

otu: so, this time it was only just over a year that we saw and spoke to each other.

omi: really? how time seems to fly, doesn't it?

otu: speaking of time - did it work out and were you able to finish your book in the desired time frame?

omi: of course not. again, as so often, everything turned out differently. i'm still not finished with it. the layout, the image selection and the work of uploading the whole thing to one of the self-publishing platforms are still missing.

otu: aha, so no publisher?

omi: not a conventional publisher, no..

otu: ..didn't find one?

omi: i didn't look for one, that is, well yes, i wrote to around 20 agents, but even as i was doing that, it seemed more and more nonsensical. i asked myself why i was trying to get into any field of literature that i didn't really belong in. it was also disheartening to hear from all my writing friends that the graphics 'for sure' remained in the hands of the publisher and how low their sales margins were.. similar exaggeration as in galleries.

otu:...and then what did you decide?

omi: as soon as i finished writing to the agents, i wrote to them all again telling to please delete my request, i'd decided to publish it myself. so with one of the now many self-publishing platforms, like amazon, apple books, barnes & nobles, and whatever they're all called, i want..

otu: ..didn't you have a publishing house yourself, [Radical Books](#)?

omi: ohhh yes..uff.. but my partner in the project, the Czech count von Beneš, then decided, because of his bubbling economic drive and talent, to set up a Spanish ham import. half of the Czech republic now has a leg of pork at home, a long story. anyway, we had to put Radical Books back on ice. like the hams, except that they stay fresh.

otu: how exciting! and now?

omi: now i'm going to take the whole of October to do all the layout and image work and send it to the right channel. Inshallah.. i have no idea which one that is yet.

otu: amazon, apple books... that sounds like a strange complicity when i look at the way you work and its certain ethical background..

omi: yes, i have to go through that. you know.. but it just fits much better. i can do everything from a - z myself, nobody talks me into it, i don't have to make any lame compromises on style or content of the book, and then the profit ratio is much fairer than with traditional publishing houses. i also like the fact that with most of them a book is only printed when an order is received. so the sad warehouse in which the books rot away is also a thing of the past. we'll see who i end up working with, but i think it'll be one of the big ones, simply because they have the best distribution networks.. and because i wrote the book mainly to give it to friends. so, they'll have to buy the book, but the content is sort of a gift.. i mean if they didn't exist, i wouldn't have written it.

otu: what's the name of your book? did you tell me then?

omi: i don't remember. it's called I AM - MY FRIENDS, THE TUMOR AND THE ART,
ICH BIN - MEINE FREUND:INNEN, DER TUMOR UND DIE KUNST

otu: oh, i'm very curious, maybe we could even have a 5th conversation after i've read it?

omi: maybe.

otu: do you want to say anything else about the book? otherwise i'd like to come back to questions we've already touched on.

omi: no. or maybe yes.. i've added one by Simone Weill to the other quotes that precede the book: *"One should always identify with the universe itself. Everything that is less than the universe is subject to suffering"*.

otu: hallelujah! and why do you have to mention that?

omi: because it is very important to know.. because it addresses one of the central problems of this messed up human-world..

otu: ..is sweet loving love coming up again now?

omi: if that's what you want to call it. i mention it because this beautiful statement contains everything i tried to understand in my book.

Otu: ..to understand?

omi: yes. that's what i also say in the foreword - that i want to explore the question of how it was possible, how it came about that from the very beginning and on the whole, i always saw my tumor as a gift, not as a threat.

otu: and that led you to identify with the universe?

omi: that made me realize that i am nothing less than this! I AM, you know.

otu: yes, but everyone is, without encompassing galaxies and infinite expanses and complexities. isn't it a bit exhausting to be the universe?

otu: no, it seems to me the most freeing and plausible of all. the only consolation that provokes a smile, if it spills into your consciousness from the depths, or heights, or breadths, as you will: I AM everything. The whole life, all that there is and always will be.

otu: sorry, but for me this is really an esoteric babble now..

omi: yes, i can't blame you. but look, Alan watts, the "philosophical entertainer", as he once called himself, and whom i like to read again these days, once made a nice metaphorical point. very roughly speaking, there are two kinds of consciousnesses he said, the *spotlight consciousness* and the *floodlight consciousness*.

the spotlight has a narrow radius, can concentrate on something and sees the universe as a made thing. this is what most people identify with, at least here in the so-called western civilization. spotlight consciousness sees itself as a separate identity in a foreign world. floodlight consciousness, on the other hand, is everything that happens subconsciously without us, while we locate ourselves in our heads, not noticing it. you don't beat your heart, it does that by itself and other infinite actions that happen every moment in you, out of you, into you and through you..

otu: ..interesting image, okay. but why is that comfort and why does it make you smile?

omi: well, because from a scientific point of view - we also touched on this briefly in the third conversation - it point to *one in the multiplicity*. Life as such. we are not egos enclosed in skin bags, as Watts calls it, we are the universe. or to put it more accessibly, if we *are* only in permanent interaction with our entire organism and this only in permanent interaction with its environment, we are ultimately everything. the thinker is what is thought, the seer is what is seen. we may be infinitely different on the outside, but on the inside we go together. that's why i said in our last conversation that giving and receiving are the same thing. i think that's when you gave me the hippie village priest label.

otu: well, I have to sleep on these statements too, but..

omi: ..you see, even your way of expressing yourself points to these statements.. if you have to sleep on it, it's probably because you trust your floodlight subconsciousness to clarify something for your spotlight mind in your sleep, as if by itself.. only that now a self is meant that goes far beyond linguistic or intellectual abilities..

otu: aha, i'll think about it, good...

omi: didn't you want to sleep on it better?

otu:.. (narrows his eyes).. let's leave it alone now.. if you don't mind, i'd like to come back to a question that had slipped away from us. when i went through our conversation again yesterday from part 1, i realized that we forgot to pick up a question from the 2nd conversation in the 3rd one.

omi: yes, that's right, i also remembered that at some point, but i forgot the question...

otu: ..when it came to colleagues you mentioned in praise, namely Olafur Eliasson, Otobong Nkanga, Thomas Hirschhorn and Superflex.. and my question was why you said they were all close to your way of working..

omi: ..yes, exactly.. well, first of all because i just feel it.. what they brew in their work, how they do it and how it then shows itself, and how they present their person, as quasi, now speaking again in the watts-dictus, their egos encapsulated in skin bags in the art world, is as if it could also be mine.. so i feel great sympathy..

otu: could it be a bit more precise? any concrete project maybe.. finally..

omi: ..i think we would be friends if we had a few beers behind us.

otu: so you don't want to go into aesthetics and content?

omi: ..yes, i would, but i already know that that won't satisfy you either.. and by the way, what is more beautiful and rich of content than a friendship? well, in other words, i could pick a project from each of them and continue it, expand it in some way.. but i mean really putting hands on their work, not making words about it with you now.. i'd really like to that. for me, that indicates that we basically feel and think like art-relatives, that we probably also question our "skin bag existence" in a similar way and want to shape and communicate our projects beyond that.

otu: how do you mean that, like you, they want to go beyond that ego-consciousness?

omi: look at their projects.. they are all artists who, in one way or another, do not play along with the superbranding of superstars in the individual cult of the art market. they are all more or less famous and very much in demand, but on all levels, as far as i can understand from a distance, they refuse the clichés of the genius.. the one, extremely talented.. but always speak of their works as qualities of relationships, or of collaboration, or open themselves up even to charitable aspects and results..

otu: ..well, but ultimately they are simply authors, authors who also sign as such and know their market value..

omi: ..of course, what else could they do, but that's probably only for spotlight and copyright reasons. presumably they all know that they're nothing special, but that it's life itself. nature. the universe. and that generates a certain kind of quality of their works which i like very much.

otu: all right, so we're back to "sleeping on it"..

omi: ..yes, what you can't think about, you have to sleep about..

otu: ..frankly, the longer the more i feel like i'm not talking to an artist at all, but to a self-taught meditation teacher or something like that..

omi: (laughs) of course, i could be ambitious now and say something comparatively clever, but to be honest - and sorry mister, but meditation is as far as i met this sort of technic or tool, a very, very fine art! Ultimately it's the most creative lifestyle i met - well yes, i'm rather glad that i'm so stupid..

otu: ...come on, now you're being a coquette!

omi: ..no in a semi-serious way i'm serious, i just don't want to take myself so seriously.. so.. do you remember what Beuys once said: "*i am in search of the stupidest.*"?

omi:.. yes, what do you think he meant?

omi: i was just about to ask you that..

otu: you tell me, i'm too intelligent for that..

omi: well, i always had the impression that it couldn't mean anything other than looking for the one who lives in the floodlight. like a child does. by "stupid" he surely didn't mean simply dumb.. but rather pointed to a refined sensitivity and attentiveness.. the one who really feels and understands profoundly the ideas and values Beuys always talked about.. i think reading life, so to speak, is 1000 and 1 times more instructive than reading books about life.

otu: ...oh yes, certainly (groans annoyed)... say, what are you reading right now?

omi: your moaning..

otu: and what do you understand when you read that?

omi: well, that i'm annoying you. but we're not bored, are we? do you still want to have a 5th conversation?

otu: maybe.

omi: i know by now that we will (loughs)!

otu: and you're not reading any real book right now?

omi: no, not "right now". but on my bedside table are laying 4. the *"Wisdom of the Unsafe Life"* by Watts, a beautiful collection of essays by Jiddu Krishnamurti, a booklet by Simone Weill about her time as a factory worker - *"The difficulty of lifting your head to heaven"* - *Von der Schwierigkeit, den Kopf zum Himmel zu heben*, is the German title of the book, i have no idea what the correct English title is... and the new *Kunstforum* on the subject of textiles.

otu: oh, thank goodness art is still included!

omi: art is mentioned from front to back in all these writings! hellooo, it's the 21st century! as i said - to meditate is art, or better its the fountain of freshness, from where its 'arting', at least for me it is. what else should art nowadays be about if not the most open and therefore most fascinating questions?

otu: okay, so... come on, frankly i'm exhausted by your answers today, i feel like i'm not in charge, or i don't really know what we're talking about anymore..

omi: interesting..

otu: ..well... please allow me just two more small questions from the field i know better. please give me two short answers.

omi: why short? are you going to miss the train home or what?

otu: no, but i hope this means you're leaving the universe out of it for once and we can get a little closer to the artist via art..

omi: go ahead.

otu: 1. what is the last work by a contemporary artist-colleague that really convinced you?
2. has your first book, which you have written and is soon to be published, inspired you to write a second one? if so, which one?

omi: 1st: Hannah Cooke *"Ada vs. Abramović"* and *"Ada vs. Emin"*.

2: yes. working title *"Why I AM so Stupid"*, it wants to narrate about the 50 or so places where i had my homes.

otu: if i can get you to promise that in the 5th conversation we will talk about art in the.. well.. conventional way, namely about Cooke's work and the reason why you want to write this second book, except that you are the universe, i would look forward to..

omi: ..it's a deal, i swear. but remember, i mean watch out the other beautiful statement by Federico Fellini, *"I am in search of the absolute lie"*.