

DEAR J,

HANNE VAN DYCK

We met each other at the site of Furkart on October 10. Along with the students from ECAV and CCA, I participated in the workshop “Curating the Alps,” organized by Benoît Antille. During the week, we saw various curatorial models and artistic approaches that have been applied in the Valais and elsewhere. As a result of the workshop, we were asked to formulate a possible proposal for a curatorial model/ artistic practice in the Alps, based on our experience. Before leaving I asked you if it was possible for us to come back and you said it is. Of course, we didn’t talk about the circumstances of this return, but ever since I have been daydreaming about returning to Furkart, and staying in the house of Panamarenko.

Right behind the house you can see a steep mountain slope and in front of it a road. The bus stops just outside the house. It’s neither big nor small. The roof is dark grey with flat roof tiles. Three windows rise up out of the roof, each one just the same size and a little bit more to the right. The windows look like little houses themselves: each has its own tiny roof. The windows are divided in six even parts and have white frames. Each roof carries a bit of snow. Water glides towards the gutter as it melts. A little chimney sits on top of the roof on the right side. The front of the house is rectangular, proportioned like two squares next to one another. It’s mostly beige with some dark-er spots here and there, especially at the bottom and on the left. Just below the roof are five more windows, hiding behind five shutters, from left to right: one orange, two green, one orange,

one green. Thirty-five white dots are painted underneath the leftmost orange shutter, stopping just before the next shutter starts. There are three rows: the top and bottom ones each have twelve dots in the same places; the one in the middle has eleven. Each dot has been placed in the middle of the dots in the other rows. Next to this you can see a sign painted in purple; the letters in yet darker purple are unreadable. To the right, ‘auto-garage’ is painted on the wall in capital letters – just legible – with a wooden garage door beneath it. The green paint on the door has peeled off, mostly visible at the bottom. The planks have been placed horizontally. The front door is just left of the garage door: between the third and fourth windows. Two steps lead up to a dark wooden door. The door is decorated with wooden carving, and in the middle, there is a circle. On the left of the door something is painted in little red letters: not legible anymore. More to the left, another wooden portal: just as dark as the front door. This door is wider, but lower, than the garage door. The bottom of the door – one third of its height – consists of vertical planks, and the rest of edgewise planks. Next to this, under the first orange window, is another window that’s been shut with a wooden plank. Between the front door and the door to the left are five holes in the wall. Three in a row, underneath the other two. On the far-left side is the bus schedule, mounted on the house, as well as a sign that signals for the bus to stop. On the left of the house a semi-circular structure has been built just as high as the bus sign. It’s made of cement

with plexy-glass windows. The window that's visible from the road is rectangular, except for the upper side which is bent. Out of the structure protrudes a stairway, which goes up at an angle and leads to a half glass, half metal structure that has been built on top of the roof. To the right of the house a very low and little wall has been built, with stones, from the house to the road: about a meter or two. Snow lies on both sides of the house.

As I may have told you, I recently moved back to Antwerp, where Panamarenko, Mark Luyten, Ria Pacquée, Luc Deleu, Filip Francis, and Guillaume Bijl live, or used to live. I moved here in May, and have since spent five months in the Swiss and Chinese mountains. Today I arrived back home and am ready to explain to you why I want to come to Furkart. The visit to Furkart inspired me in many ways, not only because of the history and location but also because of the discussions we had. We talked about the conservation of the artworks in Furkart, about living in the city and the countryside, about growing older as an artist, and about the differences between conceptual and physical labor.

I would like to come to a better understanding of my position in this world – as both an artist and a human being – by further examining the overlaps and discrepancies of the different worlds I live in... The city; the landscape; being somewhere else while traveling, visiting or living; being young and getting old; the artworld, the process of making art, the work of art itself, and their interrelations...

There is so much going on at Furkart that seems relevant for my generation: how to grow old as an artist, and how to take care of your work/world, or of someone else's work/world. You told us about Furkart and Furkapass; the Alps which are constantly moving; the influence of tourism, industrial, scientific and military usage of the mountains; and the rich history of hotel Furkablick.

In my work, I research the relationship between human beings and nature. I try to look at things how they really are, function, and perform, by reconstructing them and seeing how many elements come together in – for example – a mountain, a city and how many parts are needed to sustain its existence.



My practice is a balancing act of applying myself to an environment or a landscape, and making poetic deductions from that application. It represents an attempt to render myself – as well as the viewer or visitor – sensitive to, and conscious of, everything from an environment to one's place in an ecology of things and interrelations. I examine how this placement both shapes the relations between things and entities, which then come to shape us. Through my work, I introduce several templates – translated from fieldwork – into a new patchwork of significations and meanings, in the form of text, mixed media installations, video, and photography.

I had the chance to work in the mountains for the past five months, by traveling in China and doing an artist's residency there as well as in Sierre. I am now back in Antwerp. For this project, I would like to study, contemplate, and compare these two places – Antwerp and Furkart – as symbolic places/spaces which juxtapose one another in many ways, yet bring different worlds together. A city in a “plat pays,” the second biggest harbor of Europe, a culturally vibrant city; and Furkart – a place of discovery, a hidden treasure with a rich history. I would like to conduct this research through Psychogeography, defined by Guy Debord and members of Situationist International as, “The study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.”

This research will start in Antwerp, by getting in contact with the artists who have been in Furkart as well as wander around the city to get a new understanding of it. And use this research as a base to explore, observe and wander the site of Furkart.

Panamarenko's house will play a role in this but also my house, a 700m² warehouse in the city centre, without central heating or hot water, overlooking the Schelde, a very important international transport route.

Sixteen windows are overlooking the Schelde. In winter, we can live only in a few secluded spaces, so for the moment: six hot and ten very cold windows overlook the Schelde. My desk stands under the second, third and fourth windows from the left. The night slowly starts to fall. The air is baby blue, and purple-grey clouds are lying low on the horizon. One cloud comes out of a chimney hidden behind the trees. The cloud becomes bigger and bigger – white, grey and light yellow – and disappears behind the apartment building on my left. I can see ten big apartment buildings on the other side of the river. Only a few places have their lights turned on. There are trees everywhere, all about the same size. They're planted rather scarcely, and arouse my pity. On the other side of the water is a big marina. The boat masts are about as high as the trees. In the middle, stands a big building that looks like a boat. With my binoculars, I can see that it's a yacht club. Behind the trees there is an industrial zone. There are high constructions, cranes, and lots of steam. Light brown reeds stand at the river side. The Schelde makes a ninety degree turn to the left. A little white bridge leads to a cement landing in the middle of the turn. On the other side of the water – as far as I can see from here – are more trees, dark green and much more tree-like: not lonely anymore. Far away, in between the trees, I can see windmills, and to the right a few cranes. Somewhere on the other side we swim in the summer. Five ducks are flying by. A little ship goes by; a black hull and a car on deck; probably a houseboat. Right in front of me, on this side of the

water, there is the quay and a parking lot. Forty-one cars are parked there now; the working day is almost over; most people have already left. Then there are two blue containers, and a lot of colored objects that I can't identify. Three streetlights. People are jogging and cycling past. On the right, a house with two pointed roofs and one flat roof; next to that a long but low building. A low wall with words painted on it, in 1991, "POEZIE IN UITV". It's the beginning of a poem that follows the quay from north to south and connects both sides of the river. A motorway lies between the parking lot and my building; between the parking lot and the motorway a bicycle path; between the bicycle path and the motorway are roadworks, a tramway, and the driveway to an underground garage. All the lights are turning on: the streetlights, those on the bridge over the water. A few people in the apartment blocks have also turned on their lights; the cars are becoming lights. Advertisement panels tell me it's five degrees outside, to buy perfume, and about the chance to receive a smartphone with a new subscription. A boat, six cars, and a jogger, are moving; one car switches on its lights, the rest of the view seems to be standing still.

I see this proposal as an intentional act – that includes an openness towards new things and encounters – as a learning situation that can result in research, collaborations, or new work. I would like to ask for your approval to come to Furkart next summer and spend some time there: possibly in Panamarenko's house, to ponder all the above-mentioned questions and interests.

I hope you enjoy the holidays.

All my best and hoping to hear from you soon (or later).

