

# the hungarian artist

by eamon byrne

What led to the current situation was that about a year ago the conceptual artist had been shocked to read in a small item in a newspaper that a conceptual artist in China had also grown an ear on his forearm and this discovery had led the conceptual artist to make a visit to his local internet cafe to do a search on google, where he discovered that the growing of ears on the forearms of conceptual artists was not at all uncommon, and it was then that the conceptual artist had understood why the demand for his appearances on morning television talk shows had over the preceding several months begun to wane. That the current situation had improved was only due to the conceptual artist immediately (after googling conceptual artists + graft + ear) contacting his graft specialist and ordering a mouth to be grafted onto his forearm directly beneath his grafted ear. The conceptual artist, after the operation, had of course kept his new graft a secret by wearing long sleeved shirts buttoned at the wrists for pretty much the whole year, which was about the time his graft specialist had told him was needed for a mouth to fully acclimatise itself to a forearm. Fortunately, since the demand for his services on morning television talk shows had by this time almost completely dried up, this diminution of his attraction as the most well-known conceptual artist with an ear graft on his forearm had not caused him any more financial loss than it otherwise would have if another conceptual artist with an ear grafted to his forearm had appeared in China, or had others begun to appear elsewhere also, according to an advanced search on google. Fortunately, due to his inherent propensity towards defensive self-rationalisation, the conceptual artist had not been led into any depressing feelings that his sneering dismissal of the 'internet' and the 'web' had been the very cause of him completely missing the existence of the conceptual artist with the ear on his forearm in China and, apparantly, the many other conceptual artists with similar appendages on their forearms

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elsewhere; and though he was aware that he was, as it were, the victim of some cosmic injustice (that being that, solely due to the vagaries of chance, other conceptual artists might be plying a trade similar to his own), he did not succumb, as has been said, to any feelings of depression but rather took a sanguine or “realistic” view of the situation. Nevertheless, before issuing a press release announcing the existence of his new, unique combination of ear + mouth on his forearm, the conceptual artist had taken the precaution of making a visit to his local internet cafe to do a new advanced search on google to verify that no other conceptual artist had come forward with an ear and mouth on his forearm. To his relief this search had returned a negative, and so the conceptual artist had sat down at breakfast to compose a press release to announce the existence of a brand new type of conceptual art installation on his forearm. However, what if the conceptual artist in China was to sooner or later copy his innovation of having a mouth grafted below his ear on his forearm? To allay these concerns the conceptual artist had made a visit to his local internet cafe to google for local teachers of ventriloquism, and the following morning had also gone to his local stationery store and bought a small roll of velcro. It was after taking these preliminary steps that he had sent out his press release announcing the new conceptual installation on his forearm, and it was not long thereafter that invitations to appear on morning television talk shows had again begun to appear in his actual physical mailbox which was conveniently situated at the front of his building. This summarises the events leading more or less to the current situation. Except that, on making a visit to his local internet cafe to do a google search a few weeks ago, the conceptual artist was shocked to discover that a conceptual artist in China had recently appeared on a morning television talk show revealing an ear and mouth on his forearm. Fortunately, as this was exactly what the prescient conceptual artist had anticipated, he himself, when turning up at his next morning television talk show to show off his ear and mouth on his forearm, was able to reveal a completely new innovation, that being a cellphone attached with velcro to his

forearm just below the ear; and using his much practised ventriloquism skills, and also by flexing the wrinkles on his forearm, the conceptual artist was able to conduct a conversation with his forearm, such that the ear on his forearm appeared to listen to his physical voice, and the mouth on his forearm appeared to talk back to him via the cellphone using his ventriloquist's voice. Following this sensational appearance, the conceptual artist was now in greater demand on morning television talk shows even than before. Such was the buildup of invitations in his physical mailbox that he was forced to abandon his long-held sneering contempt for the 'internet' and the 'web' and arrange for a man from an internet company to come to his premises to install an internet connection. This describes more or less the current situation. However, this very morning, only a few weeks after commencing his new habit of assiduously trolling google using sophisticated search algorithms which in his spare time he had painfully composed using a computer language he had with great difficulty only recently begun to come to grips with, the conceptual artist was shocked to read in a small item in a newspaper that a female conceptual artist in Hungary had recently appeared on a morning television talk show with two mouths grafted to her body, one below the nipple of each breast, and these had regaled the hosts by conducting a lengthy conversation in Hungarian. The conceptual artist hurriedly rushed to his computer and logged in to youtube, where on googling 'hungarian artist' + 'graft' + 'mouths' he was shocked to discover that English-captioned examples of the Hungarian conceptual artist's appearance on a morning television talk show were all over the internet, with the captions - risible, tweet-length - composed in the lowliest possible light.

