



Studio away from Studio : Artists in COVID19 Quarantine

Jeff Feld

- Where are you? Do you have Quarantine? Since when?

I'm at home in Ridgewood, Queens. My home is also my studio.

We've had quarantine here for about 3 weeks and the University that I work for has moved all its operations online.

- How many times do you leave your house? Are you with family and/or pets?

I'm lucky that I have a dog and some outdoor space so as a result I am outside numerous times during the day. Sometimes for a walk in the neighborhood other times to work in my garden. It's interesting to me how much interactions with other dog owners have changed – very little communication and we tend to keep the dogs apart. They seem a bit bemused with the situation. My mother is 90 and in frail health and I have been very involved with her care. Given the quarantine I've not been able to visit with her which has been difficult for us both. Thankfully she is doing OK.

- How are you feeling?

Generally OK – thinking a lot – thinking about time, how we define and use it. In the absence of a familiar structure how does one go about their day? Should I be productive? Should I be lazy? What is important to me and who do I value

- Are you making work? If so, is there a difference since the quarantine, such as inspiration, motivation, productivity, etc?

FRESH WINDOW

What is making work? If anything the virus brings this question to the fore. I'm spending most of my time working in my garden and working on my building – and somehow these activities add to and are central to my creative process. Is there an object ready to be unveiled? Not exactly, is there a foundation for such a thing to appear? I think very much so.

- Are you making something new or working on something you started before the quarantine?

A little bit of this and a little bit of that.

- Are you making any work related to Covid19?

No. That is not to say that my work won't be influenced by it but typically my process is driven by internal processes and not external circumstances. Sometimes I wish I could be more topical but that is not me.

- Has it changed any future art projects you had in mind or planned?

Not yet but I am open to the possibility that it could.

- Has it changed any exhibition plans?

Yes – I was deep in preparation for an exhibition in Berlin that was to open during the first week of May. No telling when/if that will be re-scheduled. I did get a full refund for my air fare and air b and b 😊

- Has the medium changed due to limited resources or due to staying at home instead of studio?

My home is my studio and I have too much stuff here – so basically no. My diet has changed a bit as well as my exercise but not the practice.

FRESH WINDOW

- Is art helping you stay sane?

Art helps me make sense of the world and liberate me from struggle. Is that staying sane? Not sure about that. Should an artist even be sane?

- Do you have another job that has been affected?

Yes – I am a part time administrator in higher ed. I am now part of the zoom work force. The best part of this is having my dog on camera and having my work in the background so people can wonder just WTF am I doing.

- Are you reaching out to other artists?

I am reaching out to close friends and family, some of them are artists

- Do you feel the art world has come to a stop?

I feel like the part of the art world that has stopped is the least interesting part – lots of great stuff is happening online both visually and in narrative form.

- If you are staying at home, do you see your home differently?

Yes, it seems the idea as home as refuge and reflection of self seems more prescient than ever.

- What do you miss the most as an artist during this quarantine?

The sense of being part of community that I experience from visiting another artist's studio – going to a museum, or doing a gallery walk. The notion of being on the same side and sharing a common language, that we were/are involved in a project bigger than ourselves.