
.interview: vanessa ximenes



Image courtesy of Vanessa Ximenes

Interview: Vanessa Ximenes

Luca Curci talks with **Vanessa Ximenes** during **VENICE INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR 2019** at **THE ROOM** Contemporary Art Space.

Born in **Rio de Janeiro**, Brazil in **1989**. **Vanessa Ximenes** is an **art teacher** at the Federal Institute of Rio de Janeiro. Her classes are **modeling, ceramics, sculpture, painting**, theory and practice of **visual arts** teaching. She also works as a **sculptor** and **photographer**. She holds a master's degree researching Visual Languages in the postgraduate program in **Visual Arts** of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and she holds a bachelor's degree in **Visual Arts / Sculpture** also in UFRJ. As a visual artist, she has already exhibited her artworks in several places such as the **THE ROOM Contemporary Art Space, Palazzo Ca' Zanardi**, Hélio Oiticica Municipal Arts Center, among others. Hers areas of interest are: Sculpture, ceramics, art criticism and **contemporary art**, with emphasis on **artistic productions** and critical artworks analyzes of sculpture and photography.

We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue to use this site we will assume that you are happy with it.

Please, review our updated **privacy** and **cookie** policies

Ok



Image courtesy of Vanessa Ximenes



g

Luca Curci – What is art for you?

Vanessa Ximenes – Art is a kind of necessity. Just like feeding, drinking water or doing exercises, I feel that going to exhibitions and reading books about art fills my soul and it's what I do need to live. I also think that art is, before anything, about a subjectivity production. After Duchamp, for sure, we, as artists, are admittedly intellectuals, we produce researches, we get rationally involved with questions transmitted by our own artwork. In my case, the concept I seek to define and problematize is the female silencing in history. However, the artistic experience also passes through our senses, our body and then, from my point of view, art is about love. The feeling I seek to transmit with my artwork, its essence, is love in its purest way. We are now living strange and dark days all over the world, and before anything, I believe we need to talk about the importance and the hope of keeping love alive. The love that takes care of all things and at the same time wants the good for the others and not only for ourselves.

LC – What's your background? What is the experience that has influenced your work the most?

VX – I lived with my maternal grandparents for some time. They had no academic background, my parents were deaf and had no opportunity to go to college either. When I was a kid, I used to spend time with my grandparents and my grandfather was a self-taught person who was very interested in art and had a collection of art history books on his bookshelf in addition to small-format sculptures and paintings around the house. They were all replicas of works well known in the history of art as Michelangelo's Pietà and Leonardo Da Vinci's Holy Supper, for example. We didn't have the money to buy art, so he was just contented with the photographs and replicas of these works. In my family, almost no one had an academic background, which has changed in my generation. My grandfather talked about the

We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue to use this site we will assume that you are happy with it.

Please, review our updated [privacy](#) and [cookie](#) policies

Ok

family because of my parents, since they were deaf. The environment always had many colors and painted pictures, photographs scattered throughout the house. Our communication was through the Brazilian Sign Language, so the visual expressions and gestures were always very present in my daily life. I believe this has given me a closer look at the images and the delicacy expressed in things.

g



Image courtesy of Vanessa Ximenes



g

LC – Which is the role the artist plays in the society? And the contemporary art?

VX – There's a phrase from Judy Chicago I read once that says "I do not think art can change the world. I do think art can educate, inspire, empower people to act."

Artists must play this role in society. They need to inspire people in a way that will take them out from their comfort zone and make them act, make them have an existential and profound self-reflection. That is where love and caring for others is: when you "wake up" someone to issues that really matter, by educating them to look more critically at themselves and things in their daily life.

It is from this, from this critical, careful and attentive analysis that people begin to act and to change the communities in which they live. The problem is that in general, this is not what we find in contemporary art. Artists are still not generous in this regard. Few contemporary artists have actually acted like this. My main references are Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Pape, who have definitively changed the world art scene by bringing issues such as participatory art and the possibility of drawing the viewer from a passive position in art exhibitions, inviting them to participate in the artwork more actively and critically. Some examples are Hélio's "Descongelado", Lygia Clark's "Concepção Objetiva" and Lygia Pape's spiritual

We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue to use this site we will assume that you are happy with it.

Please, review our updated [privacy](#) and [cookie](#) policies

Ok

LC – Where do you find your inspiration?

VX – I have a silly and at the same time super ambitious dream of taking what I know about art to as many people as I can. In addition to my work as an artist, I teach art at a school in a low-income district far from the center of Rio de Janeiro. The age of my students ranges from 18 to 60. So, in the same classroom, I can have a teenage student, and an elderly student attending the same class and I have to find a way to convey through the language the importance of a work by Rodin, or by Rothko, or by Duchamp, for example. The most important thing for me is that they understand the relevance of these artists even though they have never seen anything about art because art is not in their reality. Being in contact with my students feeds me spiritually and inspires me because they question me and make me find ways to make them access something they would not have had if it were not for that school there.

g



Image courtesy of Vanessa Ximenes



g g

LC – What is the most challenging part about creating your artworks?

VX – Time is the real deal. I wish I could only use my creativity to get by financially. Although, In Brazil, it is tough to earn money with art or even enter the art market. People who enter the market quickly usually come from wealthy families which is not my reality. Then I need to spend some of my creating time to teach art classes which provides me the resources necessary to enhance my productions. In sum, the hardest part about creating artworks is having to work with something else to always fund productions

We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue to use this site we will assume that you are happy with it.

Please, review our updated [privacy](#) and [cookie](#) policies

[Ok](#)

languages and concepts give us an interesting panorama on the world production of the present time besides the fact that you are not being attached to artists who are already known worldwide, for example. It is in this point that I find it democratic because it allows young artists like myself who do not yet have a name known by the art system to show their artworks. I'm grateful for the opportunity. It's the first international exhibition I participate. The concept of the festival inspired me because the interaction itself is quite complete between the multiple art channels that go from the artist's production, through the curator, to the gallerist and, finally, to the collector. It can bring me great opportunities to expose my artworks elsewhere in the world and reach a higher audience.

LC - What is the message linked to the artwork you have shown in this exhibition? How is it connected to the theme of the entire festival?

VX - My artwork is a video of a boat that is "floating" on my belly like it was in the ocean looking for land and, in the end, it finds a "maelstrom" in my navel. The artwork touches on issues such as silence, loneliness, the position of a foreigner seeking a place all the time to fit in and live. I identify myself with this idea. However, the belly that appears in the video is mine, a belly of a woman and it carries a lot of meanings. The woman's belly has a different meaning from a man's belly. It can, one day, be the shelter for another body, a baby. I always think that the artwork is more comprehensive than the initial idea, the work always expands and "works," it produces by itself. Presenting it in Venice, which is a city mostly surrounded by water, perfectly fits the meaning of my artwork as it has everything to do with the city! I could not put it in a better place. It is a dream come true.

g



Image courtesy of Vanessa Ximenes

We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue to use this site we will assume that you are happy with it.

Please, review our updated [privacy](#) and [cookie](#) policies

Ok

LC – What do you think about ITSLIQUID Platform?

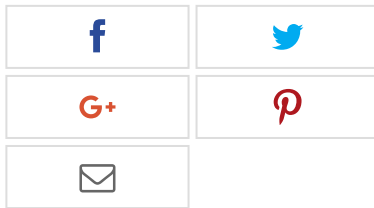
VX – I am impressed with your professionalism. I wish we had the opportunity to have the promotion of Contemporary Art with quality and with a world perspective in Brazil. I am delighted with this platform, and I intend to join other exhibitions organized by you. It would be a pleasure.

LC – What do you think about the organization of our event?

VX – I liked it a lot! I had some doubts in the beginning. I sent you e-mails before confirming our deal and sending my project. My English is not so good, but you were very patient and polite all the time.

LC – Do you think ITSLIQUID GROUP can represent an opportunity for artists?

VX – It represents a great opportunity for sure. The social class or the origin of the artists don't matter because you care about the projects and give them the correct importance. It's something relevant and not so present in the art fields as it should be.



We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue to use this site we will assume that you are happy with it.

Please, review our updated **privacy** and **cookie** policies

Ok