



Secrets We Disclosed to Everyone
Twelve Intimate Dialogs (and One Monologue)
Jonathan Levy
Curated by: Keren Zaltz
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Jonathan Levy's new solo exhibition continues his exploration of themes such as boundaries, sexuality, passion, and relationships. In this project, which was photographed over the past five years, Levy invited women of various ages to engage in an open conversation in front of a continuously filming camera, knowing that they were participating in the creation of art that would ultimately become an exhibition. The conversations took place in the artist's studio, which was designed minimally with a black background, two chairs, and lighting. The right to use the recorded conversation remained with the woman, a key principle in Levy's approach.

Levy and the women he encounters share experiences, memories, and philosophical thoughts, taking on roles of both the inquirer and the respondent during the dialogue. They speak directly, revealing thoughts that most times remain private. Viewers are invited to listen to the dialogues and become participants through a non-judgmental gaze. The conversations, held in Levy's studio, free from external background noise, manage to touch upon intimate questions that are not typically asked. Unlike therapeutic conversations, for example, which have a clear hierarchy and division of roles between the two sides, here the self-consciousness is sometimes mutual, as are the moments of silence during filming, inviting the viewer to navigate between these realms.

Topics discussed in the meetings addressed issues of age and how it influences the need and desire to feel desired and attractive, alongside thoughts on sexuality that exist within the boundaries of personal and public space.

The dark inner space of the exhibition is dedicated to conversations with the women, through seven synchronized TV screens, each continuing the conversation from where it left off until it freezes again. The resulting sequence is not committed to the complete conversation with each woman, and Levy reassembles segments into a narrative with different voices, devoid of decisive moments or climaxes, but rather full of life's contradictions and uncertainties.

During transitions between one conversation segment and another, the screen stops, leaving a static shot of the woman and Levy. This disconnected fragment, devoid of words, makes us linger on the expressions of the speakers' faces and observe their hands and bodies, often expressing more than words. The tension between the continuity of the conversation and the possibility to halt it at a certain point maintains the inherent dichotomy between the moving image and the frozen image, echoing the delicate transition between a preserved secret and its exposure to another person.

One of the conversations filmed within the broadcast sequence is essentially Levy's monologue as he sits beside an empty chair. The monologue begins with the sentence "The films themselves are supposed to be very minor in what happens there," and after a small pause, Levy continues, saying, "But the truth is, no one has ever asked me that question." These two sentences touch on the essence of the conversations - the intimate questions alongside the minor stories told by the women.

At the entrance to the exhibition space stand two images side by side, offering a starting and ending point into the space where the conversations take place. The first image is a large-scale print showing Levy's studio, where the conversations were filmed. Levy stands beside the chairs, his gaze contemplative and distant, directing towards areas beyond the frame. The photograph exposes the production means of the video segments: the flash and the backdrop, revealing the back of the studio. We cannot tell if this photo was taken before or after a meeting, if it anticipates the unknown, or sinks into the depths of the conversation that remained after its completion.

The second image is a projection of texts that stretch and shift on the wall, running forward and swapping places, resembling a news ticker. The fragments of the texts are taken from the conversations with the women, and similarly to the action of connection in the internal video space, in the projection, they gather into a long and tangled sentence. Viewers of the video segments may recognize sentences that were spoken or linger on a point that eluded them during viewing. The separation between the text and the figure who spoke it distances the story from the personal realm to an imaginary collective space with a plurality of voices and shared experiences.

Levy's project examines how in artistic action, there exists the potential to fulfill the bold and suppressed desires of the creator and the filmed, who consciously chose to disconnect for a moment from their daily lives, enter the studio space, and embark on an adventure. It is a personal journey of the women and Levy, escaping from the confines of the documentary into territories where truth lies somewhere between our memories and the way we tell them. The result is a performative action of bodily gestures, words, and silences, touching more than anything on life itself.

Keren Zaltz
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