

(A,5)

Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'

"You can engage in the experience of 'doing nothing'. In return you will get paid the local hourly minimum wage.

The experience takes place 'here' [in the space]. You can decide on the time you stay, you just have to know that that compensation is foreseen for the number of full hours. If you are interested, you will sign a contract. After 'doing nothing' and getting paid, you will receive a proof of payment.

All applicable taxes and social contributions have to be paid according to laws and regulations."

Visitors of an exhibition space are suggested to 'do nothing' is a (situational) (expanded) performance by artist Katya Ev.

It deconstructs the idea of 'doing nothing' as losing time, the idea of productivity as valuable, and the possibility of being present to yourself as a class privilege.

The performance was enacted for the first time in December 2020 in the Gosset site in Brussels during the exhibition *In a Long Blink of an Eye*.

www.doingnothing.website

All images courtesy of Katya Ev.

(x,y)

+^(1,2)

KATYA

+^(K, 5)
09





'Doing Nothing'

It is suggested to understand 'doing nothing' in the sense of 'being' and through the prism of a spiritual exercise: as a possibility to create a void, to experience inaction and being present to oneself.

Participants to this performance are asked to accomplish a paradoxical task – to explore a state only defined by negation. Strictu sensu, one cannot do nothing: our bodies require at least minimal activity, our heads at least minimal thoughts forming, our senses at least minimal perceptions captured. Therefore, 'doing nothing' proposes an exercise of awareness where expanding emptiness can be gained by refraining from any action, time and again.

Far from an attitude of passivity, this approach is close to the concept of Wu Wei taking its origin from Chinese philosophy: agency without acting. Activating an inner space in deep connection to the self, while sitting quietly, 'doing nothing' reveals its generative emancipatory potential.

In whichever way 'doing nothing' is enacted concretely, the contract signed by participants formally recognizes that what they are doing is what 'nothing' is.



Katya Ev

VISITORS OF AN EXHIBITION SPACE ARE SUGGESTED TO 'DO NOTHING'

CONTRACT FOR 'DOING NOTHING' N°[DATE: YEAR-MONTH-DAY/NUMBER OF THE PARTICIPANT]

(Hereinafter referred to as 'Contract')

By and between

Ekaterina Vasilyeva

born 21/10/1983 in Moscow, USSR
residing at 38 rue Jacques Louvel-Tessier 75010 Paris, France

(Hereinafter referred to as "I / Me")

and

[First name] [Surname]

Born on [date] in [City], [Country]
Residing at [full address], [ZIP code], [City], [Country]

(Hereinafter referred to as "You")

Me and You are hereinafter collectively referred to as the "**Parties**".

Parties agree on the following:

1. 'Doing nothing'

1.1 You will 'do nothing' on [date taken from computer] in the capacity of visitor of the exhibition *In a Long Blink of the Eye*¹ and the performance *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'* by Katya Ev.

1.2 'Doing nothing' will be performed through physical presence and embodiment.

1.3 'Doing nothing' will be performed within the space and framework of *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'* and during the hours communicated as hours of activation of the performance: 16 – 20 December, 2020 and on 7, 14, 21, 30 January 2021, on each date from 2 pm to 6 pm.

If a physical presence cannot take place because of applicable COVID-19 measures, or for serious health reasons You will 'do nothing' in a digital form through a virtual meeting environment.

In this case, You are liable to create similar conditions to the setup of *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'* as stipulated in 2.1. All material describing the space setup will be transmitted to You.

¹ HISK laureates exhibition taking place at Gosset site, Rue Gabrielle Petitstraat 4-6, 1080 Brussels, December 16, 2020 - January 31, 2021

1.4 You declare that you have taken notice of the mindset through which 'doing nothing' is suggested to be performed as stipulated in *Appendix 1: Conceptual Prism*.

1.5 You declare to commit to 'do nothing' with profound seriousness and personal engagement.

1.6 While 'doing nothing' You will avoid any attitude or action that leads to moral, physical or emotional suffering.

(Hereinafter referred to as '**doing nothing**')

2. Conditions for 'doing nothing'

2.1 I will duly provide suitable conditions for 'doing nothing'. I will provide You with the necessary material means: a space of 28 m2, a comfortable chair, and a reasonably quiet environment.

2.2 A host will provide You with guidance and accompaniment, a kind attitude and assistance. Upon your request the host will make sure that any vital necessities are met (hereinafter referred to as **Host**).

2.3 The Host is responsible for handling *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'*. The Host executes the terms and conditions of the present contract on my behalf, and accomplishes all applicable administrative procedures and payments. The Host ensures the integrity of *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'* as an existential situation.

3. Duration

3.1 The duration of 'doing nothing' being unlimited by Me, the duration of 'doing nothing' is of Your choosing, within the hours of activation as stipulated in **1.3**.

3.2 Solely in the process of 'doing nothing' You will determine the actual duration of 'doing nothing'. No formal commitments by You about the end time of 'doing nothing' will be accepted by the host.

3.3 I guarantee You access to the time by any possible means and at any moment of You 'doing nothing', and per Your request.

4. Compensation

4.1 The compensation amounts to € 10,25 per completed hour – meaning: 55 minutes = 0 hours, 1 hour 5 minutes = 1 hour. On Sundays and national holidays, the compensation is 200%.²

4.2 This compensation for 'doing nothing' will be transferred to Your bank account, or paid out to You in cash, before leaving *Visitors of an exhibition space are suggested to 'do nothing'*.

4.3 You will receive a proof of payment, which You sign before leaving.

² * Belgium's general minimum wage upon CAO (collective labour agreement) n° 43 of the National Labour Council, which sets the absolute national bottom amount for wages. These apply when there are no other specific sectoral agreements on minimum wages.

5. Privacy

5.1 An anonymized version of the present Contract may be publicly exhibited or reproduced as a part of the performance *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'* by Katya Ev.

5.2 Your private data will solely be used for administrative ends that belong to the contract and the proof of payment and thus kept private.

6. Final covenants

6.1 Parties agree to adopt an attitude of respect, trust and kindness towards each other, the host and all other third parties

6.2 In the case of gross misconduct by You, the present contract immediately terminates without prior notice. The Host has the right to terminate Your 'doing nothing' and have You removed from *Visitors of an Exhibition Space are Suggested to 'Do Nothing'*.

6.3 Parties mutually covenant that their mutual commitment is not subject to labour law and any specific regulations related to it. You will be responsible for the tax declaration of the compensation.

6.4 Parties agree that Belgian law applies to this contract.

6.5 The appendices form an integral part of this agreement.

Drawn up in 2 copies in Brussels on [date]

Ekaterina Vasilyeva



[Name] [Surname]







Katya Ev

VISITORS OF AN EXHIBITION SPACE ARE SUGGESTED TO 'DO NOTHING'

PAYMENT NOTE N°[date: year-month-day/number of the participant]

Date: [date]

Between

Ekaterina Vasilyeva
38 rue Jacques Louvel-Tessier
75010 Paris France
Siret: 50742615300023
VAT ID: FR47507426153

and

[Name] [Surname]:
Born on [date of birth], [city of birth], [country of birth]
[address]
[ZIP code], [city], [country]
[email]
National register number: [national register number]
Bank details: [IBAN]

Object: payment for 'doing nothing' as agreed upon in the Contract for 'Doing Nothing' N° [date: year-month-day/number of the participant] d.d. [date]

[Name] [Surname] requests from Ekaterina Vasilyeva the payment for 'doing nothing':

on the date: [date]
starting time: [starting time]
end time: [end time]

[number of complete hours] hours x € 10, 25*

Total amount to be paid: € [number of complete hours x € 10, 25, if Sunday, €20,50]

Payment method: [IBAN] [cash]

Ekaterina Vasilyeva agrees and proceeds to immediate payment of the requested amount.

For proof of payment:

Ekaterina Vasilyeva

[Name] [Surname]

* Belgium's general minimum wage upon CAO (collective labour agreement) n° 43 of the National Labour Council, which sets the absolute national bottom amount for wages. These apply when there are no other specific sectoral agreements on minimum wages. On Sundays and national holidays the compensation is 200%.



Conceptual prism

Visitors of an exhibition space are suggested to 'do nothing' deconstructs the idea of 'doing nothing' as losing time, as well as productivity as valuable – because the participants are paid for it.

In a world where economic constraint dispossesses workers of a large part of their time, Visitors of an exhibition space are suggested to 'do nothing' reconsiders free time as a class privilege. 'Doing nothing' here is radically opposed to the notion of otium advocated by ancient philosophy and later widely developed in Western thought – an aristocratic grant obtained through the exploitation of others.

On the other hand, Visitors of an exhibition space are suggested to 'do nothing' unpacks the social stigma associated with 'doing nothing' as marginal pastime or procrastination. Unlike voluntary and involuntary outsiders, practicing inaction and refraining from accelerated productivity is no longer dissident when getting paid.

'Doing nothing' is thus practiced by the means of the capitalist system, where money is the ultimate measurement of symbolic value.* Visitors of an exhibition space are suggested to 'do nothing' is conceived as a systemic proposal: a modèle réduit, or scale model, that formalizes and points out elements that belong to everyday capitalism. Using procedures, contracts, measured time, compensation, transaction, and so forth, it does not offer a commentary on 'doing nothing', but enacts it through a subversive device. It gives an objective, administrative existence to this 'doing nothing' and 'nothingness' recognized by the state, and by attributing to them monetary value, installs them in a capitalist logic.

* 'Bullshit jobs' and the notion of 'bore-out' are to be further discussed.



Between the 16th of December and 31st of January 2021, 21 people did nothing for a total of 12 hours and 10 minutes. The duration of 'doing nothing' varied between 3 minutes and 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Daniella Géó

"I was super tired, exhausted after such a long, intensive year. To have that single moment to be able to 'do nothing' felt as if I was on vacation. [...] it was a mixture of feelings: since I was curator of the exhibition, I also had some responsibilities as a host of the show."

"There was a strange moment. When I was 'doing nothing' an art professional I knew came into the space and addressed me. At that moment I got confused. I thought: "Am I allowed to? What is the procedure here?" The host came to me and asked 'Are you doing nothing?' and I felt like 'No,' and then he said 'Okay, I am sorry, it's a breach of contract.' At that moment, his authority came into play."

"When I told the host I was doing something, I was being truthful to my understanding of 'doing nothing' in that situation. But if I really wanted to problematise my own experience and my own idea of what 'doing nothing' meant in that context, I would have to consider that I broke the contract many times. Every time I expressed my role as a curator, observing the visitors, observing the host, observing even myself, was in a way already a breach of contract."

Mélanie Weill (host)

"I stood behind this grey desk, and when people entered I explained the performance, showed the contract and told them about the frame of the performance. I seated visitors on the chair and I was there the whole time they were 'doing nothing'. As the host, I also 'did nothing'."

"Some people were quite easily distracted, it was not easy for them to 'do nothing.' As the host, I was very careful to protect the bubble and create a safe space for them [...] Because it was a public space, I had to tell people "Please, do not come close, don't observe the person too much." There were participants that went into their own mind super quickly and I didn't need to do anything. There was a woman who even covered her whole head... some people slept, so with them it was really easy. Sometimes they made me very peaceful. I was watching them and I saw they were enjoying 'doing nothing,' super deep into their own inner space [...] there was a sort of empathy between their state and mine."



[www.doingnothing.
website/daniella-geo](http://www.doingnothing.website/daniella-geo)



[www.doingnothing.
website/melanie-weill](http://www.doingnothing.website/melanie-weill)

