
Art and Emergency

ISSUE editor, Venka Purushothaman with artists Vincent Leow,
Pratchaya Phinthong, Milenko Prvački

This conversation took place in the heritage city of Georgetown in Penang, Malaysia, on 27 and 28 April 2022. The discussion aims to be as close to the participants' comments within their vernacular expressions and has only been edited for clarity where needed. The original transcription was considerably longer, and the present form here is a focused rendition.

perceptually art

Venka Purushothaman

We live in a state of flux. We look at an emergency as a crisis that is always called a break, a rupture. That's a bleeding and a wounded society. Wound also means renewal of life—rejuvenation. As you know, in all these moments of crisis, we stop talking to artists about ideas and their take on the world. We have no time to observe but are flooded with imagery. And so, I just want to get a sense from you, mainly where you are at in your practice and your responses to the world. What new things do you observe?

Pratchaya Phinthong

As an artist, a practising artist, I feel a sense of not an emergency but urgency all the time. I make myself available, yet I don't know in which arena I could explain myself. I'm trying to understand all the painting, printmaking, and sculpture I have learnt and then try to forget it all. I have them as an asset, and I recall and work on them whenever I need them. The simplest and hardest thing to do is to be ready and to be able to absorb and feel the things and everything surrounding you and to try to reform yourself.

This experience is happening every day. That's why the sense of urgency for me in practice is to be able to cope with the urgency in terms of where you can; whatever you have learnt in your history, that knowledge will secure you or be fundamental to what is coming at you. I can feel the subject you brought up is very interesting, but to what extent is this an emergency? Is it because, as you were saying, we are dealing with time or is it COVID-19 or war? So, there has been something that has been coming to the peak where we find ourselves emerging and changing and becoming something that will change us forever.

So now we can travel again because we never thought that something like COVID-19 would happen and how our lives would change. I had a lot of changes in my life as well. We shift ourselves from the crisis and we go on. I think the problem I have the most is getting used to thinking to understand, to feel the cause of the emergency. So, this takes getting used to. I'm not applying a negative or positive take on it, but it's a feeling I have to get rid of—to have soft skin to start, to be refreshed all the time. Because all the knowledge, all the media, everything gets you used to war which is already a month old. You get used to something that is constantly nonstop (COVID-19, war); whenever you turn on the TV or open your ears and eyes, everything comes to a state of violence. So how can we have immunity, that is, understanding the point of something?

Vincent Leow

I liked what Venka said about observation. We are all observing this whole thing. And I think that observation as an art student today is lacking because they are all just drawing from their electronic devices. Sometimes when I take [students] for outdoor drawing, they take a picture and then draw from their devices. There is a very mechanical observation and connection with the observation itself. They have become dependent on their devices. I feel that observation is more than drawing their subjects.

I believe that the idea of 'emerge' comes across strongly because 'emergency' or 'emerge' manifests from observing. We become more observant as artists when we see something emerging. I feel that one of the things that artists do is respond to their subject. I think that the

idea of responding is essential. In the military, too, you observe the enemy emerging, and then you respond. And in artmaking, we use that response. I feel that emergence and emergency are connected because of that immediate response to a situation. There are a lot of times I feel that we are somehow stalling, somehow delaying our responding. Maybe we depend on some instructions?

Milenko Prvački

I absolutely agree with Vincent. He brings art students into nature, and they take a picture and then look at the camera. We have the big picture right in front of us, and we reduce it to something that we have to focus on—totally disconnecting from nature because the observation skill is absolutely different when we have another perspective. But I'm thinking about our own stresses. I am trying to say it's not only an emergency in the hospitals, but when you switch on or off the TV, it looks like this. Anyway, you can't sell information, newspapers or TV programmes with good news. We have all of these stresses which are not easy to fight. You know when you cut your fingers, you see a doctor; now [the stress] is something which is becoming very permanent, plus COVID-19 and war. And it's not only about the Ukrainian war. Last thirty or forty years, we have seen war somewhere all the time. I ran away from the civil war in the middle of Europe, but then we have the Middle East—always every day some war, and we never say it's a third world war like the first two which ended. We have a permanent ongoing war. War is consuming all of us. There is a democracy, but at the same time, it's the double standard where the power has a pattern. What's happening in Ukraine-Russian War is very similar to what happened with Serbia and Kosovo.

We all know our history.

Vincent Leow

Art traditionally is always problematic, the problems in art that makes us think, to make us look at it with a fresh eye, inviting different perspectives. The media provides different perspectives from an artist's perspective and intention. Artists look at everything differently; rather than taking sides because to the artists, everything is grey.

Milenko Prvački

I think we don't have pleasant inspiration. We have ideas, but we can't catch any of these beautiful ideas. I have started to understand why art is becoming devoid of aesthetics.

Pratchaya Phinthong

Lacking ideas is one thing that is traumatising. A lot of ideas are also traumatising in certain ways. There is no fine line. Art is a thought-provoking process, so it engages you to be thinking. So, the boundary is also part of the game to set terms for the way of thinking. When you fall into one basket or a different one and then try to admit yourself to that, it doesn't seem to be right. As you say (Vincent), it's not to say that we are to be the victims of the phone this and that or we understand one side or both or up or down below or better than the other, but we are trying to transfer this conflict.

The conflict doesn't have to be so big. It can be small, on the toilet, or anywhere inside your body. That which is provoking us to do art, that's beneficial. It allows me to deal with a lot of things and sets me free to go from one side to the other, and allows me to make myself open and understand other people. It's not in a general way.

Art becomes this line. Every sequence of time you project this urgency or emergency or the unexpected, it obstructs our view. And if you see this obstruction, not in the terms of Buddhism or whatever religion, but in terms of something that is confronting you, for me, that would be subject to mobilise, to work on it. If you turn the other way, you will still see the unexpected kind of stuff anyway. Life has already been created like this and will continue until the last of your days.

Venka Purushothaman

I really appreciate how the conversation is dealing with what I would say the deficit of culture that art presents to us. This is a positive thing but also a negative thing. I mean, you talked about observation, you talked about urgencies, we reached into historical misgivings, and you know there are the perspectives and the boundaries within which we are operating. I think the deficit is also how artists have to respond to immediacy. Actually, as Pratchaya says, artists can choose not to respond to it. What, in actual fact, I think is that we are overly institutionalised in our responses. We are numbed to spontaneity.

I want to return to observation. I was kind of reflecting on what Vincent said. As an undergraduate student, for a module in communications, I had to write, if my memory serves me right, close to 100 entries of observations. For example, one aspect was intra-communication, where you had to observe yourself, for example, brushing your teeth and writing about the ritual. Then you're supposed to write about aspects of non-human communication processes where you could observe a cat, dog, or mouse. Then, in human communication where you had to observe someone that you personally know (for example, family member), observe people who are not your family members and observe people in large group settings. The exercise helped map and shape multiple perspectives and sharpened the way I created perspectives and contexts.

But that's that thing because I think as human beings, we all of a sudden are now being told how we should function, not just as artists, but as humans. How do we observe, and how do we communicate in an increasingly technologised world? Of course, as humans, we are also trained to be nice to people, tolerant, and diverse. But the fact is, we are no longer ourselves in terms of how we respond to people because of technology.

Pratchaya Phinthong

When I ask students to observe closely when they are taking a shower, this is a kind of action. Once you try to see it, it will change from what comes automatically, naturally. It starts with soap. What kind of soap? So, if you have started the same way, you put shampoo. So, if you don't think of that, it goes naturally. So, I think, it's about projection. So, are you projecting yourself or are other people projecting you? So, the change of this kind of movement or the way that this performative thing will change according to them. For me, when I don't 'think' about my shower, every shower is the same all the time.

Milenko Prvački

I find very interesting this writing project Venka spoke about because it connects to the idea of perception, delivery, waiting and responding. So, whatever in these three, four stories you mentioned—perception is number one. Perception skill is the ability to observe and transform. But then, when you look at a toilet bowl and describe it's something very observational and very pragmatic. When you have to analyse your

cat, you are already more emotional. When you have to observe and perceive your close family, then you are very emotional. So, this is how we respond. Perception is always number one. We will have to observe in order to react, but the ways are different. And I think we artists are sometimes quite emotional, which is nothing wrong, but it's becoming wrong because sometimes your reaction is in conflict with new rules.

Venka Purushothaman

Self-analysis is very intimate. As such observational skills and perception are key. We have to care for ourselves before embarking on self-analysis. If I can't look after myself, how am I going to be able to give a sense of a situation or express an experience, or have a conversation with someone else who might have view on a situation. So, I think that self-awareness is important. I find with technology and social media I think our self-awareness has become so much more in a sense of inertia. If we normalise all of this now, do I need to respond?

Language of their own

Milenko Prvački

Art is trapped in the idea of 'style' for thousands of years. We don't have, and it is not correct to use 'style.' Art is about language because it's a very individual. Art is not style. And that's why it's important to understand artists.

Venka Purushothaman

People have forgotten that art itself is a language of its own. Today, there's a sense of urgency to introduce technology in art in every school in every corner of the world. If artists feel a need for technology to formulate their language, fine. If not, why would I want to impose?

Vincent Leow

The media has changed today. The pressure of technology provided to students and they are like "hey, I don't need the sketchbook anymore, I just need the iPad or an electronic device, you know?" So, in the end I think the whole process of processing observation, thinking or self-awareness has become diverse and different.

Venka Purushothaman

I just saw a very interesting piece of final year design student work at LASALLE working through hip-hop dance movement and light systems to develop a typographical system for writing...

Milenko Prvački

This is talking about language I think is very important. It's important that our own limits are personal. How much do we want to be free and unlimited is a personal choice. But, then again, we create our own kind of borders, our own fences and limits and its personal. It's a choice. I get angry when someone else imposes or creates limits for the individual.

Venka Purushothaman

Your point Milenko leads to the right to critique or comment. And the right to critique and criticise was very organic in terms of how a person was thinking through the situation, the issues and all that. But I think increasingly, we live in a world where, like you earlier mentioned, you know the boundaries are very black and white. It's either this or that and technology has enabled, social media enabled it to be very black and white, that the fact that the right to critique is no longer sitting in the in-between space. Because the right to critique is to actually tease out the issues that even the artist may not have realised. Sometimes the artist is coming from a particular perspective and through that conversation/critique you see things that manifest itself in ways that you might not have imagined or intended.

And I don't think we have that space there. Because everyone is taking such categorical perspectives in very thick boundary lines. And I think this is also part of the problem with philosophy and education. Boundaries and binaries are so entrenched and people are struggling to free themselves to create new ways of thinking.

So, I'll give you an example. I was at a conference some years ago in Zurich and the conference was about collaboration. And one of the key topics around collaboration was why increasingly we need to be providing for collaborative collectivist artistic practices, group practices rather than individual and there was a lot of discussion about moving away from the individual as the artist. And this was coming just before the Indonesia artist collective, Ruangrupa was appointed as curators of Documenta 15. So Ruangrupa's Ade Darmawan was there, he was part of it. The Swiss and the German presentation was the art of the future would be highly collectivist. It would be co-created, co-shared, co-thought through in different ways breaking away from hierarchical approaches to power structures. But this is what we do in Southeast Asia anyway. So, I referenced back to the Indonesian concept of *gotong-royong* or coming together to deliberate and proceed as a way of thinking. And hence all of a sudden, you know, Southeast Asia became sexy for Europe. And they were looking for artists who were having that kind of a space that you can come in and infuse a new way of thinking about it.

Milenko Prvački

Not only Europe but US, have become overstructured. I'm able to contextualise everything! Here in Asia, we are talking about opening door, window and trying to get out. There (Europe and US) they are trying to do opposite. To lock down something. They think they are able to anticipate what's going to happen. Because of media, sometimes they do unfortunately. But I think for them Southeast Asia is out you know, because they are suddenly surprised that there are so many open doors and windows here while they have locked themselves. They always ask me when I go back (to Asia) what am I doing there? It is the reason why I bring young artists to Pulau Ubin first; and most of them think that Singapore/Asia is a banana tree. It's totally wrong. I say: "Oh, I enjoy it there because everything is fresh." Here it's just open. You do whatever you want. You accept any influence, you mix up. In Europe everything is already overstructured. It's boring.

Venka Purushothaman

This over-structuring is entering seriously into identity politics. You know everyone you know.

Milenko Prvački

You mentioned about being critical. We are critical about things. We perceive social issues, philosophical issues, historical issues, community. The major problem with us is how much critical we are about ourselves; you mentioned the example about showering and how we shower, I'm sure you always do it in the same way. I shower in the same way and I start from here and go down—it's the way I move. So, I was always thinking about that: every evening when I leave my studio, I'm real genius and then in the morning when I come in, I say shit what did I do. Because being alone with your own work expressing things on the spot sometimes too fast and then enjoying the process, but then when you come back and look it could be different. It's not the right way. Sometimes if you don't step back and look at your own work that's the major mistake of artists.

fragility

Pratchaya Phinthong

Being fragile also enables artists to create at the same time. So, that's really explaining the situation where we are living. You need to be poor to understand the value of this other side.

Venka Purushothaman

We are fragile in many ways. But then there's still strength in the artistic enterprise, there's still strength in what we are seeing and what artists do.

Milenko Prvački

About the word fragility, I am always thinking that there is no 'normal' and there are no 'normal' people.

People, sometimes or most of the time, are not allowed to comment or have their own opinion. Their job is to execute or produce or do something. With artists, we are a bit open. We unpack and we are exposed to sun, to nature. This is also fragile. Without us, this nature should carry on without problems but we damage the environment and nature becomes fragile. But we are naturally exposed to all this rubbish...sometimes it depends on artists as to how fragile they are.

Apropos, I want to ask Vincent something because I never asked you. I hope you're not going to be offended. When I came to Singapore, you and your group (The Artists Village) were very active as painter and performance artist—very provocative, and you were having lots of problems, risky art. Even now, in the eyes of censorships and politics. And I remember, you did a lot of risky things. You are a quiet man now. What was your perception then, when your art drew strong reactions?

Vincent Leow

It was a journey for me and it is very important and I don't regret it. If I don't do it or because I think that making art is about taking risks and we don't have all answers to artmaking. At that time when I was doing performance, painting and all I'm doing, I feel that at that time I don't fully understand any of these artforms like performance art. I feel that it was an important learning curve in my process. Exploring different artforms impacted me to be able to look at/ reflect on my artmaking process.

Now we can provide art students advice; in my early years very little advice or anything was provided. So, there is a shift in the way we make our art. There is an artmaking practice that you go on our own without guidance (self-taught) and there's a practice that you go with a lot of guidance. And this guidance is institutionalised.

For me, it is the exploratory element in my work and I also learnt a lot—taking risks becomes a big part in my artmaking.

The arts community does give a lot of support. I remember during my risky performance works in the 1990s, people really supported me and helped me. Artists are sometimes not the most articulate people. I really appreciate that there were people who helped articulate the work. So, I think that it can be good stress because after that performance they helped to talk through the process. I saw it as a kind of a reflection. All this experience to me is a part of my journey in my art practice. And this has allowed me to reflect upon what I can further in my own practice and whether I'm able to define my personal and public space. I became more aware and to think deeper into my work. What I have

gone through is all part of learning. What I make or what I do as an artist can only be done are my experiences of the work I make today.

Venka Purushothaman

Because you've spent quite a bit of time in the Middle East, Sharjah, right? If we think Singapore is a strict place, you were going to an even stricter place, and for someone whose works might be perceived by others as being risky.

Vincent Leow

One of the reasons I wanted to go there was I was a young artist, I was eager to learn about Western art. Most of my peers would choose to go to the UK and I chose US because American art was what interested me. My conversations on art with friends were mostly about eastern and western art, seldom or hardly were any about the Middle East and it became a place of interest to me. One of the reasons I wanted to go to the Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE) was because I was curious and there was an opening for me. Even though the place was conservative, I learnt that it was not so as I imagine. Something that I found in the UAE was that there was somehow a very clear line between what is private and what is public in the Middle East. It made me interested about private and public spaces. During my time there I remember, watching a programme on cable television there, realising that they have much more variety of choices than our programmes here. I felt that they don't have as much censorship as we do here, on their private TV channels. Whereas in the public space, such at the Kinokuniya Bookstore when I was there to buy an art book, I see nude paintings redacted using a black marker. In comparison, in the university library I don't see that happening. Being there made me think about the realm of public and private spaces there alot. I think that making my artwork there also allows me to look at a different approaches and perspectives to my artmaking.

Struggles/Education

Venka Purushothaman

And how do you educate, how do you teach, how do you create environments and communities in an information-loaded world. It's not just about the art school, but just general education itself. An important part of education is in building of communities amongst peers to support and learn from each other not just enabling individual skills achievement. This lack of emphasis on artist communities, I believe, contributes to the struggles in the journey of the artist.

Milenko Prvački

In art nothing is fixed. We float and swim all the time, and you know, just waiting to sink. But young artists today are more concerned about many things, and I quite like their independence.

Vincent Leow

...finding their own space, finding their own voices to be heard...

Milenko Prvački

I'm joking here, but Van Gogh will die in Singapore after six months because no way someone would give him food, paint or whatever. You can't borrow money from someone in Singapore easily. If people do give, they make profit out of the loan. In Belgrade, if I have a problem, I ask my parents or my friends and this is very normal. So, that's why I joke that Van Gogh would die very fast here. In Europe, artists are respected. Even bad artists are respected. So I have many friends who became heavy alcoholics. Because when they sit in restaurant, a bottle of wine is there, a table waiting for people to drop off wine and food 'for all the

artists.' Artists stop going to their studios and prefer to sit in restaurants and drink. But we need artists. It's like my grandmother always said, someone in the family has to be artist. Today, there are unions in some countries that will arrange that government to support struggling artists with pensions and medical support.

Pratchaya Phinthong

In Thailand there's no union, no pensions sort of. My way of understanding to be naked to situations and feel all the things as you practise your art. A lot of people in places like Silpakorn University, Chiang Mai university have sort of a name, and some left the university and became artists. In my class of fifty students, probably two or three became artists. They really sit with their thing. And then the others, that's fine too.

Artists cannot be finding a kind of soft wall or soft landing for them wherever the situation is really harsh, there is no way. Because you perform as a professional artist when you are over thirty, selling art is not for everyone also. That is only one part. The second part is the collector, kind of leading you to somewhere for doing art, kind of influencing you. There's sort of playing around, some kind of negotiation, but also will kind of shape you to a certain state.

A lot of young artists I know or artists in my age, they are really doing their thing. I mean, mostly middle class, so somehow when they are short of money, they have some... and some people would just come out from graduation and start to think about having a place to do their own thing, like startups. Of course, the opportunity for startups is there but even then there's no kind of drop of water or something that could transport artists a little bit further. I think money is only one thing.

Milenko Prvački

That is what I want to say. Different countries have a different system on how to manage, or a better way to say it, *not* managing artists. But that means we are in a permanent state of emergency. Because intellectual or spiritual contribution to the society, are ignored financially. You don't remember who is the lawyer or doctor in 17th century but you know what they do, and you go and see this architecture, music, whatever...and not everyone understands Mozart. As artists, through exhibitions, actions and performances, we give something spiritual, something intellectual for a nation or society. So, they don't appreciate, or [they] think that this is contribution that need not be paid for. It's taken for granted everywhere—"You're an artist, can you sing something?" or ask Zelensky, "can you tell me something funny because you are a comedian?"

Vincent Leow

Historically, I believe that artists have had strong patrons. Like the royal family will support the artists and care for them. In contemporary times, I guess it has become like a job and no longer like "oh, you are a painter, come and paint something for us." In the past, I believe that artists play a very important role in society and like the Renaissance period, the Medici families would be patrons and nurture the artists through commissions.

Pratchaya Phinthong

What I did was, I had my wife start a t-shirt business selling in the market for a living: to relieve me of being dependent to, bound to. So, I just want to live my life and do what I love. That is the thing.

And when I ask for money, job from somewhere or support it's all like always having obligations. I don't mind painting someone's house, colour or doing something whatever job —art can really apply to all kinds of things. At the end of the day, I would do my thing. This is what I am. So, in order to do that, you have to make a living. And make a living, you can choose what you like, be a teacher, like floating, through that and a lot of people are having a side job in order to be able to move and you know like I don't know... I mean for example if you pick up very early as a young artist, success somehow, money-wise—there are people buying your work and you're fine. But to what point... yea, you must have a certain point. I think economics is also one subject and that's a great tool to draw out something and I think that's a great medium to understand the world that we live in very easily from the day you start to the day you end. So, I think, yea. This is the model that I found myself—that I believe if what I am doing is not going to sell in the beginning, I believe I am still in process. But that's kind of er...what you call, incubation like the time when you *be* something. You need time to be really you, but listen to everything and then being you. And then try to absorb and feel this. But that time can be poison too. When fragile, the fragility can break you out and destroy you from the beginning. This is what I think.

Milenko Prvački

I think you are right because what I was talking about and what you are talking about— families supporting artists and medicines and all these things. But your point is distressing because it is what's going on in our head, in our brain.

And I want to say that, we were talking about support of rich people, the way we survived in former Yugoslavia was similar but not because of the rich, but because of the middle class. What we don't have in Singapore—a middle class who appreciates art. So over there if they—and every week they have a wedding, birthday party over there—they would come and buy some drawings. And other weeks, they would come and take a painting or some ceramic sculpture as a present for wedding. It was normal. Nobody comes with envelopes with cash inside, or carries a fridge for the wedding you know. And I would also say that in Singapore, we can work more on art appreciation. This may be a middle class which is richer than former Yugoslavia, and they can still do the same. And of course, you are very rich and you will be collecting, you will support artists and you will buy. In Singapore we did have group of collectors, but they didn't catch our generation somehow. They did pioneer artists, they collect old stuff; and new business people, they don't have a collection or they buy work or they want to buy I don't know what. So, there is a gap in Singapore.

There are always some artists who are selling very well, they are rich and have no problems with this. But there are some practices that are not only aesthetic value but it's another kind of value.

Venka Purushothaman

It's kind of interesting in listening to all of you talk through the struggle of artists and in my own mind I was looking at three dimensions to struggle. Financial sustainability. How do I self-sustain and continue to connect. Another dimension is existential. The struggle of the self as to who am I, what am I doing, what is my work? This is even more challenging for emerging student artists There is pressure to succeed in the art world and at the same time a sense of unpreparedness consumes.

Because coming out of school, you only have the tools to put yourself on a journey. The third struggle, again I am drawing from what you all have said is that, really the fact that the artist's and the arts community's contribution to the intellectual life of society has not expanded beyond the gallery walls, transactionalised in some ways.

Milenko Prvački

I do agree. I think the problem with curatorial job in recent years is that they have started to ignore the metaphysical part of art. Instead, curators seek to get the artist to speak or explain. Some artists don't speak. Some are not intellectually capable.

Pratchaya Phinthong

I face that. Before, I never been able to speak as to what I think truly. So, each time I struggle. The way to explain art to somebody is also in the state of the moment. I think about a show I did and a woman came to me and asked me explain why I was doing my work in that way. It was really hardcore like French. "Actually, do you have time for it. It depends on how thoroughly or how big of your basket or and how badly you want to know."

Vincent Leow

In applying for grants today, artists who don't articulate their work through writing will tend to lose out to artist who are able to write fluently about their work. Artists tends to articulate their work on paper before they create. Artworks have become more and more dependent on artist texts. There is a need to read the artist text to understand an artwork. I do feel that artworks should be self-explanatory and should not be dependent on text. Where I find that's not always the case when for us, taking an example of the work of the expressionist artist such as Van Gogh, that we respond to what we see to appreciate the art.

Pratchaya Phinthong

I just want to say that it's all about the 'approach' from my point of view. The proposal, there is a way to approach. What I did somehow experience hasn't taken place yet. This is approach before that right. The reading, when you open exhibition the approach moment is really important to solve that solid situation where you cannot enter to an artwork easily. That approach for me is value. To set that approach very well but not to gain the thing, not to make a gain on that but the approach of reading the proposal and then trying to make that visually to the letters that's one thing. It's amazing. But then to be super abstract is also fine too. I remember when I had a class in Germany, we have artists visit our studio. In our studio we share three working spaces and there is one room. So, we decided to invite this artist and when he came, we shook hands and locked him in for 45 minutes and we left. Later, we unlocked the room and said goodbye. So, this kind of visit raised a lot of...But everything was set for him to wonder, to see, to understand quietly different persons, different works and stuff like that. This is an approach as well to also see what if we are not able to talk to each other. To understand the voice, understand the feeling through your palms, voice and ears. What would happen if you never meet these people—would you be able to get something and would that be all? So, I think it comes back to this point of approaching text, work, and approaching the visual, approaching the moment where it has to be a work. That's really important. Everything is interconnected as we know but how you highlight that into a form of really understanding and sharing.

Milenko Prvački

If someone likes to talk about work, I love talking about the work. Unfortunately, nobody is asking much about the work except

how much it cost and how long it would take to do it. I understand some artists that they can't speak. I have many friends and they're really fantastic but they can't articulate anything.

Vincent Leow

Some of the students make really amazing work but they can't really articulate it well.

Milenko Prvački

I find that, at least from my experience, artists who are able to teach are more articulate because they're forced to talk, to analyse, to look at works critically, to compare. Because we can't tell students I don't know what you're doing. We have reference. You know you have to read, you have to be informed. Not in order to copy, but to know what students is trying in finding their own language. This was a very funny example that happened at LASALLE in Goodman Road: Frank Stella. He was such a bad speaker he couldn't talk about his work. We filled the auditorium where we have staff meetings. My God, you know, everyone it's Frank Stella; but it was rubbish! No, he can't speak about his own work. Well, it's very strange. I was thinking it'd be better, I shouldn't come. It damaged my notion of him. I'm a big fan of his last work. His minimalist work I really like.

Pratchaya Phinthong

That's my curse. So when I had a first show there I had to talk at the Foundation that set me up. I don't like to talk. It's not like me today. Even today I don't like to talk in public. I love to come here because you say it's casual. At that time, people not coming in that time. So there was wine, and just waiting, I just drinking by myself; because it was raining I thought nobody would come and I drank a lot of wine. And the thing is that they came after rain. Full house. And I starting to open my computer. I was slowing down. Disaster. I couldn't remember what I was saying. Then my friend or some person who know me tried to explain my work to the crowd better than me. I just hoping to end really soon then I can go out. I hate talking. Then I felt really guilty because I couldn't take care of the audience. But I still drinking every time I talk. I kind of enjoy speaking to people when they come close and then I talk as it is more intimate. It's a dialogue that begins, their really wanting to understand, to know you. That's fine. That's really peaceful. Otherwise it becomes, like you know, it's shaky. It's a hundred people. Then you have to speak and then the curator. The curator is fine. If you have to do alone, it's disaster again. I don't how to start and then. You have to be trained and listen a lot to other people, how they did well. This is like a talk show. It's a performance.

Vincent Leow

Visual arts students do not visit enough exhibitions to look at the work of their peers. They spend a lot of time thinking and planning. Go look who is working like you. If you start looking at other peoples' work you will never create anything.

Milenko Prvački

Good point, on how to help this this kind of people. I realise it's successful. Otherwise, you don't know what to do with that. You just pick one two sentences about what they thinking about. What is that? And then I always suggest to look at history of references who deal with the same issue. Historically, they're all different. For example, if they want to do 'apple' you have hundreds of different apples. It's not about apple, it's about how you paint or create what language applies to apple and then you choose your own. This is another way. But it's good to know another way historically how that issue was dealt with. We want

to approach *emergency* in the same manner. We didn't talk here about one kind of emergency. We talk about so many things that is even not about emergency. Each narrative, each story has a kind of situation that is interrelated.

Venka Purushothaman

I was making my own notes about speaking of the unspeakable. What do you see of the world? Also, social media has made it very difficult to speak because you are already spoken of. In many ways people have already looked at your work. There is nothing left for you to speak. That's another problem of uncritical reflection of what goes on online in many ways.

Milenko Prvački

In different texts, comments they are quoting from social media. I find that they speak out in a position of anonymity. Nobody knows you. They don't feel responsible for what they are saying. They say so many stupid things. But because they are not exposed, they are not responsible. That's why so many people talk rubbish.

Vincent Leow

There is a kind of system about questioning the state of art like a practitioner and educator. I think it's good to have this conversation always going on. Because the conversation of art has always been formal and people don't get together to talk about it. It's been interesting here.