WHEN WATER AND I INTERACT I ASK

INTERVIEW DOOR NAVID NUUR

WTR: *Why do you want to interview me?*

NN: I want to do this because I want to get closer to the material that constitutes 60% of my body. There is slightly more of this material in me than there is of Navid Nuur.

WTR: *Ahhh, I see...*

NN: I don’t really know how to start this interview, so I’ll just ask you some questions and see where we end up. Occasionally, when I hear music or certain sounds, I feel a light resonance slowly rising up from within my body to the surface of my skin, until I feel this sensation across the full expanse of my skin. Is this partly because you, as water, start to vibrate within my body? I know that sound transfers very well through water and I can also see the surface of my drink vibrating during a concert.

WTR: *Yes and no. All the water in your body can resonate. This is partly in response to sound and partly in response to your inner thoughts. If you open your mind to this process, this can happen either unconsciously or consciously. If the sound in question enters you via your ears and body, you can actively allow me to resonate to this sound. We start to vibrate and at some point all the water inside you can vibrate simultaneously, instigating something like a Mexican wave that spreads from the inside to the rest of your body and finally finds its way out and makes your body hair stand up. Which, sometimes, you can literally see happening.*

NN: Besides activating my body’s true sound, you also leave my body in a variety of ways. Maybe it’s a long shot, but could it be possible that the water that I am presently in contact with was part of my ancestors?

WTR: *We as water are about the micro and the macro levels and never about the private and public. We are in constant motion. Your ancestors play but a*
microscopic role in this collective and are shared with everyone everywhere. The world's whole past and present population is travelling through your own and everyone else's body. Sixty per cent of what you are is this collective shared presence. The greater part of you belongs to a collective entity, rather than to yourself. The view you hold of yourself as an 'I' does not hold. It only exists in the world you created over the past few thousand years, definitely not in the real world.

NN: What you’re saying is that as a person, I have to perceive the world that I live in as part of my body, my collective entity. As a shared sense; like a second skin?

WTR: Not your second but your first. Perhaps as your lost first skin.

NN: What do you mean?

WTR: As I have told you, I circulate, adapting myself to the elements and to humankind. Whether I am set into motion by the wind or flow from your eyes as a result of your emotions. The main thing is that the essence of my existence as water lies in mobilising all past, present and future matter. I’m there to move dirt and to serve everything on earth functional, at the micro and macro levels. But I also have to be kept clean by you all. As I don’t take sides between the good or bad content that can exist through me, this is primarily your task.

NN: Aaah, OK... Like that scene in Miyazaki’s spirited away.

WTR: Something like that, yes...

NN: Sometimes there is too much water and it can be a lethal force. Do you also have a dark side?

WTR: A lake, for example, is contained by the soil that surrounds it. If this soil lets loose, the water can reach places where it doesn’t belong (where you do not want to have me), or if the wind blows hard on the lake, it can be dangerous to sail on the lake (dangerous for you; not for me). Water can be used by other forces, but on my own, I can’t do anything — I am dependent on the elements and on your intentions.
NN: I use you quite often in my work. As art does not have a fixed body, formally speaking, I don’t think of my practice in terms of materials and form, but usually in interdependencies between that which I feel and something that I wish to convey, and that could possibly exist outside my body. Sometimes water is the right component. Because you can take on many guises and furthermore carry an intimacy that becomes publicly accessible but can also become invisible. Thinking out loud: imagine that you are running through the tap in my studio and proceed to fall into my sink — the last thing that your body has touched is the inside tube of my tap, which has been through a lot of things. Does this information also become part of your being?

WTR: Yes, I will absorb the intentions and emotions at a sub-level, as well as the metallurgical composition of the tube as an ingredient.

NN: I have also used you at one point to try to show the hidden aura and intentions that are encapsulated by the title of a work. I bundled this whole process together in the publication entitled ‘sliding the slow split’. Was this actually the right title? You were there too. Do you remember the occasion at all? Can you come into contact with the small amount of water that went through the paper, tea towels and canvas and that returned to you via evaporation or the sink?

WTR: You’re right: I was there. Except the water that went through the sink and the water that evaporated are now part of a far larger resonating whole. I would like to increase my sensitivity to make contact with that part of me, but unfortunately I can’t do it. This is partly because the water in your body isn’t pure enough. If it were, I would have been able to travel outside your body and localise this information.

NN: Bummer... But am I ever going to succeed, or am I too polluted, spiritually and physically speaking?

WTR: As a human being, it’s not really your task to become completely pure and have such an immediate relationship with me or any other terrestrial element. You need a healthy dose of negativity to learn from. To be able to channel and redirect all is what you need to learn from this. These skills bring you closer to your self and as a consequence to your collective self...
exactly... just concentrate on the stains that can still be found on the wall of the Cacaofabriek in Helmond. These are indeed the residual shapes of water that hold the answer to your question. I have to go back to the process that lies between my approach and yours. You picked up a black felt-tip pen. I was inside, and although I appeared as the colour black to you, inside, I felt like a whole range of colours that together appeared to be black. You took a sheet of paper, and wrote the title as work, I believe it was ‘calling out to all conceptual consequences’. After which the paper stood in the water, so that I could pull myself up via the fibres. While the pace at which this occurred was jointly determined by the paper’s fibres, but the route was determined by my volume and the colours found within the black. The composition of your hand-written sentence served as the basis. Actually, you shouldn’t dwell on it too long — accept the way it is and consider it a thing of the past... That was then; you have to move on now...

NN: I get your point... I would first have to approach you, and as a consequence approach myself, with a bit more awareness. But I think I’ll leave it at this for the moment...

WTR: If you think out loud and write it down like that, you sometimes need more time to process the information. Allow yourself that time: allow me to flow through you again to greater effect, so that you can continue this interview at some point in the future.

Deze tekst is een geredigeerde versie van een interview in The Value of Void, Navid Nuur (Onomatopee, Eindhoven, 2010).