

## Instructions for Something to Happen

A poetic instructional text on process, traces, distributed authorship, and what can emerge in encounter.

DIEGO MADERO ISLAS · EN

(or how to approach what is sometimes called art)

1.

Do not begin by making a work.

Begin by provoking a situation.

If an object appears, let it exist,  
but do not confuse it with what matters.

2.

Take anything:  
a sound, a piece of code, a recipe, a conversation.

Treat it as if it were a system in potential.

Observe it until it stops being “that thing”  
and begins to behave like something else.

3.

Set a rule.

Then another.

Not too many.

If the rules produce nothing, change them.  
If they produce too much, constrain them.

Distrust absolute freedom:  
it usually produces noise.

4.

Do something with those rules.

Do not overthink it.

Allow the process to move far enough  
to leave traces.

5.

Stop before you understand everything.

If you understand it completely,  
it is probably no longer useful.

6.

Leave a remnant.

It can be:

- an object
- a recording
- an interface
- an imprecise memory

It does not need to be clear.

It does not need to be complete.

7.

Allow someone else to encounter that remnant.

Do not explain too much.

If they ask “what does it mean?”,  
resist the temptation to answer.

8.

Observe what happens.

If nothing happens, do not force it.

If something happens, do not try to fix it.

Remember:

what occurs does not belong to you.

9.

Do not expect understanding.

Expect deviations:

- incorrect interpretations
- unintended uses
- side effects

This is often where things become interesting.

10.

Do not trust technique.

It can help, but it can also conceal.

A flawless execution may produce nothing.

An error may open everything.

11.

Assume you are not the only author.

Consider:

- where your rules come from
- who else is involved
- what systems were already in place

Authorship is often reconstructed afterward,  
like assembling a story from scattered pieces.

12.

Do not worry about permanence.

Some things work better when they disappear.

If something remains, it will be a trace.

If nothing remains, that also counts.

13.

Do not use the word “art” too soon.

If you use it, clarify it.

If you cannot clarify it, leave it suspended.

Sometimes it is better to work without naming.

14.

Repeat the process.

Change the rules.

Change the medium.

Change the context.

Observe what remains.

That is what matters.

15.

If at some point something activates—  
a shift in attention,  
a sensation difficult to name,  
a small transformation—

do not try to capture it completely.

It already happened.

Final note (optional, but recommended)

If someone insists on asking what you made,  
you may answer:

- > I did not make a work.
- > I allowed something to happen.

Compression

- > It is not about making something,
- > but about allowing something to happen
- > when it is no longer there.