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ARTFORUM

DISPATCH

WHERE WE'RE AT: LONDON, DUBLIN

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BY LOCKDOWN TIME, galleries and institutions worldwide finally understood that the internet was a Real Thing, which was confounding because it's been one for decades. Amid their scramble to devise new online platforms and (cheaply) gather original content, some artists, curators, and writers stopped looking at art and certainly stopped producing it "on demand." The online conversations that followed these refusals have been the closest to a proposal for the kind of future I want to be a part of. They (d)evolved into an energetically legible gibberish: discussions that doubled back on themselves and swiftly shifted focus, long threads interrupted by the OP admitting they'd lost the plot, thoughts grown and multiplied rather than articulated. These ways of speaking about art and life after everything was suspended felt free, liberated from the need to provide tidy sound bites for an established phantom "we." Long-standing demands were rehashed in unapologetically personal and unending terms, and the overall opaqueness felt more conducive to progress than any formal scheme. I muted anyone who sounded too clever, blocked anyone who made too much sense, and reported anyone who suggested anyone's physical condition was up for debate. I'd cancel myself if it meant the world could be one iota more beautiful. For months I've existed inside conversations with no destination or deadline, full of care and mutual aid, their ends trailing off into sleep or long stares out the window. These exchanged words are engaged in, as Octavia Butler would call it, a "positive obsession" with how we want to live together—an obsession that must withstand whatever new normal we'll soon be asked to exist in.

Cécile B. Evans is a London-based artist.