

**Jimmie Durham** è Cherokee nato in Arkansas nel 1940. Artista visivo, scultore in particolare, ma anche saggista e poeta, lungo gli anni '70 è stato attivista politico di primo piano nell'American Indian Movement. Dedito al teatro e alla performance negli anni '60 e '70, dal decennio successivo inizia a realizzare bizzarri oggetti, assemblage e installazioni. Pur ricorrendo a elementi di scrittura e performance, la pratica di Jimmie Durham si traduce soprattutto in sculture nelle quali oggetti quotidiani e materiali naturali sono assemblati in

forme vivide. Il processo di produzione, che Durham definisce una «combinazione illegale con oggetti rifiutati», può essere considerato un'incarnazione dell'atteggiamento sovversivo che pervade il lavoro dell'artista. Durham è una delle figure chiave negli studi critici e teorici nell'ambito dei cultural e postcolonial studies, ha partecipato a numerose mostre internazionali e biennali in tutto il mondo. Alla 58esima Biennale di Venezia (2019) gli viene attribuito il Leone D'Oro alla Carriera. Vive e lavora a Berlino.

**COFFEE IN THE MORNING FOR A VERY  
LARGE FLOCK OF FRUIT BATS**

**JIMMIE DURHAM**

*buon giorno gabi. may this note find you well. i hope the text i sent is usable for your excellent project, but if it is, in my mind it works best with your note to me included at the beginning...*

*best, jimmie*

*o, the mis spelling at the beginning is de-  
liberate...*

dear Jimmie

I hope you and Maria Thereza are keeping well, in this disrupting time.

I thought of contacting you at this particular period as, as you know, I fully believe art can help us question, think over and perform in life. This period of vulnerability in which we are led to review needs, priorities and rhythms of life, can be considered a cultural challenge and a stimulus for further reflection. I think, more than ever, now artists should not remain silent.

I believe the fact that exhibitions and events having been blocked, urges us to find ways to express ourselves.

Therefore I would like to hear the artist's voice and thoughts regarding issues such as the right of health care, transmission, pathology, vulnerability, isolation, spillover, the capacity of a virus to overcome any kind of borders. You are one of the artists that I look forward to receiving feedbacks.

Via this message I would like to ask you to share with me your thoughts/readings

of the current situation; it can be short text or an articulated one, can be accompanied with an image.

I am not yet sure what this collection would look like at the end; hopefully a publication; I'm going to let you know as soon as possible, but I am hoping it would help meditate on the present and prepare for the future. This emergency will sure be over, while our obligation to deal with the actual, to care for ourselves and loved ones and the larger society we live in, will remain.

I do hope you share this impulse and agree to be part of the project.

Thank you very much in advance for letting me know what you think.

All my very best

Gabi

*well, i would be glad to send a written text but probably will not have time to do it.,,,,. this morning was really difficult: we were woken by a loud noise at 4am on the terrace. i opened the window and a VERY LARGE flock of fruit bats (called 'flying foxes') flew into the house. about 70 000, more or less.*

*not knowing what to do, i offered them coffee more or less from desperation; i knew i did not have enough coffee for that many guests even if they were smallish guests, much less bat cups or sugar (although probably not all of them would have wanted sugar; some most likely would have preferred honey). it seems they wanted nothing more than to hang out awhile, and just as i tried to arrange coathangers and other devices we heard a strong knock on the front door.*

it was the police, of course, demanding to know if we were sheltering any vicunas. some neighbor, it seems, had reported seeing about 47 vicunas at our door. we said of course not but would they like a cup of coffee. it was a squad of about ten or twelve police-people in full armour, so in fact i knew i did not have that much coffee, not to mention police cups or sugar. in brazil the police often use as much as four spoonsfuls of sugar for one cup of rather weak coffee, but many others drink only roasted mate'. mate' has as much cafeine as does coffee but a much more mellow taste. (even though in argentina people, especially the police, drink mate' unroasted. like drinking unroasted coffee; so uncivilised as to be considered heretical, almost unlawful, certainly indecent in places like brazil. but argentina was colonized by people from catalunya and then from napolli so...

it is not really true, of course, that mate' has cafeine; i like the french attempt (even though i know it is childish and naive) at linguistic precision: in france only coffee has cafeine. tea has teine. 'how could tea have a coffeee ingredient, they seem to ask)

when we lived in marseille we often drank arab coffee, turkish coffee, and pretty good portuguese coffee. the portuguese coffee was, of course at the portuguese restaurant off cour julian where we would have roast chicken double-roasted garlic potatos. as we left marseille the owner-cook was retiring and gave the place to his daughter. when we went back years later she still ran it (that does not mean that she ran;;; simply that she oversaw the functioning) but the menu had changed.

«never go back», is maria thereza's motto; nothing remains as you knew it and the changes are always so strange as to discombobulate you. i know that is true but i still return to places and situations from the past... maybe it is just a male weakness;; sentimentality of a kind women have learned over millenia to do without. i am always sorry and disappointed. on the other hand, i am often sorry and disappointed by stuff in the present, so maybe it all evens out in the long run. i am not running these days but i do exercise on what is called a bycycle every day now, to get some physical activity in these isolate days... a bycycle ought, necessarily, it seems to me, have two wheels; so as to respect its nomenclature. if things do not have a relationship with what they are called then language becomes unlanguage;;; we no longer mean what we say... my bycycle has no wheels, and goes, of course, no where.

that is more or less ok with me because it is in my studio and the windows are of course closed; so in fact wheels would be a kind of hindrance;; if one can call an enabler a hinderer.

if my bycycle truly functioned as a bycycle it would be, of course, unuseful for the use i make of it, which is physical fitness of a kind.

in english the concept, if one exists, of "where" is truly esoteric (i have always loved that word, even though i am not exactly sure what it means;;; for me it is like the word "salubrious"; it connotes sophistication and education while having a pleasant sound). english speakers say (and of course, english writers write) "anywhere"

*"nowhere" "somewhere" "wherewith-  
al" "wherefore". then they say that they  
do not know where you are coming from;;;  
when they mean that they don't understand  
what you mean to say-  
jimmie*