

+ ISTANBUL QUEER ART COLLECTIVE  
(Tuna Erdem and Seda Ergul) +

# DISCOMFORT IS A WALK IN THE PARK

*Discomfort is a Walk in the Park* (2021) is a guided tour of the park surrounding Museum Kurhaus Kleve, which can be used at any park in the world, without losing anything whatsoever. The audio tour consists of four tracks that also contain various performative instructions or “performance scores” in the grand tradition of Fluxus, which the listeners are free to follow or not, at their own discretion. The tracks can be listened to in any order, preferably by randomly choosing the geometrical shape that is assigned to each track. Below you can find snippets from the texts of the tracks. Please be advised that there is more to the tracks than the texts read out loud, so this will not give you an indication of what you will experience or even what to expect but it is still better than nothing.



# A WALK IN THE PARK

According to the Cambridge English dictionary, a walk in the park means: “something that is very easy to do, and usually pleasant”.

The “usually” they sneaked into the definition is what you need to look out for. Insidious that. It spoils the pleasant associations, makes you wonder what the unusual pleasantness lurking about might be.

So let us state this from the very start: We do not promise that your walk in the park will always be pleasant, but mostly so.

[...]

I hope by now you have realised when we promised a guided tour of the park, we did not mean guiding your steps through the paths and letting you know some boring facts about the park. What we meant was guiding your thoughts through the journey, to places you might not want to go: places of dis/comfort.



# A TREATMENT IN A SPA

Find a place to sit comfortably facing the building, preferably on a bench, as you listen to this.

So, this place was originally a bathhouse: a place to relax, heal, be comforted.

Nowadays it would have been a spa, which brings to mind more of a luxury holiday in a serene place where you are pampered. A temple of comfort, you might say, for those who can afford it.

But is it really as comfortable as it seems or is it beset with the discomfort of social awkwardness and treatments that have way too much in common with torture practices?

Let us try to answer that question with a little experiment. If you google “Top 5 Spa Treatments for 2020” this is the first list you come up with: [...]

## ◆ A SIT IN THE PARK

Sit comfortably until you are not.

These are the type of performative instructions that we follow in our own performance art. They are called “scores,” which is a reference to music scores, and like musical scores, they are meant to be performed over and over again by different performers. We prefer the Fluxus scores that contain instructions to do things that anyone can do, without any special talent or training. Some of the performances we do, fall under the category of “endurance performance,” which is all about enduring discomfort. Many body artists take the concept of endurance to such extremes that mere discomfort becomes too humble a sensation to claim that we are enduring anything. But after all both pain and discomfort are subjective and in the realm of performance art they are usually used to set deadlines and to measure time: A performance score very often tells you to do something until you feel you cannot do it any longer; until you reach the very threshold that discomfort becomes unbearable. And in terms of time, this will end up being different for each and every one of us and will necessarily differ each time we try it again.

The thing is discomfort is the easiest thing in the world to achieve though our every move is to avoid it. Discomfort is a walk in the park.



# A STRIP OF GRASS

Go to the strip of grass.

Take off your shoes and socks.

Go ahead, no need to hesitate.

You won't hurt your feet, I promise.

Well, you know as well as I do that no one can promise such a thing.

Except for god, if he exists

and I am no goddess, even if I have pretensions in that direction.

[...]

Close your eyes.

Try to feel the wind on your skin.

The caress of a spring sun.

Have you started to feel like a goddess yet?

Because if you haven't yet,

I promise

You never will.