Im still away from my computer  
But things are cooking

My friend william pym wrote this thing about a project i did with kate levant in 2010 called The Unlimited Plan - which was presented as a phone on a pedestal filled with soda - the phone was a kinetic sculpture which would be sent images of things we would gather in the world - the phone would always grow and it was proposed that the phone should or could be sold and forever growing with images we would jointly send it- a physical Katamari- so to speak  
Here is the essay he wrote for it  
Vanity of the vanities blog by william pym look for the unlimited plan

May 16, 2013, 1:48 PM

I can't find the blog? Every time I look for Vanity of the Vanities blog it just shows results for Ecclesiastes

Eek i feel like he might have taken it down  
Im sure its in my email somewhere  
Ill look when i get to my comp

I just sent u it

I just sent u it

Cool thanks. I like the idea though of an object that isn't so important sculpturally but instead more as a conduit for continuing to receive these new images, or messages from the person who made it. It seems like a promising territory, especially since everyone is so used to mobile devices--especially considering we're doing this discussion over text now

This is going to be a bitch to edit. Maybe we shouldn't edit it and instead we just have branching conversations based on the timestamps or what we were responding to, or what messaging service we were using

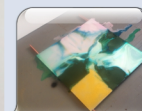
May 16, 2013, 2:06 PM

I have to step out for a minute and run an errand, back in about 25

Ha yeah that project was funny  
It felt slightly pre tumblr  
Or like when we showed it , it was such a clunky familiar thing and people were like - really? Really?

But both kate and i are scavengers of stuff - off the ground, thrift stores, the edge and it felt strange and beyond our territory to pack them into a mobile device and propose it as a forever changing sculpture  
Something that had meaning or could move beyond the edge of the white cube

May 16, 2013, 2:50 PM



I like the idea of layout as map  
I was thinking of richters atlas series of photos

Atlas rugged  
If rugging is brushing everything under one canopy

Yeah, this image scavenging is something that I work with as well a bit. I feel like this can be an important concern, just how to deal with the mass of images that are shared every day, and how different groups elect to sort and use them in different ways. There's the very intersubjective way



Yeah, this image scavenging is something that I work with as well a bit. I feel like this can be an important concern, just how to deal with the mass of images that are shared every day, and how different groups elect to sort and use them in different ways. There's the very intersubjective way, like the mood boards I mentioned earlier, where people repost images as nauseum, and end up with a constellation of images that is supposed to represent their own personal taste/brand and their own kind of surface level research into the world of imagery. But there's also what gets called information aesthetics or data visualization, which is all about not being subjective--trying to be objective, but it fails I think usually--and trying to represent huge sets of images. I started this project Similar Objects around the same time as I created the first Image Objects. The whole project basically uses some starting image, run through google similar image search, to find images that are deemed visually similar by google's algorithm, another kind of subjectivity that tries to be objective. I feel like in these works I'm trying in some way to achieve something between the two polarities: it doesn't pretend to be objective, but it's not subjective either, and in fact if you look at a lot of the images side by side it seems totally ridiculous that even a machine thought they looked the same.



One instantiation

Also [similarobjects.com](http://similarobjects.com)

May 16, 2013, 3:00 PM

It's funny that you say people were put off by this "clunky familiar thing" in the cell phone--especially I think because since you did that project mobile devices have become some of the sexiest industrial design objects out there, things that are totally coveted and reliable.

Yeah I know  
It was weird to think about that project in terms of taste and being distasteful  
Like the way duchamps fountain was received maybe

Looking at your similar objects sculpture makes me smile  
There is a really beautiful idea in thinking about similarities between things and how machines generate these algorithms in a seemingly effortless fashion yet your way of displaying them deals with gravity, a pivot, a clamp, scale and things that the google search can bypass  
What did you discover when putting together that sculpture? Is searching by clicking the same as searching by clamping glueing etc?

May 16, 2013, 3:18 PM

I think there's definitely some kind of relationship between these methodologies. Using all of these images is in a way just using what's around and accessible, in the same way that you see a few objects and put them in relationship with one another. That piece had a very weird domestic beginning actually--those are IKEA mirrors and sawhorses, which were materials that I had around my home and studio when I moved recently. I came home one day and my partner Camille had put this full length mirror on top of the sawhorse, and seeing them in relationship with one another I was really into it. I put clamps onto it to keep it from ever falling, and in doing so it seemed so much like the format of an advertising banner to me, which was actually the way I had initially envisioned the piece. I had wanted to use an already existing language of image display (the advertising banner) to work with these images, but seeing the similarity (and since I've used these same IKEA sawhorses in a number of pieces before) it seemed like the perfect way to transform it. There's something about it being objects from domestic environments that's interesting to me about it.

Ha thats strangely how i arrived at these buffet table pieces --

Ha thats strangely how i arrived at these buffet table pieces --



You mentioned Katamari Damacy, do you follow videogames? I'm curious because I feel like there's something about how one works with artificial space in those types of environments that a lot of young artists are responding to and get inspiration from.

In which the objects on top become a way of mapping - in a alchemical sense - if  $x = y$  then grapes squared equals your mom

I grew up with video games but then sort of became alienated by them when they were first person point of view- and had trouble navigating the world that wasn't side to side -  
Back and forth --  
But i think about those games and the moment that that world, which had always offered me a place for escape became closed -even though through technological advances in software programming people were able to access more "actual" experience - maybe i felt that there wasn't a place for me to project my imagination - or that the zone of discovery or anticipation had collapsed and i moved on to something else- drugs and sex

The kind of spaces that i have informed my work are those of black box theater, multiple plane cameras used in early animation, dioramas, collapsed perspectival painting typical of Jan van eyks paintings or boschs carnivalesque environments

May 16, 2013, 3:31 PM

the connections used in genealogical charts and parlor games like the six degrees of kevin bacon are ways in which i am considering things like your similar objects- but vis-a-vis a trip to the supermarket then a trip to IKEA and the mall and the movie theater and an alley

your similar objects- but vis-a-vis a trip to the supermarket then a trip to IKEA and the mall and the movie theater and an alley

I think of how lars von trier has turned America into his own artificial space- having never visited it - but experienced what it has to offer through all forms of media- and then responded, analyzed, and reinserted a parallel experience/portrait of what that culture is to him and many outside of it- and how that in many ways is a surprisingly accurate depiction - almost as if we have then become the other-side of the video game/computer screen and he is the person clicking and browsing and surveying what we do  
And how that is so strange

lol

How bizzare by OMC

That makes sense. I grew up playing them too and have kept casually following them since.  
There's something I think they can accomplish which hasn't been as well articulated in other mediums--recently things like Portal or indie games like Fez, really complicate spatial relationships in a kind of amazing way. And since it's interactive it's different than, for example, watching The Shining really closely to notice that the interior architecture is presented almost nonsensically, or at least spatially unrealistic.

At the same time I feel like I drifted away from that too--the things I like to look at are these weird moments of tension between the virtual and actual, or to be less dry about it, the kind of social conventions or assumptions people make about different types of objects or media. So for example, intellectual property law, which is a societal convention created basically to maintain order over disputes about abstract ideas. Or even the preconceptions people have about digital media as "immaterial". In a way intellectual property is far more immaterial than any digital media ever has been.

Ah, I like that we were both getting to this question of immateriality



Ah, I like that we were both getting to this question of immateriality as I was typing that heh. The von Trier thing is a good example--we all form our outlooks from these completely mediated perspectives.

reading what you sent me I see the way in which flusser is understanding history is through more writing about history and that additive layers is a way in which we attempt to distill

May 16, 2013, 4:01 PM

Yeah, he definitely tries to build a linear narrative, which itself is funny because overall he's talking about a future age of relativism that in a lot of ways we inhabit now. But I think the way he does it is pretty interesting. He builds out this idea that we've gone from an age of what he calls linear texts into a more difficult realm where visual communication is on the same level if not stronger than textual communication. I think he'd be excited by things like Tumblr. But I imagine he'd also see a poverty in it, since he dreams it as a mass democratization, and a lot of what we've seen so far continues to reify old media structures or continue old hierarchies

Yes this is absolutely true And perception and ideas shift and grow all of the time I feel we both are proposing at a given moment that what we have surveyed is reading as this-or that- but this is in flux and we can deconstruct and try again - in time and come up with a new evaluation of the present, the future, and the past and the slimey more recent past

May 16, 2013, 3:47 PM

Which is, itself, formed by whatever mediated sources we've observed. Have you read any Flusser?

No i havent Can you send me

Speaking of immateriality Everything i am writing from needs more power and is about to die-- so give me a few while that happens....

Just sent you his book into the Universe of Technical Images, or the recent translation. He had an interesting outlook on this-

-writing in 1985--that with an apparatus, like the camera or really anything with which we can produce something else, built into that apparatus is all of the possible products of that apparatus. That by necessity any production with that device would be limited by all of the possible outcomes. He called it the "competence" of the apparatus, after a concept in mathematics.

Sure thing, I need to charge too heh.

It is strange then Or just instinctual that we take what we have and mash them together until we have discovered fire And then we add a new layer to complicate what we have discovered and we try again.

As i have just begun reading what you sent me i see the way in which flusser is understanding history is through more writing about history and

Like when i was in school we would speak about "the work" and locating where it existed and if it is hovering and floating between things waiting to be understood in brief moments of discovery -the object etc- then where and why and what do we do with the fossil of the idea which has become the work- except put it aside to be rediscovered in another place and time outside of our world- right now- And for me the network then grew and the emphasis of the image became stronger than the object- but i still wake up everyday and shit and eat and deal with the object which is my body, and although life may be easier as a ghost - i wonder what drives us to continue making if not purely due to compulsion and the desire to understand and interface with stuff in order to remind us that we are complicated beings in a ceaselessly complicated world and that the work will always transfer and embed itself into the products of our distilled desires and life is not a



embed itself into the products of our distilled desires and life is not a vacuum

I can hear someone in my building playing the beatles- some song about love- Its funny that some things never really change

Yeah, and still making objects too! So much for the eradication of ego and desire.

The Beatles will have to die

But then there's always some radio station playing Bach so maybe not. Old dead white men.

Old dead white men

Yeah i dont understand them

I need to go buy water from across the street

Corporeal concerns

Its really Hot today

It's pretty nice in Brooklyn

Philly is lawless in the summer

Yeah I recall, I miss that about it heh

Like, doing acid and breaking into the train yard to go tag; seems like ages ago and wasnt really.

And or breaking into the stables to ride horses bareback down the street in north philly, or going into your house to get your shotgun to break up another fight in front of Ericas sports bar -

There is shampoo all over my studio floor and everything smells like Axe and i can hear the Beatles This must be the place

May 16, 2013, 4:57 PM

That photo of the same side of the two coins is nice

I wonder how we should lay out these texts I feel like you know how to do things like that pretty well, right?

I had to look up what AFK was so ....

Heh yeah I could probably do that. Well I think there are a couple of things we could do. We could either copy and paste text and format it like that, or I could take a bunch of screenshots and edit it so

I want a picture of your hand Heh yeah I could probably do that. Well I think there are a couple of things we could do. We could either copy and paste text and format it like that, or I could take a bunch of screenshots and edit it so it looks the same as how we experienced it, through iMessage



I think im going to hold this until it completely melts Yes, I like the actual experience

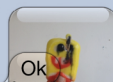
And maybe once we have that laid out we can fuck it up again Or double it or cut it in half or burn it

Or just include a match

Haha the eyes would be great. I wonder if they'd go back side by side a single match and a strip of sandpaper in each issue



Ha god that would be so fucking fun if they did



If for some reason there can be no match, we should invite people to buy a match and burn it and send photos of the magazine burning to the Internet

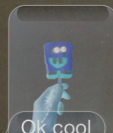
I feel like there are gaps still but maybe we can add and poke holes once its all laid out

Yeah, for sure, once we can look at it all together

Maybe we should copy paste everything out just so we can see it

Corporeal concerns

U mean screen shots or just laying things out Should i head to an internet place and look with things in a bit screenshots I assume, since hopefully we can use it like that, and then Im gonna be able to edit work on the layout like insert weird text on the side colliding into it Sorry had to deal with something, I'll screenshot all of this and get back to you



Ok cool

Or like handwrite our own comments about it and

THE NEXT DAY WE OFFICIALLY MET IN PERSON, AT A PARTY. WE DECIDED THE ONE THING WAS TO BODY.