

Mmmmmmmmm I look like crap. Anyway-I'm pretty happy. I got a lot of exercise this summer I shipped lots of leaves to LA yesterday. I have 2 boxes of banana bread I want to give one to your parents-do you want some of the other one? Do you like my bathroom? You want hair? When you are a girl and you take a bath-Sometimes water gets in them when you relax it comes out. It can happen hours later-walking along-whistling-then GOP! down your leg. Do you want to take a shower and eat while I get dinner ready? Do you ever go canoeing? What do you mean? I'm all wrong! Then what? Why? Inside the Tomatoes and Mushrooms? good as in 'good looking'? I love scented geraniums. Winner the Hook's birthday too. Give me Green. a very feminine place. a good walk that goes through the Arboretum. Its rhythm is beautiful I can't exactly grasp it. My mom is like that. When I call her-everytime-no failure-She will say a lot of vegetables-it's so funny! Even when she called to tell me my grandfather died and she'll talk about dirt. English wool. But sheep stuff is really great-heating, spinning, spinning wool in the bright spring sun-The sun warms up the lanolin and the wheel-it's so fast and tactile-olfactory-orgasmic. It seems so 'Quaint' or 'Dumb'-but it's really sexy. Do you mind if I put my lady legs over you? Do I seem nervous? The hotel that I go to perform kinky acts is around here. Your ticket? What's inside? I knew her dog before I knew her. I used to bribe the hall out of my sister's arm. I have such a fat ass. I'm pretty happy but I'm tired. I was up till 2:00 last night. I can't believe I'm doing this to you. You like the possibility? I like it that you can't hear me pee because I've always been embarrassed by that-I would hold it all day in school because I wouldn't want any other girl to hear me. It's a long story. One of the best meals I ever had was when I was 11 years old-Baked beans, hot dogs, cooked outside by a snowy lake at twilight with my friend-it was so cold. After school we went up there with the stuff-got a fire going-it was SO delicious-I remember the smell of the snow and the sky and the fire, and my mittens, and my cold feet and packing it all up afterwards-home in the dark-But very delicious-the food in my mouth was exquisite. A movable land, artificial at first. I was throbbing I can't drive a stick shift or I'd offer to take over for a while. Bery's has good dirty martinis. Flanobé is such a good word. What is your second best ideal? I'm too talkative aren't I? I feel bad about that you know, there is a lot said-I've taken so much for granted. I really wish I could sign because I love quiet conversations. Rachel said the veterinarian's here & he was watching her get dressed. It's comforting to have these gaps. This is my favorite cupboard. All silver & kind of empty. Shall we go for dinner with my father tomorrow? What would you do if you had to do something completely opposite of what you do? your pants were hanging from a tree branch. I can't believe it. Is there anything you want to know? About the sound of the world? Here in this apartment? I think you can hear the buzz can you? I thought I caught you finally that you're not deaf. The music is really funny. Ohness I mean. Citrusy. I want to tell you something-This friend of mine. She had a baby. She didn't discover until he was about 6 months that he was totally blind. She noticed weird things though. One was that he imitated perfectly the sound of the refrigerator. The sound of the car on the gravel approaching the house. They say things come full circle-it's all relative-perhaps they are right. Beauty is difficult. Crunchy crispy with whippy fluffly inside. Perfect waiting always in cloud. That's your excuse. No one can communicate. Not with words anyway. Maybe smell or hair or something. I said I'm oral sex horrible. Where were you raised? Do you want a beer? Fuzzy navel? Alabama Slammer? I'm tempted to smoke cigarettes again. When are you home? Get me some wine. Let's not hurt ourselves. I look tired? Grey hair? My nerves have become so bad I think no more champagne for lunch for me. Eric will join us a little later. a pitcher is three glasses. Roasted peppers. balsamic vinegar. foxy meow. my mother's homemade applesauce. I was thinking of a girly coffee drink. I can't believe how talkative I am. Have you ever lived in suburbs? Ramps? I don't know I get flustered in front of the broccoli. Squid? Oh my. When I was cycling home last night guess who I met? no-lying on the ground out cold-peeded-I get her up after repeatedly calling her name and walked her home. if you start with a 1 carat diamond for example and in two years you want to purchase a two carat diamond you can receive full value for the original purchase and just pay the difference. loudness and laughing from other table. They're talking about septic systems-Kirsten knows them. He's got a great Irish accent. Do any of your pockets work? Was it cold in the greenhouse last night? I had to set up cat litter. Does it give away

Joseph Grigely

Blueberry Surprise

*Obligatory mention : © Vera Kotaji pp. Michèle Didier

About *Blueberry Surprise* by Joseph Grigely

The art of Joseph Grigely (born in 1956 in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, U.S.A.) is essentially focused on the art of conversation. Questions such as «What does a conversation look like?» or «How to figure a speech?» are present throughout his work. It is shown literally in his Conversation Pieces installations, referring to a specific genre of painting practiced by William Hogarth and Thomas Gainsborough or Canaletto which depict characters engaged in conversation. Grigely constantly explores issues of communication and language. Before becoming an artist, Joseph Grigely taught literature and critical theory, and continues to do so in the Visual and Critical Studies program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He has published several critical theoretical texts (e.g., *Textualterity: Art, Theory and Textual Criticism* in 1995). As an artist, he explores multifaceted aspects of spoken and written phenomena. Moreover, conversation takes on particular significance for the artist, who lost his hearing at the age of ten. Grigely actually uses writing in order to communicate, when unable to read lips or in doubt. He asks people to write down what they want to say and thus exchanges scraps of paper, producing written conversations in this way. Grigely keeps this «daily life» material, building walls with them, creating installations and now, publishing a book.

Blueberry Surprise consists of one continuous text of 45,000 words transcribed from the written conversations that Joseph Grigely has been collecting over the last ten years. The transcription has kept the features of the handmade inscriptions, including punctuation and casts, while skipping all of the drawings which might have been included on the papers. The reader switches from one «voice» to another according to the changing colors of the sentences: red, orange and black. Switching color means going over to the next person writing. The identity of the characters is not known, developing a pure narrative voice coming from we-don't-know-where. This endless series of notes builds little by little a polyphonic murmur, which resonates in a purely mental field. The arrangement of the text on the pages is based on both ideas of continuity and fragmentation. The lay-out in a single paragraph gives a feeling of continuity while the changing colors create a feeling of alternation. This represents the very flow of any conversation and, at the same time, testifies to the presence of multidirectional sources, characters, moods and moments. Although the whole text consists of an endless litany of messages (5,000) it is impossible to define who is the sender, who is the addressee. All we get here are messages. And anything which could have possibly made them recognizable, like handwriting, of course disappeared when they were type-transcribed. But other clues remain apparent, such as misspelled words, which suggest foreign origins. There is, anyway, a kind of «who's who» game playing out between the lines in *Blueberry Surprise*.

Blueberry Surprise is a text in one single go. Looking at the Latin etymology of the word «text» brings us back to the transitive verb meaning «to weave» or «to braid». Here we have indeed a powerful collection of intertwined fragments, subtly playing with (a)symmetrical patterns, rhythm and balance. But it is practically impossible to read the entire text out loud from one end to the other. The reader would not be able to take a break because of the lack of actual punctuation (apart from the one transcribed from each paper). He or she would be out of breath before even finishing one page. So, is *Blueberry Surprise* a kind of one-page book, devoted to silent reading? The special type of layout used places *Blueberry Surprise* somewhere in between the very archaic system of «scripta continua» and modern Western text setup. Although one should not forget that the lack of separation in manuscripts made the practice of silent reading impossible until around 7th century... So, should we consider this text the visual representation of what a conversation «looks like»? When we speak, there are no pauses between each word. Words are all linked through the delivery of talk, knowing that all these scraps used to be written in a rush, in a constant attempt at following the rhythm of any spoken conversation.

Whereas in ancient civilizations people did not have a word for «word», since in the oral form of language, there is no awareness of words as graphic units, here we have quite the opposite. What is supposed to be spoken ends up on paper. The work of Joseph Grigely approaches very contemporary issues in the field of written communication, knowing that the boundaries of written language have evolved a great deal with contemporary tools like

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the Internet, emails, textos, which leads us directly to the heart of a whole set of theoretical questions.

With *Blueberry Surprise*, Joseph Grigely gives the reader the opportunity to plunge into ten years of conversations, and therefore to enter into the intimacy of exchanged notes, delivering quotes, remarks, questions, poetical breakaways, expression of feelings, flirt talks, mundane indications, etc. Besides, this one text conceals multitudes of meanings and levels as do the messages themselves. It could contain commentaries on the situation itself like «It's not something I would have told you if you could hear. I would still have written it down»; things that definitely do not need to be written down in order to be understood, like «Yes»; funny clarifications of misunderstandings such as «I said I'm oral not horrible». Grigely grants additional dimension to the conversation, considered as an art and captured in its theoretical, plastic, emotional and ontological extents.

Joseph Grigely drops the initial function of a daily communication tool and designs a complex construction, in an attempt to render the sound and color of unknown and invisible voices, revealing games that might be profound, absurd, hilarious or moving. Here we seize an exciting chance to read things said in everyday life but never written down. Fleeting marks end up crystallizing the very essence of a non-secret conversation.

Vera Kotaji pp. Michèle Didier

Joseph Grigely
Blueberry Surprise

Specifications

- 28 cm x 21,4 cm
 - 96 pages
 - Paper : Opale Dialogue naturel 150 g
 - End papers : Black Colorit Paper 160 g
 - Signatures are double-stitched with linen thread
 - Cover : Orange Colorit Paper 120 g mounted on cardboard 2.5
 - Jacket : Red Colorit Coquelicot Paper 160 g
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- Printing by Arte-Print, Brussels
 - Binding by SVK, Sint Niklaas

Production

- Limited edition of 250 numbered copies and 50 A.P.

Produced and published in 2006 by mfc-michèle didier

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