The Core Project
Matthew Nevin

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23 September
2017

Rua Red Gallery



Glendeline Maduro—Aruba.

Supported by
Rua Red Gallery, Arts Council of Ireland,
MART Gallery, South Dublin County Council,
Galway City Council, Kildare County Council.

www.thecoreproject.net



Kelvin C. Nhantumbo — Mozambique







"Through this inclusive project I wish to break down barriers on how Art can be perceived, created and viewed, with an aim to engage, unite and create a spark in people's lives."

M. Nevin

The Core Project

‘The Core Project’ exhibition is a large-scale installation featuring over 150 videos from participants across the globe, filmed live answering a question that they have not previously seen. By withholding the question, artist Matthew Nevin removes the participant’s ability to prepare, producing a series of natural and behavioural nuances within an international cultural context.

This exhibition is one part of an ongoing, multifaceted, visual art project Nevin has been developing since 2010. For this installation, Nevin chose one respondent from each sovereign state in the world to contribute to the project by filming themselves answering a previously unseen question:

“What is going to happen next?”

The project is as much about the participant’s verbal response as it is their attitude towards the unknown. A primary aim of the project is to engage citizens of the world in a global cultural experiment that serves to highlight the diversity and complexity of people; opening a door to individuals from all corners of the earth.

The Core Project focuses on the accumulation of an ephemeral ‘art public’ by analysing each participant: their process of understanding the question; their choices in visually setting the scene; and their manner and practice in participating in the project. Acting as both a global online artistic endeavour and an archive of a group of individual real-world responses, the artwork focuses on intervention in, engagement with, and critique of the dominant political and economic order of society. Respondents become the subjects, and even sub-artists in the project, moving away from singular spectatorship.

Through this form of activation and collaboration, art online in all forms has become a collective creation process. Technology enables the sharing of opinions /thoughts of artists and participants from all over the world, permitting the co-creation of art that exists both virtually, on the project website, and in tangible form—an installation.

In Conversation
Dr. Katherine Nolan and Matthew Nevin
The Core Project—10 July 2017.

I'm quite interested in the fact that the Core Project has been going on for a long time, so I'm just wondering when you started? Can you talk a little bit about the beginning, to go back all those years.

Yes it began back in 2010, as part of a European Project MART had curated across Germany, Norway, Ireland, England and Slovakia. I remember sitting at a desk in my apartment in Archway in London devising the idea. It was probably March of that year and we were presenting the shows in June, and for some unknown reason I thought the project would be complete in the three months. I soon realised that this was a bigger project than I initially thought…

I think there is something ridiculously ambitious about it, which I like. I like that it almost could be futile. Well, I always thought it was a great idea. At that point, what did you hope or expect it to be? What was the aim then at that point in time?

I feel like it hasn't changed, what I want the project to be. I think my understanding of the project has changed, but actually the premise hasn't: having a fresh response from one person in every country in the world. And seeing what that was and analysing their experience of participating, of recording themselves to camera. I began looking at the moment before someone responds to an





unknown question on the spot, being obsessed with the few seconds of the initial thought process.

When you say your understanding of it has changed, what has changed?

The scope and the meaning of the project. My understanding of time has definitely changed. People's lives change, my life has changed. Life affects how we work on things. For instance I've accepted the word “project”, that this is an ongoing research and developmental social experiment. My understanding of technology, globalisation and politics has completely changed.
I see how the sentence can have a different meaning every year, place and space in how it’s read. If something positive is happening in the world, or something negative, within a country or someone's life, it has a completely different meaning in those moments of recording, and then how it is viewed over time changes.

What has made it change?

Technology and my growth as an artist and a curator. If you think even with mobile phones, and the ability to record with a camera yourself. In these past seven years that has become more accessible to millions of people. For instance Facebook has two billion users right now and the accessibility for people to take part has completely changed.

However not everybody has that same accessibility, do they?

We have this understanding that we are all connected by superfast broadband, but you could be somewhere in the west of Ireland and have dial up, and the same goes for most nations across the globe.

And physical access to the technology itself. Because the internet relies on physical technology to make it happen, even though we experience it virtually.

A selection of the responses highlight people's experience day to day with those technologies. This is why Facebook and Google are trying (well obviously also for monetary reasons) to build their network and float hot air balloons in the sky and have aeroplanes to spread broadband to remote places around the world. We live such a privileged life in some of the countries of the world that you forget this. So many countries lose power at 9 o'clock at night. Never mind like in a remote pacific island country, or in Antarctica you've to wait for the satellite to come over head to get internet connection. While some places are dealing with governmental blocks on social networking or messaging apps.

With this in mind, what do you hope people get from the project?

The main thing is engagement, this connectivity and engagement with people. This common idea that we are one world and that we are all the same, and really engage with that simple idea. In each moment, the first ten or twenty seconds of everyone's video, we are all the same. The majority of the content of the responses are roughly the same.

How did you think people would respond to the question?

I suppose in global problems. Climate change is one of the biggest global, slightly controversial, topics. It effects everyone. And I think when people see the Core Project with one person from every country in the world, you think in your head: global future. But not everyone does, and that's what I'm really excited about.

So, in a way it is this global project, but then people are talking really specifically about what's happening next in the next hour or the next day, or their hopes or aspirations for their individual lives in a very personal way. As well at times talking in that universal – "oh I have hope for peace"

Yes the project is so full of hope, which is something that I didn't expect. I thought it would be anchored in anxiety and negativity and depression.

Do you mean the responses are full of hope?

Yes. The people are the content, how the viewer accesses that content, through the

website or through the installation, or when the film is made... that is how you're going to engage with the positivity. I'm really chuffed that it's a hopeful project, that we're not going into a negative experience. Because there's so much negativity in this world, the media, and it's so hard to have hope when you are surrounded by that.

Tell me a little bit about how the people's responses have changed. Say from 2010 to now. What changes have you seen in terms of the things that people are saying? In some ways, because of the scale of the project, you probably have engaged with the videos the most, and I don't think that anybody, unless they're completely obsessive, will sit down and watch all of them. You have a privileged access, as a researcher, to all of them. What would you think has changed?

I think people's idea of globalisation and global issues, and hoping that their personal problems, or their own country's problems, are more of a global problem now and there is a better chance that their voice will be heard more now because of technology and our networks growing.







The project has grown in momentum and in confidence as well. But what about the current global political situation? This financial and political crisis is ongoing. And the rise of the right. All of those things seem very prominent at the moment. I'm wondering through those seven years, has there been a pattern in responses?

The newer videos from 2016 and 2017 reference western politics, even if they're a Pacific nation, or an African or an Asian nation. But you also have people from all over the world talking about their own country's bigger problems. For instance one of the participants talks about all his brothers and nephews being pulled into gangs and civil war. At that moment they don't care about western politics, they care about their brothers. They're wishing for a time when they can go to work, or receive further education. It just whacks you back into this anti-western world. I was reading Naomi Kline's new book No is Not Enough, about how a president or person in power can ride on negative events, tragedies, problems, wars, because when that happens it's a distraction. It's the distraction that allows them to pass these policies that nobody agrees with. And if you're part of some sort of fringe group fighting against something like this, you're suddenly seen as anti-war. Anti my cousin who's gone to fight in Afghanistan.

Anti people's personal situations.

And supporters question "How dare you be anti the war?" using that leverage to get

policies across. All that has just opened my eyes. Hopefully the project will give its audience an international scope in to that. Into people's real life personal stories, problems and hopes.

That certainly comes across. There's both really personal everyday type of response, and this global politics type of response. I think it's reaffirming to connect with human beings around the world. I'm reading Žižek at the moment, and he's talking about a lot of the arguments that the left is currently making against all of these crises and the rise of the right – how it's actually a distraction and is ineffective. What is actually wrong is the whole system. Capitalism is the problem. And all of these counter-arguments actually reinforce what the right is doing. So, I think it helps on a personal level, and in many ways that can become political, because maybe the more hope that we can achieve something that we have on an individual level, somehow that can galvanise into something wider or more political. It's not an easy question to answer in that way…

Yes I agree, the project focuses on both individual and group social dynamics. We have real people telling their story, their thoughts about what lies in their future. As humans we very rarely think about our future too much, because we're so caught up in the day to day. You have this hope for what's to come, probably from being taught that as a child, and suddenly years go by and you get older and your future is not the future you planned or hoped for, but that is all part of life. In my future… I'm very interested in maybe meeting and engaging with all the participants in perhaps five years' time. Meeting them in person and seeing what did happen to them over those years and if it correlated to what they said or planned... A few months ago, I started calculating how much of a production budget I would need to travel the world to meet all these people. It's insane I know, but I'm going to do it.

Ridiculously ambitious. And Utopian in some ways.

Yes. But that really excites me. But I suppose I do things for the challenge. In the immediate I'm looking forward to taking the installation abroad and to making the film, and then letting it go for a while. And letting it be done for a while, if I can.

Having a full stop before the next sentence.

Matthew Nevin

Matthew Nevin is a Curator and Visual Artist based in Dublin. His work has been shown in Ireland, UK and in the US. Nevin's visual arts practise encompasses video, installation and performance. He has exhibited at Shunt London; Galway Arts Festival; IMOCA, Dublin; Bar 8, Galway; UWA, Wales; Galway City Museum; G126, Galway; Entrée, Norway; Shunt, London; SPACE, Bratislava; Stattbad, Berlin; The Molesworth Gallery, Dublin; Lewis Art Gallery, Jackson Mississippi; PQ Festival Prague; Popup Art Loop, Chicago; Flux Factory, New York; CS Gallery, Los Angeles; The Market Studios, Dublin; NCAD, Dublin; Talbot Gallery, Dublin; and The Art Foundation, Athens.

Nevin has a background in Film and completed a Degree in Film, TV and Scenography (UWA) in 2006. Nevin also holds a Masters in Art in the Contemporary World (NCAD).

Nevin is Co-Director of MART Gallery and Studios, where he has worked alongside Ciara Scanlon since 2007. MART is an independent arts organisation and one of Ireland's largest artist studio providers. As an organisation MART is dedicated to fostering and promoting emerging artistic talent. Together they have curated exhibitions across Europe, the US and Japan.





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Kim Hyun Min—South Korea

Opening hours
Monday to Friday 9am – 9.30pm and
Saturday 9.30am – 6pm
Galleries and Reception: 10am – 6pm
Café: 10am – 4pm

Location
South Dublin Arts Centre, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.

Getting here
Luas: Rua Red is located directly beside the Tallaght stop on the Red Line.
Bus: Nearby routes include 27, 49, 54a, 56a, 65, 75, 76, 76a, 77a.

For bookings or more information contact
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Cody Meyer—Antarctica