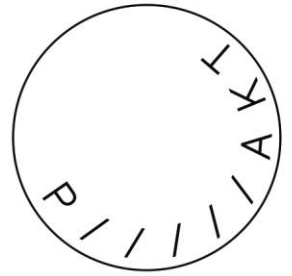


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## It Began with a Telegram and Ended with a Biography

By AL

Dear editor stop arrived Hotel Lloyd stop 1985 query typo query gallery closed but room juvenile  
prison chic stop intentional query assuming a Gesamtkunstwerk editorial style stop apologies brief  
telegram will find fax tomorrow and exhibit Fri stop AL

△ △ △

Dear Ed,

Hope my handwriting is legible, can you believe the technology here? I'm still a little confused by the hotel but they do a good breakfast in their makeshift restaurant and I'm learning a few words of the lingo. Better news for you is that I'm constructing an angle on the piece. I think it's inspired by the decor here, I swear the place hasn't been refurbished since the mid eighties. So let me give you an image: I'm sitting at breakfast drinking my coffee and watching the sunlight fall into the dusty corner of the room and suddenly I'm just thinking up all these crazy thoughts like: What is science friction? What if it's not about space travel? I think it bears speculation. What would it be like to go back in time to a place that you've never been to, bring back something to the present and animate it in a way that couldn't have happened if you'd actually gone? A place light years behind the future, progressive in its retrospective context, a potential model for our retrograde contemporaneity: How would we speak to it or how would it speak to us? And then to bring it back to the assignment (and because present tense is always less tense when it's projected away from itself), in lieu of an impossible corporeal journey we could send an object. And I'm thinking one of Bram de Jonghe's MacGyver objects. So then, the piece could be a speculation on what they-the-past would send back. Anyway, there I was on my flight of imagination and a woman called The Calculation Languages (I told you it was a weird place) whirred around from the table next to me and after a rather dramatic pause expelled the word "Now". I don't know what that was about but anyhow, I'll send more when I see the work, let me know what you think about the angle!

XAL

△ △ △

Hey Ed,

Thanks for all your support in the last communication, I was a little apprehensive about writing the piece back then. The notes that I'm transcribing from, into this email, are still on paper (would you believe), and there's no point apologising for the lateness of the piece of writing, but in retrospect I really think I should have written it at the time, twenty years earlier! Anyhow, I did find the gallery, to my own embarrassment I had to take the bus the wrong way to end up at the "central" station and even purchase a map, it was like I was beginning all over again. The walk back to the hotel was a lot faster and had some lovely features (purple and white flowers that, at the time, were waiting for the winter to soften). [I'll switch here into a direct transcription of the notes now, I hope this isn't going to prove too difficult to edit.]

Do you know, it's silly to begin this way, but I'm not sure if this projecting into the past thing is going to work so well with the [insert details here]. It's just that it's impossible to choose between all the works that were in what the artist is calling their so-called white cube space. With the translation of the single title from German to Dutch I guess it's best to describe the works to you, and then when you visit next week you'll have a complete picture. [Illegible bit of scrawl]

[Once I had found my way to the gallery at the end of a long road with an actual windmill at the end of it] the first thing I saw was literally a washing machine by the name of Bosch ... it had a giant wall on it. It was difficult to tell if the wall was holding in place the machine or the machine was holding in place the wall—but let's just make clear that the wall was diagonal and not linger too much on the details, as we all have our own associations with washing machines, and perhaps painters by the same name too, so-called or not.

Level electromagnetic hovering floated-ness. You mentioned attraction in your last email, when referring to the breakfast scene, was she cute, you asked. The question must have stayed with me today as I'm thinking about the kind of scientific attraction of magnets, I'm not a scientifically minded person when it comes to this field but positive and negative forces in certain combinations [I obviously couldn't remember what] attract and in certain combinations repel. If you keep the forces levelled it looks like some kind of levitational electromagnetic force. [For the reader's information, here, if I remember correctly, I was looking at a builder's spirit level hovering with fabricated levitation technology and thinking about what I might know had I read *New Scientist Magazine*].

Speaking of your email, per diems, Ed, I'm not sure I understood my fee to be a per diem, but if that's your intention then we might need to talk.

The hilarious plant. Perhaps that's the part of the work I would send into the past, a plant that records, a leafy decoy perspective. [This seems quite irreverent on re-reading but I remember being

halfway amused at the time, standing there on the floor of the gallery that I was later to read in the brochure by the entrance door was a platform, with my lower legs exposed, wondering if it was intentionally a saloon-style piece of architecture.]

Small televisions, but flat, which looked a bit like small chalk boards and were the proportions of a novel but played videos. The videos are of short durations and picture birds-eye views of things like very shiny escalators, a small clip from a home video and some other things that seem to have faded into the background. A larger scale projection of a fountain that fountained was accompanied on the opposite wall by footage of a rotating machine that was set into motion by a fan-belt mechanism. [It was a long time after seeing the exhibition that I remembered the word “centrifugal”.] These moving images of moving things found moments of stillness in small illustrations of circular mechanisms like bicycles and more obviously diagrammatic figurings of some kind of complicated multi-parted thing that I didn’t recognise and that it seemed like the artist was still attempting to figure out. Working drawings seems a fitting description, and perhaps, if we’re talking old masters like Bosch, then Leonardo De Vinci might be a nice reference, with his sketches of flying machines.

There’s a few things that I won’t describe, seeing as you’re going to see the exhibition platform yourself and I’d rather not give too much thought to a couple of the works that I found completely offensive—you’ll know them when you see them. I’d like to say that sending something (which I should clarify is an artwork) back into the past to see what they send back might be a task too great for this writer but perhaps the transmission of ideas has already happened.

I’ll call you when I get back home later and please pass on my regards to your missus for me.

AL

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[Here it ends.]

Δ Δ Δ

[Actually, I found another note.]

Δ Δ Δ

P.S. Hey, Ed, off the record I’m pretty sure these guys aren’t a secret all-guy society as you thought. I mean I know they have a lot of esoteric futuristic scientific technology in the B.d.J. exhibition, like those tiny flat almost paper-like TV screens. The plant that seemed to sense when you were there

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and then spin around totally freaked me out until I was told by the person looking after the exhibition that day, or at least doing work in the office adjacent to the so called white cube gallery, that she was operating the plant that rotated with a garden-variety remote control. But that's a spoiler! [So don't print please.]

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*AL is a pen name of the Artist and Writer Liz Allan. Liz Allan lives and works in Rotterdam and during the year 1985 was a small child living in New Zealand. Neither AL nor Liz Allan are time travellers. Liz Allan is a member of AtCS.*

*Marnie Slater is an artist who lives in Brussels. During 2015, she is commissioning a series of texts by women, of which this one is the first, to be read in parallel to the exhibition programme at P/////AKT, Amsterdam.*