

Interview 2: Sharctic

L2: Everchanging borders

Exhibition text:
In the Sharctic interview, the interviewee talks about how different borders can be easily changed, and how time is also a factor that changes borders. He also adds layers to the way borders are everchanging not only physically and historically, but also concepts such as social, racial, gender, and citizenship borders. The interviewee, who is a border scholar, refers to himself as a "labor worker" to raise awareness on how the terminology we use does not always define who we are. Labor workers are seen as vulnerable and dealing with manual labor, however that does not always have to be the case. This concept of terminology can be applied to borders as well, and how there are different perceivers, experiences and definitions based on one's biases, backgrounds, and ethical concerns. The excerpts from Sharctic's interview share a deeper understanding of how borders are an everchanging concept depending on the many levels of inner and outer positionality.

L1: Biases through borders (02:10-02:35)

So, experiencing the border and how you get treated at borders is so different for each individual. Depending on so many things, and of course we talk about citizenship, we talk about race, we talk about gender, we talk about sexuality, all these things that influence everybody's experience of the border and I think that's probably what I think about more when it comes to borders.

Comment:
This excerpt talks about different biases, or criteria, might impact one's experience at the border. This is important for the exhibition due to the reflection on how many levels can be taken into consideration on the theme of borders and crossing them. It connects as well to the L2, since the borders will change depending on how many "points" are added to the criteria or not, hence why Everchanging Borders.

L1: Types of border crossers (06:38-06:58)

The migrant- I'm a labor migrant, I love saying that because people think labor migrants as these, you know... frightened, slightly desperate people who are crossing in boats and coming over for, you know, the populace would say "taking our jobs".

Comment:
This excerpt becomes interesting for the exhibition thanks to its wordplay. Although the interviewee is a scholar who studies border and migration, he calls himself a labor migrant because he, in fact, is one. He raises how society sees those who are referred to as "labor migrant" as those who are in more vulnerable position, when the meaning can be more than it seems. The terminology used can impact one's perception until the term is broken down and redefined.

L1: Expectations of borders (08:27-09:16)

Crossing border, it's exciting because there's something on the other - especially if you haven't crossed that particular border before - there's something new on the other side that you're not familiar with. It's slightly frightening because it is something new that you haven't experienced before. When you're crossing some of these borders in, I don't know, in Russia, that's the one that's a common one for me or Tajikistan or wherever, you know, there's always an element of risk when you cross the border, but then usually the benefits what you gain from crossing the border is always worthwhile in some way, or I think so.

Comment:
This excerpt refers to the imaginary of borders, and how our expectations can shape part of our experience with borders. The expectation of crossing an unknown border is also how one can define "what is borders", because it is not just what we experience with it, but also what we make of it. Everchanging borders can also be a part of our expectations: if we see a border as an adventure, and a fun experience, we may as well change our expectations regarding that border.

L1: Materiality of borders (12:56-13:36)

The borders that we had in societies between classes and genders, you know, one hundred years ago, fifty years ago, so different today and yet people probably won't even recognize it. You know, what do people consider traditional culture? Their borders around traditions. Well, those traditions probably didn't exist in the 18th century, they're probably a creation of the 19th century or early 20th century, especially in the lands of the Habsburg Empire where, you know, new nations are being born. I think people should be reminded of these man-made borders and how they're just changing.

Comment:
This excerpt goes into different details on the history with borders, history of borders, how they were created and materialized, and cultural concepts within borders. It is important to see borders not only as how we see them now, but also how they were conceptualized and materialized into what they once were and what they are today.