

# WRONG TIMES

## 13 QUESTIONS FOR DARA FRIEDMAN & MARK HANDFORTH BY THE WRONG GALLERY

The Wrong Gallery: Who are you?

Dara Friedman: I'm a middle aged white woman with brown hair, and I might do just about anything.



TWG: Where do you come from?

DF: I come from a meeting of opposites. Aleksandra pointed that out. The Germans lost the war. The Americans came in and occupied Germany. The American soldiers bred with Germany's best -- the lost and lovely girls who were born during the war. It's complicated. It's a place where you push and get pulled at the same time. My mother's family comes from a place of high culture- they made wine, were poets, sculptors, curators- part of German expressionism -- wild and heady and privileged. My father's family came to Ellis Island from Russia. They started with a vegetable cart and took it from there. I grew up on the beach in the 70s in Florida. I'm the existentialist in the bikini.

TWG: What are you doing?

DF: Trying to describe to you that my waters are deep, but my well runs dry. I'm sitting here in a darkened room setting up 'Sunset Island' in which my actors are asking each other these sorts of questions. But they don't answer the questions. You know, the only honest answer is an action. I can tell you that I'm sorry, but unless I don't do it again, it doesn't mean shit. Tomorrow I'll be taking care of our children again, and you, and our home. But I could disappear. Kick you in the ass. Stick with it.

TWG: Why do you do it?

DF: Because I'm addicted to love.

TWG: What inspires you?

DF: Other artists inspire me. Fearlessness and ease. Nature. People as Nature. The huge beauty of it.

TWG: What do you hate?

DF: Snobs. Fear

TWG: What are you afraid of?

DF:

TWG: What are you looking forward to?

DF: Grandchildren.

TWG: What is special to you?

DF:

TWG: What is there too much of today?

DF:

TWG: What do you need?

DF: Some time alone at home. I also need to party hard and long. To get out of my head and into my body.

TWG: What do you want?

DF: I want the house to be finished. And clean, so that

Cherry's allergies stop. And a swimming pool.

TWG: What's next?

DF: I can't really see beyond right Now. I think that what's happening Now is also Next for a while. I think that this is IT. But then there's always Later.

The Wrong Gallery: Who are you?

Mark Handforth: Mark Handforth

TWG: Where do you come from?

MH: I live in Miami, though I grew up in London, but I'm born in Hong Kong and my mum's Irish.

TWG: What are you doing?

MH: Giving the girls a bath.

TWG: Why do you do it?

MH: it keeps them clean, washes the day away; it calms them down before they eat their dinner. I'm a big believer in baths; you've got to soak all that stuff out of you before it becomes you.

TWG: What inspires you?

MH: Nature, and human nature.



TWG: What do you hate?

MH: Boring conversations.

TWG: What are you afraid of?

MH: Prisons.

TWG: What are you looking forward to?

MH: Long white hair.

TWG: What is special to you?

MH: My two girls, obviously.

TWG: What is there too much of today?

MH: Real estate.

TWG: What do you need?

MH: Sleep.

TWG: What do you want?

MH: Time to enjoy what I've got.

TWG: What's next?

MH: A ski vacation?

## MICHAEL WILKINSON INTERVIEWED BY MARCEL PROUST

Marcel: On my walks along the Kelvin Way I would often find myself, unexpectedly prompted by the rustling of some long forgotten crisp packet or carrier bag, caught mid flight by a protuberant hawthorn or buddleia like an arrow from Cupid's quiver gone awry in Arcadia, contemplating the effects of the packaging of childhood breakfast cereals and their role in the forming of aesthetic sensibility. Standing, bow legged and dumbfounded, before a faded and embrittled packet of Nik Naks forced as if by the hands of some woodland sprite into the crack between a park bench's bum-worn slats, the colours of the Nik and the Nak, once glorious in their fluorescent sunset hues now rendered almost as transparent as the central window through which one observed the quality of the goods, I would be reduced almost to tears. The tiny barcode, in its pomp as bold as Hyperion, now faded into the slightest of hieroglyphs, the embrazened vertical gate of its columns a ghostly ruin offering little resistance to my penetrating gaze. I would be transported back to my childhood breakfast table, back to the baffling incongruity of Tony the Tiger's lurid orange coat, aflame like Hera's Aegis against the deep blue of the background, a reference no doubt to celestial Olympus, and recall how, with the slightest movement of my eye, these saturated printing inks would create a flashing optical effect as if the gods themselves were arguing, as I was with my brother and sister, over their breakfast choices, and Zeus was casting down lightning bolts because Hephaestus had finished off the Frosties.

Denied access to my heart's want, to Tony's golden horde, I would find myself considering the far less attractive option of the Rice Krispies with their attendant imps Snap, Crackle and Pop. These demiurges of the petit dejeuner occupied a universe of far greater tonal variety than did Tony, trapped as he was forever in a cage of blaring oppositional shades, scowling at the fate of such a timeworn graphic solution but bravely puffing out his chest and declaring "They're great", a reference less to the Frosties proffered in his mighty paw and more to the enduring power of blue and orange. Snap and cohorts however, erupted from a sky akin to that of a Titian, their no doubt Bacchanalian origins in some Elysian glade denoted by a subtle tint of azure and heightened by the yellow, the green and the red of their sinister pointy hats and elfin garb. These malicious hobgoblins deceived the still half sleeping mind into believing there was yet some promise in their dull offering, so apt to become saturated on even the briefest contact with milk. The chromatic variety of their packaging, a Piero della Francesca of the breakfast table, belied the deathly dunn coloured inner world of its contents. If these creatures took the form of fauns or satyrs it was with evil intent, less the offspring of Pan and more a manifestation of those ghostly harbingers of doom, the three horsemen of the Snap, Crackle and Apocalypse. I averted this disaster by turning my bleary eyes towards the remaining candidates, none sadly unopened and still holding some much fought over prize, a spokey dokey say. I quickly discounted the Golden Nuggets, their cavalcade of hirsute pan handlers provoking in me a kind of nausea, as would at times the cereal itself, should I fall prey to a greed like that of Klondike Pete's and consume half the packet before my unwitting brother, fellow frontiersmen on the breakfast goldrush, had realised his pardner's venal ambition. Even the foil inner lining of this most glamorous of ce-

reals, unique in the breakfast pantheon, could not tempt me to follow Pete and his ludicrous donkey into their mine of precious pellets. The Weetabix too were afforded scant regard, their prosaic mantle offering neither noble beast nor mythic caricature, only an ear of corn, to my childish eye an image with little appeal and no relation to the breeze block of biscuit in the box.



While carefully considering my remaining alternatives, a melody would steal upon me like that little phrase in Vinteuil's sonata, a haunting refrain accompanied by a lyrical poetry:

I'm a giraffe and I live in the sky,

They call me lofty and you know why,

For breakfast I have two tree tops,

But I'd rather have a bowl of Coco Pops.



Prompted by Lofty's preference I would descend into the heart of darkness that was Coco Pops. Coco the chimpanzee, a kind of Cheeta in leisure wear, proffered all the mysteries of a journey into the interior. He erupted from an explicable bright yellow sky, as exotic as a Windward Isle banana, in proletarian jeans and t-shirt, baseball cap perched at a rakish angle, for all the

world a ned of the jungle. Like the sluggish Amazon, all brooding dark undercurrents, his cereal quickly formed a silted brown bayou; and it is from this backwater in paradise that I find myself launching a dugout canoe in pursuit of the source of this unending flow of memories. I paddle past the hostile natives of forgetting, avoid the low slung creepers of sentimentalism and arrive at a clearing only to find Coco and his primitive wardrobe. Would I be correct in assuming that it is in this clearing in the primeval canopy that your own investigation into the phenomenon of the ludicrously attired chimpanzee has its origin?

Michael: No.

#### PIOTR JANAS AND ADAM SZYMCZYK

AS: Why do you paint? where did that come from?

PJ: It's like diving in murky water and groping in the sludge at the bottom. Sometimes I manage to grab hold of something, pull it out and go, "check this out!" Then it's back in the water again to look for something new. I don't know what it is, curiosity maybe. AS: How do you paint? where is that heading?

PJ: It's a kind of rattle before the inevitable quietus. The paintings will rot just like I will.



AS: what's it like in the Szmulki district of Warsaw, and why do you like working there?

PJ: I really don't know what it's like in Szmulki, nor do I want to. It's definitely not fun, though maybe if I was one of the local winos and my only problem was where my next drink was coming from, life would get appealingly simpler. I'm not sure whether I like painting in Szmulki (I've never painted anywhere else), I'll see what happens when I manage to move out of there.

AS: can you tell me about an important/moving event in your life? what (natural) sights or (manmade) images made the greatest impression on you so far?

PJ: I remember when my neighbor (an undertaker at the Lutheran cemetery) got drunk and, in a fit of emotion, slit his veins. He started running all over the staircase wanting to kill his wife, who was a nice person by the way, and her child, I think it was. The Lutheran gravedigger's wife hid in my apartment while he tried to break the door down; fortunately he didn't succeed because he was weakened from losing so much blood. The police and came and Maced the poor guy, who was unconscious by then. I still remember the smell of his blood in the hallway: sweet and cloying. The place looked like a slaughterhouse for a couple of days afterwards; reddish-brown clots of blood everywhere. I was about ten at the time. Manmade images never lived up to that sight.

AS: can you list a few of the things you like to paint?

PJ: I like painting any tool that can be used for something: needles (for pricking), hooks (for hanging), scribers (for scraping), knives (for cutting), choppers, hammers, clubs (for hitting) and sticks (for poking). I think that painting hasn't done justice to basic functions performed with the aid of simple tools. To put it more generally, culture, and art specifically, has reached such rarefied heights that it's almost suspended in a vacuum, and in my opinion the only way to go is down, we need some kind of reduction, simplification. This downward movement must naturally have class and quality, we can't forget our heritage after all.

AS: what are your favorite colors and what do they make you think of?

PJ: There's always white, and white is nothing, you see everything well against a white background, clear and in focus. Black stands for everything hard; tools are often black, black is the color I usually strike with. Pink stands for all things soft; I usually strike pink with black. Bluish and greenish are the colors of decayed pink. Blue is a color I sometimes paint bellies with. Brown is excrement, sometimes clotted blood. Yellow

is usually poison gas. Red is obviously blood. I need to mention that black was tar once.

AS: do you see any progress in your paintings, are you getting better at painting?

PJ: I see that I'm learning more about oils, I'm getting better at guessing what will happen when I place one color on another. I'm not entirely sure that's a good symptom though. The best times I had with my paintings was when the paint would surprise me, play tricks on me. Oils have an inexhaustible potential for playing tricks, and that's why I paint in oils. I'm interested in the moment of transformation when the paint starts looking just like some other substance. It's like when a good actor changes into his character on stage so that viewers forget he's only an actor and start believing him. In my latest paintings the adventures have accrued and become more dense. There was a time when one adventure was enough for me, now I feel this constant craving for more: the adventures pile up and it becomes more difficult for me to finish a painting.

AS: what changes and what doesn't change?

PJ: Unfortunately, I'm changing, and I don't like change. The context of my work has also changed from being totally private (no judgements, no responsibility) into something a little more public. What hasn't changed is this disgust I feel when I get paint all over myself.

AS: what does the painting you showed in the Wrong Gallery represent?

PJ: I'd say my intention is rather to intrigue, unsettle, confuse, mislead, and throw red herrings. I try to avoid explaining my paintings, though sometimes I can't resist the temptation of 'translating' a painting into Polish. The painting at Wrong depicts a colorful stone there's something wrong with because there's a red trickle of blood behind it. Someone's taken an interest and poked it with a stick to see if it's alive. Then a strange thing happened: the trail of stone blood somebody had smudged supernaturally assumed the shape of a human face! All the painter can do now is smear his mouth with red paint and kiss the face-blot, leaving his lip-print there. —Basel and Warsaw, in June 2005.

#### TOMMY WHITE INTERVIEWED BY ALI SUBOTNICK

AS: Hi Tommy. How's your summer going? Watch any good TV shows?

TW: Hi Ali. Summer is going OK. Late at night with a few beers I cannot find a bad TV show. How about you?

AS: My latest obsession is "America's Next Top Model." I'd seen some episodes here and there before, but this year I really got into it and Wednesday night at 8 p.m. became a sacred hour. I also got to see the entire cycle one on VH1—I love their marathons. I saw about half of cycle two, but I couldn't finish it because I had to get up at 4 a.m. the next day to catch a plane. I Tivo'ed them but I'm sure they'll be erased before I get back. Cycle one is out on DVD; you should get it or monitor VH1 for future marathons. Do you have any shows that you're totally obsessed with and can't ever miss?

TW: I'm more obsessed with what watching TV does to me, so when it's on I try not to be too judgmental, meaning I'll watch just about anything. I like the HBO stuff but my favorite is when the Red Sox are on.

AS: That's one thing I'll never watch: sports (except for the occasional gymnastics). But as for the effect that watching TV has on you, I know for me it makes me sort of dumber and my reality gets really twisted. My expectations are skewed because I keep waiting for the happy ending or punch line or even a climax and major mystery to solve. Watching TV so often has made me lose touch with reality and socialization. I have a harder time talking to people face to face now and haven't been able to deal with any largish groups of people at all. What kind of effect have you noticed for yourself?

TW: I'm also not great with largish groups of people, I'm always more interested in what other people are doing than the conversation I'm having. I never really thought that TV could be the reason for this or my many other social foibles. But I think perhaps you're right.

AS: Well, I grew up watching TV, literally TV was like my baby sitter and I think it really effected my social skills and life views. But then again, I can also blame my parents for all my problems...

What about favorite characters? Do you identify or relate especially with any characters from TV or even movies? I always felt a kinship with Lucy on "The Peanuts" and in the movie Heathers, I totally identified with Veronica (Winona Ryder's character).

TW: Janice? The judge from "America's next top model."

AS: You mean America's first supermodel! So you have seen the show...

TW: Oh yes, it's quite riveting. Most people think it's easy to be beautiful, but it's not. There is more drama for them than for normal people.

AS: Have you seen War of the Worlds or Batman Begins? Did the TomKat spectacle inspire you to see either

film? I want to see War of the Worlds, but just because I like cheesy alien flicks, but I've no interest in Batman, even though the guy that did Memento directed it.

TW: I'm the opposite. Batman I'm sort of interested in, another Cruise or Spielberg movie not so much.

AS: Is all this TV talk boring you? I spent the last six months pretty much glued to the TV so it's on my mind a lot. I found a new alien show on TNT or maybe USA, it's called "The 4400." The production is sort of cheap, but I don't mind really. I got the first season on DVD to watch in Berlin because I don't get any American (or English) TV here and fear the withdrawal symptoms may be my ruin.

TW: I'm not sure if I've seen that one, maybe I have. For me the great thing about TV is I tend not remember much the next day—it's sort of a way out.

AS: Yeah, it is a kind of escape, at first. But when you reach a certain point like I did, it becomes your entire world and everything else is a time-out or recess from TV. OK, I guess that's enough TV chat, but if you ever want to catch up on any shows, let me know. Also I totally recommend "Entertainment Tonight." But don't watch its lead in show "Inside" because Pat O'Brien is really annoying (not to mention a dirty talking pervert) and they constantly repeat "Insiiiiide" over and over throughout the show, not just at the beginning but constantly after every item.

TW: I really don't watch much of that. I get too jealous of the celebrities, even though I'm sure it's really hard to have the paparazzi following you around all the time.

AS: Yeah, poor Lindsay got her \$600,000 Mercedes banged up by one of those bastards. I feel for them. What about fetishes; do you have a foot fetish? My dad's a podiatrist but I don't really have much affection for feet. Some feet are nice to look at, but I find that mine curl too much and I guess it's sort of a sore spot for me because my thumbs look like big toes. My friends in high school made up a song about them called "Hammer Thumbs." Do you have any secret physical deformities? A third nipple? A sixth toe? Webbed feet? Did you see the pictures of the mermaid baby? She was born with her legs connected, with no seams, no separation, pretty much from the waist down. They have been operating on her trying to separate them.

TW: Wow, I never noticed that about your thumbs. No real deformities for me unless excessive nipple hair and male pattern balding count. But I did once date a girl with webbed feet. She refused to ever take off her socks, which I found more disturbing than the webbed feet. As for the foot fetish—no. I wish I did, I'm sure it would make things more interesting. Is it possible to acquire or grow into a fetish? It is curious to me at what point someone realizes that the only way they can have sex is to be tied down, wrapped in latex with a ski mask on and a rubber ball stuffed down their throat. I wish I knew myself that well.

AS: Maybe it's a learned thing. One partner teaches you and then if you like it you get into it. Or it's probably Pavlovian so if you do it once, it's a turn on from then on, whether you liked it the first time or not? I don't really know because I'm super boring and have no fetishes at all. I bet if you wanted to acquire one you could do it. It's just a matter of conditioning probably. As for the tied up thing, that seems to me to be all about submission and also the asphyxiation is another type of high from the lack of oxygen.



TW: Oh yeah sure, I can see that. I just meant that it's interesting that almost everyone wants to have sex with other human beings but in order for some people to deal with being that close to another person they have to go through all that. It just says how tough it can be to deal with others.

AS: I think that intimacy isn't so easy for most people.

So here are some random questions like the ones you'd find in a magazine like People or In Touch or Us (three of my favorite reads). Where do you find inspiration? Do people inspire you or books, movies, nature, memories?

TW: Mostly the memories that are easiest to be indulgently remorseful about.

AS: Such as...

TW: Anything I did wrong that was hurtful to someone else, which I knew as it was happening was wrong. Like I knew I should be doing the right thing, but I was just too lazy or selfish. I find that sort of remorse the easiest—it's more about me not doing the right thing than whomever got hurt.

AS: I know what you mean; I've done that a lot. But, if I spent much time recalling all the things I did that I knew at the time that I shouldn't be doing... well, let's just say that I probably wouldn't be around to do this interview. I prefer denial and ignorance.

This one's from Heathers, the lunchtime poll that the Heathers ask: The same day that Ed McMahon comes to your house and tells you that you've just won \$1 million, aliens invade the earth and say that they're going to blow up the world the next day. What do you do?

TW: Probably I would spend it on revenge.

AS: How exactly and on whom?

TW: Each instance would be different but I have a pretty long enemies list.

AS: I hope I never get on your bad side!

Do you have an ipod? If so, what songs come up when you press shuffle right now?

TW: Friction/Television, Pyramid Song/Radiohead, Sister Ray (live)/Lou Reed.

AS: What are some of your pet peeves?

TW: Nick and Jessica.

AS: Yeah, I liked the first couple of episodes of "Newlyweds," but that ended real fast. They are pretty dull and dumb. And I could care less about the state of their marriage. What's your favorite fruit?

TW: Banana, apparently if you were to eat one thing for the rest of your life this would be it.

AS: You never tire of bananas? I like them but I can't eat them daily. The only thing I can eat daily is bread, the bane of my existence.

TW: I'm not saying I would like to eat bananas for the rest of my life. It's just that I heard you could, it's probably not even true—though monkeys do OK.

AS: Hmmm, monkeys must eat some leaves or bugs too.

If you were told that you had one year left to live, how would you spend your final year?

TW: I'm not sure, but I would definitely start chewing tobacco again.

AS: Yeah, I'd probably start smoking again. Thanks Tommy, make sure to keep me posted on any new fetishes you develop or TV obsessions...

TW: Nod

#### CAROL RIOT KANE INTERVIEWED BY ALI SUBOTNICK

AS: First, can you tell me who is Riot and who is Carol? Is Riot a character or persona that you embody in your performances or a part of your real-life persona? Does Carol control Riot or vice versa? Who is who?

CRK: Carol is my first name. Riot is my middle name. For some reason, most of the people I work with (for Celestial) have some odd names. Yeah I guess, someone thought it sounded cool.

To answer your other question, I've been told on many occasions that I have no self-control.

AS: No self control, what do they mean by that? You can't control Riot or Carol? Do you strike me as totally in control and able to switch into character without skipping a beat.

CRK: Yeah, I always thought myself to be a bit of a control freak—but then I've been told—by freaks—that I'm too wild.

AS: Your installations, sculptures and performances are very dramatic in a visual sense. Does your work have specific influences from the music world? Are you listening to specific bands or musicians?

CRK: I do listen to a lot of bands. Celestial's work is a heavy influence. Other than that, I suppose I listen to a lot of the usual suspects... There's a band from Norway, Zeromancer—I like them a lot.

AS: How much of your work comes from a fantasy world like Dracula, witches and vampires? Do you see your work as a narrative, a sort of dark fairy tale that is built up and spread out among your various works? Do you see the pieces as chapters or parts in a series?

CRK: I'm not so sure about witches and Vampires—I'm sure there are a fair amount of Celestial's fans that may believe themselves to be such things—but we are a very exclusive, elitist group of fans and we tend to ostracize the super Goths and "the posers."

I think Rock has always been a dark fairy tale. What can I say, I love it. But see, unlike the other elitists—I do actually understand what a big dork that makes me.



AS: Can you explain the evolution of Celestial and his fans, music and ultimate demise?



CRK: Let's see... Celestial was a god—but humanity has long since outgrown its need for god. Celestial figured out how to regain his former glory (and get chicks) so...

He crashed on Earth in the 80s and built up a band with a hard core cult following. The other gods got pissy and jealous—basically sent the furies to off him (under the theory that driving him mad would only help to further his career as a Dark Moody rock star).

Hired security will only go so far for money - Celestial hired his fans to be his security team (teen angst apparently is motivation enough to take a bullet for him).

Over the past two decades the fan army has grown and evolved. (This gives Riot a pretty massive backdrop—with several prequels and side stories tied to the series) When the Wrong Gallery was kind enough to give me a show—he had just faked his death, making me look very silly for delivering such a nice eulogy to him—so, as for his Ultimate demise—I'm still waiting...

AS: How do people usually react to you when you are in character as Riot? One person told me how scared he was of you? You really take on the persona so intensely, have you studied acting or do you just channel Riot so you become her?

CRK: That's an interesting point—I may scare people—but people don't realize that they are just as scary to me. Honestly people scare the crap outta me! I mean sure I may be a bit overdressed at times, but that doesn't then give people permission to act out themselves.

For example, I was out at a record release party, minding my own business in my lovely Vera Wang dress. Out of the blue, some guy gets in my face yelling, "Yo baby—what up with the prom dress!?" After which, he wouldn't leave me alone, so I had to hit him. Would you believe that muscle head and his three equally big friends tried to get me kicked out!

What a bunch of pussies—Venue had my back anyway. (Venue—being venue security. And the one guy was bitching and whining to venue security, a lot... guess I caused a bit of damage... What can I say? My Guard training was pretty extensive. Really, I don't know what people are scared of. I'm five-foot nothing, and it's not like I have my M4A1 with me every time I go out.

AS: I love it that you filmed some of your videos in your parents' back yard, have you been doing these for long? Did you play dress up as a kid and create elaborate stories for the characters and act them out?

CRK: Yeah, my parents have been pretty cool letting me film in the back yard and throw sculptures out of the windows. Given what my friends and I used to do in that house growing up though, that's nothing.

AS: when the cat's away... What are your favorite horror movies and fictional characters? Did you watch "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" or are you more interested in the Goth-inspired music scene?

CRK: My brother always tried to get me to watch that show, but I never really got into it. He even made me watch that one episode where they can't talk under the theory that if I didn't have to listen to Sara Michelle Geller, I might actually like it... It was a nice theory. But who knows, I'm pretty sure I'll add it to netflix in the future...

AS: It's the kind of show that you know right away if you love it or hate it. I'm a huge fan but I love any sort of teen drama, and the added vampire thing just made it extra fun for me.

CRK: As for the Goth music scene, I was sleeping with a guy for a while—he was into that. Still have some of his CD's. I don't know if that counts though. I know there is a very strict set of rules that must be followed if you are going to be a part of the official Goth scene. And as for my favorite horror movie—Who Framed Roger Rabbit scared the crap outta me when I was little.

These days, real life scares me more than movies.

AS: I never saw that movie. Real life is scarier. You should watch Last House on the Left. It's that kind of horror movie—real life, no fantasy monsters. Does Greek mythology play any part in your storytelling?

CRK: Yes definitely. Celestial's story goes back at least that far, so Greek mythology is an integral part of my life. I think the ancient Greeks told some of the best stories.

CRK: Do you have a favorite? There seem to be several tales and moralistic stories that re-occur in a few different cultures. I always liked the idea of a bunch of gods sitting around on the clouds and screwing with the idiot mortals below them.

AS: Is your given name really Carol Kane? She's one of my favorite actresses. Did you see Cindy Sherman's movie Office Killer? Carol Kane plays the main character.

CRK: Yeah, apparently my parents were big fans of "Taxi." I'm more partial to her portrayal of Christmas Present in Scrooged myself.

AS: Are you pleased with the verdict in the Michael Jackson trial? Are you a fan or is he more of an icon to you?

CRK: I would like to state, for the record, that my work is in no way associated with that freak. I am not pleased with the verdict, and I wonder, as many do if any one celebrity (other than Martha Stewart) is ever convicted...

I would also like to state that for the record that I am not a fan of his music, nor do I even put him in the same category of Rock icons that I admire. I do not even put him in the music category. The only thing he is good for is a punch line in a Letterman Joke.

AS: Wow, that is a serious opinion. Did you even like "Thriller" when it came out? That was a huge moment in my developing years, but maybe you're too young to remember how fucking big that video was. He really was the king of pop back then.

CRK: I do remember him being the King of Pop, but really by the time I was becoming aware of him—he was already in transition from pop star to "In Living Color" material. And my opinion is strong because it's quite one thing to have aspirations of world domination and to manipulate ones fans—but sleeping with little boys is where I draw the line. That's just sick and wrong.

AS: What's next? Are you telling any new tales or coming up with new characters?

CRK: I am currently working on a book titled "Lunatic Abandon" for an upcoming show. I am always getting into trouble and meeting new people—I have plenty of material for many future Riots.

AS: Can't wait to see it and whatever follows...

#### JUSTIN LOWE TALKS WITH BOB NICKAS

Bob: Funny how we first connected. I wandered into your studio when you were still in reform school... I mean, when you were up at Columbia. There was a tee-pee structure with pillows and cushions where people were hanging out. It was a very social space, and the lights were turned down, which I always appreciate. People look so good in the dark. What really got my attention was the soundtrack. The music playing kept morphing from the Beach Boys to Royal Trux to Jimi Hendrix. It made me think about how sometimes what you see or hear makes you feel that you're high on drugs ... without actually being on drugs. I was immediately hooked, introduced myself as a friend of Jutta Koether's — who was one of your teachers — and asked you to burn me a copy of the CD. I gave you my address and you never sent it. But I'm persistent. I forget our second meeting, but you did give me a CD, which I still play, and often. Can you talk a bit about how music is central to your work.

Justin: There's a certain immediacy to the effect music has on people, and at this point there is a rich visual history that accompanies it. A lot of artists are heavily influenced by music. You spend lots of time listening to music in the studio to keep you going while you make work, and it's usually music that gets you out of the studio to link up with your friends. Music has really colonized my psyche, but fortunately it seems to be somewhat of a collective psyche. The mixes that accompany the installations, and the installations, act as maps of psychic and sonic territories.

Bob: Your latest large-scale installation is based on the cover photograph staged for Neil Young's album, On the Beach, the now-classic record he released in 1974. Your installation is based on the figure of Neil Young, who stands in the distance, staring off into the Pacific Ocean on a California beach, wearing white pants and a canary yellow sports jacket. His feet are buried in the sand, his long dark hair blows in the breeze. You three-dimensionalized this image, creating a life-size mannequin dressed exactly as Neil Young is dressed. But when you walk around to the other side to see Neil from the front, you are confronted with the same exact image you've already seen — Neil turned away, looking off into the distance. In other words, there is no Neil. It's as

if he's always turning away, or lives inside his head. Can you talk about this in terms of a psychological portrait, and describe some of the other elements — audio and visual — that comprise this installation.

Justin: My friend Guy Walker turned me on to the album, which at that point you couldn't get on CD. It was one of those: "Oh man, I can't believe you don't know this album, you gotta get this... if you can find it." So of course I was intrigued and started scouring the city for it. The music is incredible. It's real slow and dark, perhaps Neil at his spookiest. It has lots of funny percussion. People play their beards with credit cards; one guitar solo is just turning the electric guitar on and off to create a wah-wah effect; and you know these guys were real stoned and recording just by candlelight, so at one point someone starts playing bongos and then just trails off like he got distracted, as stoned people tend to do, by flickering candlelight.

On this album Neil deals a lot with a state of being in which he's in between things, taking a time out and going deep inside himself but still needing people. For instance, he repeats, "I need a crowd of people, but I can't face them day to day," "I have a home away from home and I am living in between," and "The world is turning, hope it don't turn away." Those lines in particular have always stayed with me, and they influenced the decision to have a mannequin that appears to always have its back toward the viewer. But it's also a shared view: you always see what Neil sees, which when the light is right at PS1, what you see is a reflection of yourself in the window. The mix that is playing was done by Saleem Dahmee. He cut up the album and made use of loops and delays to create a cascading version of On the Beach. There are no auxiliary beats or bass lines added. We decided to purposefully make a connection with Tonight's the Night, so you hear that eerie piano thrown in, along with some ambient bits from "Will to Love", which I believe was supposed to be included on the On the Beach album.



Bob: Here's one of my favorite Neil Young stories. This goes back to when he was a teenager in high school in Canada. There was a kid who made fun of him all the time, a real prick. After taking a lot of shit from this guy, young Neil had had enough. One day he picked up a huge, heavy dictionary and stood up on his chair, directly behind the kid. This was right in front of the whole class, and the teacher. I guess Neil was always destined to be on a stage with an audience. Anyway, he whacks the kid across the back of the head just as hard as he could. Knocked him out cold. Said that the kid never bothered him ever again. Words, I suppose, have always been Neil's weapon of choice. Did anything horrible ever happen to you in high school or junior high school that served you later on in your work?

Justin: Well, you know I actually was sent to a reform school of sorts and that was absolutely horrible, very strict. When I left there it took a long time to adapt to the outside world. I went to a very liberal art school/ high school afterwards that was basically a bong camp. Both schools were sort of opposite sides of the same coin. They both had very strong ideologies at work. Needless to say, I subscribed to the latter.

Bob: So much of your work is large-scale and experiential, an environment in which the viewers can interact with the work or with each other. Can you talk a little about this impulse in your work, to create, as the conceptual artist Robert Barry proposed in a 1970 piece which referenced Herbert Marcuse: A place to which we can come and for a while "be free to think about what we are going to do." In other words, are there political/utopian ideas which stimulate your thinking? Justin: I like this idea of an immersive environment, where you can be together with a group of people, yet apart from the rest of the world. These environments sometimes act as an archive of counter-cultural icons that are being recombined. They deal with the psychic

debris of failed social revolutions and the complication of having a sense of nostalgia for a time in which I didn't exist. For instance, the van piece I did as a special project at PS1, was very much about having a temporary community. The van is such an emblem of adolescent autonomy, and the conversation pit acted as an extension and elaboration of the social arena of the back of a van, and you only reach this space after a journey. It was like getting to the back room of a party where the rules are different and you have a real feeling of being transported and disoriented, but it's happening for everyone you're with, so everyone can relate.

Bob: Will you ever make things which are easy for collectors to take home? Not that there's anything wrong with that. Artists do it every day. I'm just wondering, given that you've begun to show at a time when most of your peers — many of the artists you went to school with — are swimming like happy little fish very freely in the market.

Justin: I make what I want, when I want. I've been lucky to have support from non-profits and museums, which have facilitated the production of the work. Most of the time after the show is over, the piece gets thrown out, back to where it came from — the dumpster. Honestly, I have never been in a situation where I might sell anything anyways, except for your Melvins show at Anton Kern. That piece was more discreet.

Bob: Neither of us makes any money in a world where everyone else does. I don't know how they expect it to pay for all our bad habits. Who cares. We should make a phone call. I think the party's ready to get started...

#### TOM MORTON INTERVIEWS YOU

Have you ever visited the movies just to see the trailers?

Are you wearing a watch? Which wrist are you wearing it on?

Are you too early?

Are you too late?

What happens in the space between tick and tock?

Can you recite the poem: 'Marhsall McLuhan, What are You Doin'?

What does the future look like? Draw a picture below.

What do you worry about? Why?

Do you ever prowl about your apartment on all fours?

Do you ever wish you had a tail?

If you trip over your Friday, do you fall on your Tuesday?

When did you last say the word 'memory'?

When did you last say the word 'escape'?

Can you make yourself invisible, or make it rain?

Are your friends electric?

Are determinism and free will the same thing?

Do you need more time to think?

Are you rich?

Can you lend me some money?



Who do you love?

Have you evolved?

What's this?

And this?

And that?



What is easy?

What is difficult?

What is Swatch Time©?

Do you believe in geology?

Have you ever seen a dead cloud?

Have you ever seen a ghost?

What was the last thing you signed?

Describe the first work of art you ever saw.

Tom Morton is curator, with Catharine Patha, of *Man in the Holocene*, a major contemporary art project that explores the idea of the future through a unique sequence of inter-related exhibitions and events. Based in London's East End, *Man in the Holocene* is open for one year only, from September 2004, and will never be repeated.

TRISHA DONNELLY INTERVIEWED BY CATTELAN, GIONI, & SUBOTNICK FOR "EL TOPO" IN DOMUS

ET: Who are you?

TD: My name is Trisha Donnelly (sometimes Pendleton). I am not sure (as most aren't), who I am. Not necessarily interested in finding out either. I am more interested in the broad version of this question. Who IS you. Yes. Who IS you.

ET: What do you do?

TD: I am inclined to over answer this. I am just an artist, though.

ET: Why do you do it?

TD: I can't stop thinking about something I saw recently in an episode of "The Young Ones." It was so stupid and subtle; I just can't get it out of my head. During a scene change, at the bottom of the screen, it said, "Meanwhile, the next day..." So I keep seeing this phrase going through my mind over and over again: "Meanwhile, the next day..., Meanwhile, the next day..., Meanwhile, the next day..." When I'm taking the bus, walking, reading, any time I stop, I seem to think of this. I can't believe how funny it really is. It's a totally circular and indestructible idea.

ET: When did it start?

TD: Well, for years I have had a recurring thought of a very specific character. It's a character that has no actual home, much less an origin. I just think about him in relation to the characters in, say, a book, or a film as a possible replacement. I remove a certain character (for no particular reason) while reading, and put this man in his stead. This character is an indestructible man of sorts, a kind of super-hero/mutant whose special power is an ability to enter into, and eventually exit, the bodies of others. I have never quite figured out the motivation for and the physics behind the entering action. I suppose this is because the beginning isn't really the interesting part. Anyway, this character would eventually leave the body by way of the person sweating the character out through their pores: the character recollecting and reconstituting first as a vapor or mist or something nebulous, until, finally, there they stood in pants, with hair, etc. "Oh," he would say, as he feels his chest and head for validation of his physical person. Then he would light a cigarette or something romantic and pedestrian like that.

ET: Where will it end?

TD: I imagine the full-body finale would take place with a slow zap sound, maybe ZZZZZzzzzaaap. This could happen over and over. Indefatigable. I just still have to figure out how or why the entire transformation would start. It's hard, because the most interesting is still the end.

—Domus, n. 868, March 2004

NORITOSHI HIRAKAWA INTERVIEWED BY MARK SANDERS

Japanese artist Noritoshi Hirakawa creates thought provoking art in the form of photographs, installations and performances. Last year at the Frieze Art Fair, The Wrong Gallery, in association with the London based arts company RS&A Ltd, invited him to stage one of his more challenging works enigmatically titled *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings*, an on-going performance that entails a female model sitting in an empty white room for hours on end with nothing but a picture of her anus hanging on one wall and a perfectly formed poo placed surreptitiously on the floor beside her. This deposit of course was hers, the product of a specially calculated diet designed to create an odourless turd. And the reasoning behind this bizarre act of scatological introspection? The questioning of our reactions when confronted by a potent signifier of our biological excess, or to put it another way, what it means to be a human being.

As one of the team responsible for finding a worthy candidate to perform this service, the search for a female model willing to exhibit her excrement was not easy. After posting numerous messages throughout the art colleges of London we received just three replies out of which only one applicant seemed suitable. Interviewing the person in question we explained the project, introduced her to the artist and agreed a timetable of events including when and how she should commence the necessary diet. The creation of fragrance-free excreta requires a remarkable level of commitment. In the week preceding the presentation of *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* the model had to refrain from drinking any alcohol or coffee, abstain from smoking and eat inordinate quantities of rice. The effect though of such a stern regime was very impressive. Every morning of the three-day art fair she would arrive with a new offering, each larger and more solid than before. The reaction of the audience however was mixed with some art loving members of the public considering the performance to be an act of outright sensationalism while others became fascinated, even obsessed, by the daily offering. Throughout our model maintained a perfect serenity, answering questions and explaining the why she had agreed to participate in the project.

Considering this event in the light of Noritoshi Hirakawa's previous performances, the interaction between model and artist becomes clear. Previous photographic projects have included a series of images of women sitting defiantly in a Japanese male urinal or subtly exposing their genitals in deserted Tokyo side streets. Since moving to New York in the mid 1990s he has continued his artistic exploration of such exposed privacy using the urban metropolis as his backdrop and even orchestrating an installation in which casual female passers-by donated their undergarments to create a giant pantie clad chandelier. In all cases the female participants in this work were enthusiastic collaborators. Their active contribution through the willing disclosure of their private moments or intimate belongings raises the question of both the male gaze and female liberation. Many women in the 1960s burned their bras in public as a statement of personal freedom. So are we to read Noritoshi Hirakawa's art as encumbered by male desire or as a progressive and honest unravelling of our innate human urges, both male and female. What follows is a series of questions answered by email that try to get to the bottom of Noritoshi Hirakawa's artistic discourse.

Mark Sanders: You are known as a photographer first and foremost but you also orchestrate performances such as *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings*, which has been performed at a number of locations throughout the world including the Frieze Art Fair last year. How did this performance first come about?

Noritoshi Hirakawa: I have never been trained as a photographer but from my earliest years I knew I wanted to deal with what it means to be human in all its varied circumstances. Photography has therefore always been for me a recording device or proof of action. One aspect of being human that has always fascinated me is our collective denial on all matters related to evacuation and especially excretion. We seem to be particularly sensitive on this issue when we are eating and this silence strikes me as strange especially when you consider our excrement is one of the best indicators of personal health. Indeed to relieve oneself is just as pleasurable experience as eating or sleeping. It is one of the body's primary processes and yet we feel embarrassed about it.

MS: Diet is a key element of *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* and whenever the piece is performed the subject has to adhere to a strict diet designed to produce shit that is odourless. The taboo of human shit is often tied to its smell and so the sanitisation of excrement is an interesting if not key aspect of the work.

NH: The olfactory instinct is much stronger and so often more memorable than the visual images that you see through your eyes. You could say smell is more primitive and therefore more primary. It is indeed the case that you usually smell shit before you see it so with regard to *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* the absence of smell is an important element. When first thinking about the installation performance I had not intended to eliminate the odour but in discussion with various parties the eradication of smell through diet became an important focus of the work. When the piece was staged in London at the Frieze Art Fair, the question of smell was paramount to the local health authorities. Interestingly the female performers of the piece also feel more comfortable with a smell free shit and there is the added benefit that the diet process that occurs in the week before the performance takes on a ritualistic aspect that helps the performer to mentally prepare for the piece. What I have learned from this development of the work is that smell is an incredibly powerful and emotive sense that effects how we see the world around us. Even the impression of a beautifully dressed woman with elegant perfume can be destroyed by just one fart.

MS: *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* has been shown in a number of locations throughout the world starting with the Taka Ishii Gallery in Santa Monica to the recent incarnation at the Frieze Art Fair in London last year. At Frieze the reaction to piece was mixed. Some spectators were upset by what they saw as a gratuitous act of provocation while others considered the piece to be a poignant reminder of our biological status as human beings. I noticed that during the Fair you were fascinated by how people interacted with the work and indeed it was this interaction that seemed to be key to its meaning for you. To what extent is the reaction of the spectator important to the realisation of your work? In what ways have people's reactions differed when seeing *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings*?

NH: At the Taka Ishii Gallery I only ever showed *Spring of Mum*, the image of an exposed anus so it wasn't until 1998 that *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* was first shown at apexart in New York. What pleased me though about the installation at the Frieze Art Fair in London was seeing how Kim Simons, the female performer, communicated with casual visitors who entered *The Wrong Gallery* space. It was interesting to see her speak so positively about her experience of the work in a manner that forced a lot of people to review their initial reaction. It was this interaction in the face of an object (a human shit) and its connection to our own understanding of life that is the essential meaning of the work. By reacting to piece the spectator becomes a participant. This was the main purpose of *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* project. The work was designed to function outside of the parameters of any recognised system of thought or frameworks of commonsense.



MS: One of the interesting elements of your performances is that you are never an active component of the performance itself but rather a choreographer of the action that we see. You prefer to use actors, models or volunteers rather than engage in the performances yourself. In effect you seem to be engaged in an act of reversed voyeurism, a scopophilic interaction with your work. Can you explain to me how the voyeuristic element of your working practice has developed over the years?

NH: Well in the early 1990s I performed a number of times myself and continue to occasionally be the subject of my photography. In 1998 for instance at the Taka Ishii Gallery I created the installation *A Man Who Refuses to Make a Whistle*. This was a video piece shot in front of a camera. I was completely naked and handcuffed while a series of women tried to make me erect by parading in front of me. However when I was the subject of the work many spectators would simply dismiss it as an example of artistic excess and consider me as detached and disconnected from their everyday lives and so any prevent any kind of interaction. Over the years therefore I have shifted my position towards being a spectator of my own work. I use the word spectator carefully as I consider the development of voyeurism to be a natural progression. The attraction of being a voyeur is something that is the same for both men and women. It is one of the most basic instincts of human beings and yet one that is all too often repressed. As many art collectors know, to be an observer is often more satisfying than being the subject on view.

MS: Looking at performances such as *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* or other installation pieces such as *Garden of Nirvana*, a work repeated throughout Europe and America in the mid to late 1990s, your work would seem to attempt to recuperate corporal processes that society shuns and endeavours to render invisible. In *The Home Coming of the Navel* we are confronted by the taboo of human shit while in *Garden of Nirvana*

it is the olfactory presence of women's used panties that hang from the ceiling of the gallery like so many chandeliers. Would you say that your work attempts to transgress restrictive moral codes, especially those pertaining to the sexualised body?

NH: There is always a certain collective repression when it comes to the human constitution but it is something that is inescapable. Both the installations *Garden of Nirvana* and *The Home Coming of the Navel Strings* are good examples I think of our inclination as human beings as well as a reflection on our human constitution that underscores our positive attachment to our natural state.

MS: Looking at your work one is also struck by the degree of intimacy that pervades throughout your art practice. Whether it is the intimacy of looking a woman peeing in the street or nonchalantly sitting next a pile of her own excrement, there is a sense of exposed privacy that gives your work a powerful energy. Would you say that the question of intimacy and our collective fear of it when seen in public is a key aspect of your work?

NH: Both men and women are afraid of being labelled social outcast. Freedom of expression, especially in public, is but a fantasy for most people. Instead people tend to follow the same form of behaviour and so maintain a veneer of formality. This is a defence mechanism that prevents strangers touching the breasts or genitals of others. The division between private and public space is therefore incisive. That is why I try to mix the two with consenting collaborators to question this separation that is often maintained as an obligation of social survival.

MS: In some of the photographs you have taken you have invited the subject to take their own photograph, such as the image of the women who take a picture of their own panties in the street. On other occasions you have photographed women having covert sex with their partners in public or secretly using vibrators while standing in front of various churches situated throughout Manhattan. In all cases the subjects of your pictures are willing, complicit participants and the activity that you photograph is fully consensual.

NH: Yes, the consensual aspect of my work is important just as it is essential that no one be harmed in the making of my art. Most of the collaborators in my work are volunteers. They are not exhibitionists or individuals simply striving for attention via being nude. No one wants to be an offender in public for such gratuitous reasons. Rather the photographs that I take are but a fragment of the story. The real motivation of the participants of my work is much more complex. They are not engaged in an act of art provocation but something much deeper and more liberating. There is always a shared meaning or connection that exists between my models and myself, a more private interaction that underlies the public expression of my art.

MS: Can you explain to me how the interactive process works with the subjects of your photographs? How do you approach these women? What do you think it is emotionally that they achieve through working with you?

NH: It is quite illogical to answer this question because each individual has a different way of digesting the world and thinking about it. One thing I am very sure of is that I am completely honest about my work right from the start I never force anyone to do anything that they would feel uncomfortable about. Instead I explain my work and let them decide if they want to participate. For that reason, except in the case of public performances in institutions or theatres, I never pay a fee for participation so that I can remove the seduction of money from the equation. The reasons why people are attracted to my work are therefore usually very personal. Sometimes participants refer to overcoming personal trauma or a desire for liberation while others have mentioned simple curiosity. In this way their needs and my vision as an artist are inevitably entwined from the very beginning. Indeed the motivation of my co-collaborators is paramount in order for me to achieve my art.

MS: In the body of work *Dreams of Tokyo* produced in 1991, we see 20 different women crouching down in various diverse locations throughout Tokyo, each looking directly into the camera and each exposing their vaginas. There is a strength in these photographs that is both enticing and yet at the same time disturbing. But how does it work for the women in these pictures? Or to put the question another way... How are these images to be read by a female spectator?

NH: In the series *Dreams of Tokyo* I was not so interested in the reaction of the spectator. At the time of showing the series in Europe there was a strong reaction to the work from many journalists to patrons of various art institutions who had problems with it as well as experiencing a certain attraction. The pursuit of scandal though was never my intention. Instead it was the experience of the women who participated in the project that became the most important factor for me. The photographs were taken in Japan and so before showing the series in Europe I speculated on how these images may be misinterpreted as erotic pornography as opposed to an act of female liberation. Women in Japan are barred from peeing in the street while men can



freely urinate anywhere and be free from prosecution. As such my female co-conspirators felt empowered by the experience.

MS: In past interviews you have often referred to your Buddhist faith. What role do you think Buddhism plays in your work?

NH: I practice a non-violent attitude towards life that is emotionally driven. I believe in non-confrontation, composure, compassion and awareness as a form of self-observation. Of course when I make art I am always creating work within the framework of my spiritual beliefs. I try to approach my work in a happy and positive state of mind because only then can I make a connection with my subjects. To the outside world my work may appear to be confrontational but in fact I am trying to engage with society as a whole as opposed to working only within the confines of the art world. My involvement with art was therefore born not out of a need to be an artist but rather through something much deeper. A sense of personal and communal self-exploration that I am still trying to understand through the act of making work.

MS: In Japan the attitude towards sexuality is for many people in the West a confusing one. On the one hand you have some the strictest rules regarding censorship anywhere in the world (such as the censorship laws against the open depiction of penises or pubic hair in the media) and yet at the same time the country would appear to be sex obsessed.

NH: The concept of sin does not exist in Japan as it does in Western Christian countries. Of course there are many different opinions on morality and ethics in Japan but no strict consensus on sexual behaviour. The censorship laws (which have in fact been relaxed in Japan over the last ten years) only ever represented a formal culture that served to fuel a collective sexual fantasy.

MS: Finally, you have stated that it is important to provide new codes of existence within society. Would it be fair to say that you are in fact trying to create a discourse on sexuality that is devoid of judgement? Indeed is it even possible to judge what is for you an uncontrollable fact of life?

NH: The denial of sexuality is impossible under any circumstances and in any culture because it is a basic human desire. To my way of thinking there are only two approaches towards sexuality that are open to us. We can either be negative in our approach or positive. The negative attitude attempts to limit and control our understanding of ourselves as sexual beings and can only lead towards a state of isolation. Yet human beings were born to be social and interactive with each other. As physical beings sexuality is essential to our positive outlook on life and indeed our very happiness. Otherwise why were we born in the first place? Just to criticise everything and masturbate alone? The power of sexuality is therefore a sacred expression of ourselves as human. It is the fundamental meaning of life.

Mark Sanders is the Senior Editor of Another Magazine and Director of the London arts based company RS&A Ltd.

SHIRANA SHAHBAZI INTERVIEWED BY  
FRANCESCO BONAMI

FB: Dear Shirana, I have been ask to interview for the wrong gallery.

I think the most appropriate way to do it is to ask you the wrong questions.

Do you believe in the supremacy of western art? If yes why and if you don't why.

SS: Before entering the global art market, Eastern Art must first find the courage to render itself utterly alien and incomprehensible to the West. But Christians hatred for the Muslims is as intense as it was in the days of the crusades.

FB: Do you like America?

SS: Yes, I love America. I also like Africa, Asia and the Arab countries. Yoko Ono says: I LOVE YOU!

FB: Do you like Switzerland?

SS: Yes, I do. somebody recently said, if you would iron the mountains of Switzerland, in fact it would be a big country. From this perspective I do like Switzerland. "einem geschenkten Gaul, schaut man nicht ins Maul", as we say in Germany. In Switzerland we do have nice rivers and lakes to swim in, money for cultural projects, grants to go away from Switzerland, only that I just read that it is an old lie that the Swiss chocolate is the best.

FB: Switzerland is a neutral country, do you believe in neutrality?

SS: I don't believe that anybody would come and bomb Switzerland in order to release it from its problems or just to have a little big bigger country with mountains and rivers to swim in. The Swiss may think that this is because they don't have any problems, they must have been told at some point. or that they don't have any problems, because it's a neutral country. Maybe it's even true, I don't know. I think "Big Money - Roots of all Evil".

FB: Do you think art can be neutral?

SS: Nothing is just what it is, without reference

or background. As soon as things get connected with each other, they cannot be neutral. The image of the artworks that just comes from out of the soul of the artist, just like that, on a cloudy day, or on a beautiful morning, might be a nice one, but probably this just happened once, when God decided to send down to earth an image.

FB: Don't you think that the reason why Christianity was so powerful is because it plow the seed of contemporary art. Conceiving a God that was smart to send down to earth an image "Jesus". God didn't want to deal any longer with his dealers of faith, the prophets, so he decided to deal with humanity directly.

SS: So do you mean that if artist were smart, they would deal no longer through their prophets, but deal with humanity directly? Let the pictures talk! it works in the church. probably contemporary art works because it has indeed grown out of the seeds of Christianity.



FB: Do like religion?

SS: I don't really know how it came, but yesterday I ended up on this bus trip with Russian pilgrims to a monastery outside of Moscow. The icon of this church is Maria with a cup of wine. So if you pray to her and drink some of the holy water, then you can get rid of your drinking problems. (You have to believe of course). The night before this trip, we tried to get into this club were Garce Jones would have concert. the atmosphere in front of the door was in fact exactly the same as in the chapel where the icon is, except that the big scary guys in black were called security and had no hair, whereas in the monastery they were called monks and had really huge beards and very long hair (both versions not very nice). Regarding the impact of religion and its influence spread all over and in all details, it's hard to ignore it, whether you like it or not. I personally grew up in a unreligious family though.

FB: If you would have gone to vote in Iran who would have been your candidate?

SS: I could have voted in the Iranian embassy in Bern, but didn't. In Iran it never made sense since I was allowed to vote and in Germany I was never allowed until now. This year, it will be the first time that I am going to vote in Germany. The choice won't be easy either. If you could choose, who would be your candidate: Bush or Berlusconi?

FB: Do you like Amhadinejad?

SS: The other ones had at least some visual impact as appearance.

FB: What upset you the most a curator that invite you to be in a show because you are Iranian or one that invite you because you are a woman?

SS: Regarding the fact that I will always be an Iranian woman artist, I stopped being upset about this kind of stuff. I just don't know which exhibitions are worse, the ones that include the artists because of their sex or because of the nationality. Both versions are a bit scary and definitely weird as concept, sometimes it works though: if it's not the wrong curator.

516A1/2 W 20TH STREET  
BY ANDREAS SLOMINSKI AND ANNA-CATHARINA  
GEBBERS

doorframe 7' 9 1/2" x 3' 4 1/2" x 2"  
aluminum door 7' 7" x 3' 3/4" x 1 3/4"  
glass pane 1/4" thick 7' 3/4" x 2' 3/8"  
lettering "wrong gallery" at height of 2', size in total  
1' 7" x 6"  
handle at a height of 3' 3" high 1' 3/4" x 4" sticks out  
2"

deadbolt lock at a height of 2' 10 1/2"  
2 3/4" hinges at top and bottom



door askew out of frame, lock difficult to turn  
aluminum threshold  
10" to rear door  
metal rear door 6' 10 7/8" x 2' 1 13/4"  
rear doorframe 7' 2" x 3' 4 1/2"  
round rear doorknob at a height of 3' 1", diameter 2 3/4"  
1" gap to bottom  
no key to rear door  
2 indoor light bulbs, tube, not fluorescent  
lights turn on and off with lights of neighboring gallery  
both doors open out  
white-painted brick walls  
conduit w/ housing unit box extends 1' 2" out  
dripping AC unit erodes concrete  
5-story brick building with adjoining garages  
metal rolling door covers "wrong gallery" door and door to neighboring gallery  
3 concrete and metal pillars in front  
1' 5 1/2" from wall 3' 11 1/4" tall  
6 3/4" diameter  
3' 7 1/2" spacing

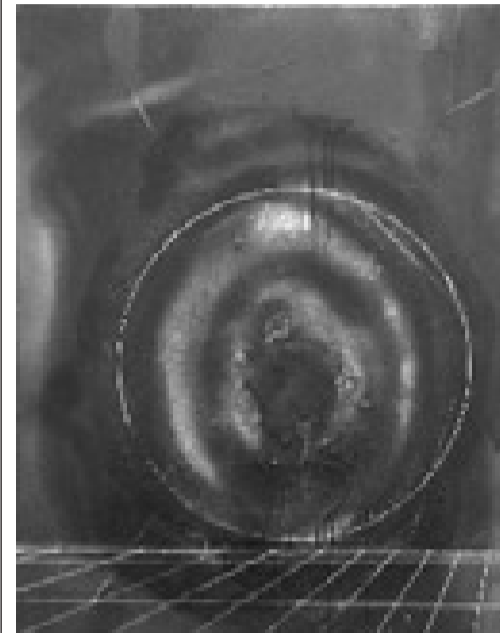
ON KAWARA, 26.192 DAYS (OCTOBER 21, 2005)



PETER PERI IN CONVERSATION

Q: Some of the drawings are based on pre-existing forms, sometimes geometrical sometimes figurative, and the way the pencil lines are built up does seem to depend on what is being represented.

A: Well yes there are different systems. With the abstract forms, a drawing like Peristalsis for instance, the lines are open ended, and bleed off. With objects like the flower arrangements and the monstrances the lines echo each other in a labyrinthine manner. There is the feeling of an object concentrating upon itself. It is a kind of mourning work - I think that's why the flowers have to be cut flowers.



Q: There is a particular structured intricateness to the flowers and monstrances that takes their original status as ornaments to another level.

Q: I like that they have a labyrinthine quality that comes out in the end to be nothing but the decorative. This ornateness is perhaps part of an idea about evil. A kind of complicated visual blankness - evil as unintelligible ground.

Q: Ground here meaning?

A: You know, like the night. Ground as opacity, unintelligibility and tension.

Q: And evil?

A: The monstrance and the flowers both reach out towards the ground at their extremities - the sunrays of the monstrance and the tendrils of the flowers - and they are submissive to the ground in a way that welcomes dissipation. And it is that submission which in effect is a submission to a lack of meaning that in my head is synonymous with a word like evil.

Q: Some of the drawings can have an affective physical effect that might be the way they are linked to signs of the body.

A: The surface does break into orifices, you know, spheres - eating and shitting, and infantile transgression. And hair. They have a bodily look.

Q: The sphere is a repeated motif in your paintings too.

A: I have always been attracted to those paintings where there is a circle - a moon or a window for instance - that functions like an eye. You get it in Bosch and Munch - and you have the feeling that the artist has left an impersonal version of himself to carry on looking back out at you - it is this desire for the thing you make to somehow represent your effacement. And it is not like self-portraiture because it bypasses representation and uses the idea of a hole in representation, so you are in a continual circular movement - looking through the hole to see your own gaze returned, almost as if the artist haunts the picture from all its apertures.

Q: You use a lot of black in your paintings

A: While I was at college I visited the Musee de L'Art Brut in Lausanne which for some reason has all the walls painted black so you get the feeling of all this extraordinary art flowering out of these quite shabby matt black walls. I think that provided part of the impetus for the black paintings. Also I was thinking of the cosmic abstraction of some of the lesser-known Russian suprematists like Kliun and Kudriashev who often painted forms emerging out of deep space. The Russian Avant Garde was caught up with an obsession with controlling and mastering space. It was a kind of fascinated stare at space. It was really an obsession with nothingness with the Russian Avant Garde. It wasn't about form. They only used form to cut and divide nothingness.

Q: The question is inevitably asked - how do the drawings and the paintings relate?

A: There is an unsatisfying quality to the relationship between the paintings and the drawings that I like. That they willfully leave out the familiar, go from tiny to huge with no medium. I see the masking off and cutting into that happens in the paintings as somehow close to the precision of the drawings - reminds me of Malevich



saying that the pencil has a sharper point than the brush so it is better for getting into human brains. What does connect them is an equal inclination to disrupt the presence of the form - holes appear in surfaces and edges fade and unravel. There is a simultaneous desire to possess form intimately and to keep it remote, to deliberate obsessively or render it with spontaneity. Perhaps it's this equivocal quality which gives the work a shared melancholic feel. It describes a movement, an approach and retreat, but no resting-place.

Q: For work that is very formal there is strong drive towards the understanding of the body's relationship to these forms.

A: Isn't that important? This whole idea of getting behind things, through going into and into them. When I used to look at the planes of my grandfathers abstract work - there was that, almost, desperation to find oneself 'in' the work, somehow subsumed by it, by its history - to look out from inside it. Perhaps giving way to the lines and spheres is a way to get behind the picture - to find oblivion within it - that's why I have such a hard time thinking about this interview - work is a way for me to disappear.

#### JULIANE REBENTISCH IN CONVERSATION WITH FLORIAN PUMHÖSL

FP I wonder, whether I can actually produce something, that has an abstract character, at all. I can interfere with systematic arrangements whereby things seem to be taken out of a system of relations of meaning. It is not just since the 20th century, that a non-figurative vocabulary of forms has changed its tendencies of meaning. Its most recent trends have once more favoured the ornamental and spiritual, a-political accounts, which already in the Bauhaus actually co-existed with the class-struggle, and context-related ideas.

JR In your work with mainly scientific processes of imaging, you are rather aiming at something like the creation of picture puzzles, where, depending on the adjustment of the point of view, something may appear as abstract or as figurative.

FP In the exhibition *Das Auge und der Apparat* ([The Eye and the Camera] Albertina, Vienna 2003, conceived by Monika Faber), I saw an early scientific x-ray photography by Josef Maria Eder and Eduard Valenta of metal samples that had been laid out next to each other. The photo depicted the different degrees of porosity of the metals. The image, that emerged thereby, is at first sight entirely incomprehensible.

In this respect, abstract photography is often a simulation of scientific aesthetics of the image. Especially the photogramme, in the case of which one never even knows the function of the composition, either. The composition does not arrange anything and additionally it does not depict anything.

JR But you also seem to be interested in scientific image production in the very direction which runs opposite to that of abstraction: namely that the image which appears to be non-figurative at the first sight is almost terrifyingly figurative once you take a second look. This effect does not only play a role in your „worm-film“ (Ohne Titel [Filmstudie] [Untitled (film study)], 2003) but also for instance in the piece with the stick insects (You have several times been paralleling or anticipating some (as yet not fully appreciated) recent discoveries in exact science-of which you may not be fully aware (few are), video installation, 2001).

There is a text by Georges Didi-Huberman which seems quite fitting here. In this text, he describes how he visits the „Vivarium“ in the Jardin des plantes in Paris. Like every other visitor, he is looking in the showcases for the life exhibited therein. He is waiting for the animals, the scorpions, snakes and crocodiles, to move or at least to leave their hiding places. Eventually, he reaches the vitrine of the so-called phasmides (stick insects). Yet, at first glance it is impossible to detect anything alive in there. There are only plants, the empty scenery of the vitrine itself. In the very moment when he almost disappointedly wants to turn away from it, it all of a sudden strikes him, that what he had taken to be the background, the plants-that these are actually the animals. The phasmides literally turn their body into the surroundings, in which they are hiding. They transform into that which they feed off: an extremely uncanny form of mimesis! No wonder, that in the case of Didi-Huberman this anecdote is told in the context of aesthetics. It seems to be an allegory of important aspects of aesthetic experience. On the one hand, in regard to the suddenness with which one can be struck by an image or, more generally, an aesthetic object. On the other hand, with respect to the strange animation of aesthetic objects in the process of looking at them: when foreground and background seem to get involved in some dynamical conflict.

In any case, these motifs exist in your work and not only in the piece with the stick insects.

FP I also relate this moment of inversion to the historical elements that I deal with. The work is about the objectiveness of the motifs, which reverses because

of the montage. In the same way in which a „historical“ sculpture imitates a stone, the „natural“ stone can simulate a sculpture. The visual language of the video sequence with the phasmides is an historical reference to early recordings of nature. It is limited to a black-and-white mode of depiction and lines up the images without any distinct dramaturgy. Scientific pictures are suitable, since they are extremely determined. One always expects a certain attribution or a narrative imbedding. Once I leave this or that out or change it, an abstract character shows up. This again has no longer much to do with abstraction in the original sense, which could maybe be called the re-organization of visual signs.

JR It seems to me that this is very important for the reception of your work in general. An x-ray photograph which is exhibited is no scientific object anymore. It begins to oscillate between its formal qualities and its (amongst others, scientific) informational content.

Its aesthetic quality lies in this oscillation. The tension between form and content is also crucial for your extremely abstract version of a Moholy-Nagy-collage (a photogramme from the series *Hauspinakothek*), for instance. There, one can see a bigger and a smaller circle. This is all, at least for the moment. But then you have added an image key by means of which the circles are potentially brought into a connection with the history of colonialism. This stressed tension between form and content-on the one hand the pretty photogramme, on the other the text with an indication of a history which is not pretty at all-of course also reads as a staid anachronistic gesture with regard to the persisting trend of a politically assiduous art, which thinks that it can assure itself of its political character via the explicitness of its image worlds.



FP The topic of this work is, how the social-critical aspect in Moholy-Nagy's collage *Mutter Europa pflegt ihre Kolonien* [Mother Europe nurses her colonies] emerges. It is laid down by means of the montage technique, the composition and the titling. The collage uses a reportage photo, apparently taken in Africa, where a mother is leading a child by the hand. The heads of the depicted figures were substituted by Moholy-Nagy with two circles of different sizes in which he again inserted pictorial elements. The circle over the mother's head now contains two parts which remind one of a cubist or constructivist painting. The head of the child is left free but swivelled and glued into the white circle which was cut out above the child's shoulders. Moholy-Nagy reinforced the critique of the euro-centric view by means of the retrospectively altered title. In the photogramme I concentrated on the size ratio of the two circles, that is, the compositional part. I discovered the missing information about the work, its actual sizes and the materials in the collage from the owner, the Bauhaus Archive. I can describe a context, which in this case is political, by emphasizing elements and re-orientating levels of description.

It is through that which is visible that I gain access to it. (Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, „Das Paradox der Phasmiden“, in: idem, *Phasmes. Essays über Erscheinungen von Fotografien, Spielzeug, mystischen Texten, Bildausschnitten, Insekten, Tintenflecken, Traumerzählungen, Alltäglichkeiten, Skulpturen, Filmbildern...*, Cologne 2001, p. 15-21. Georges Didi-Huberman's essay was originally published in French as „Le Paradoxe du Phasme“ in *Phasmes. Essais sur l'apparition*, Paris 1998.

#### DIETER ROTH AND HIS WORK BY DOROTHY LANNONE

Dorothy Lannone: Dieter.

Dieter Roth: Doro.

DI: The Wrong Gallery has asked me to write about your work. I'm interpreting that to mean you and your work. And I'm inventing your participation, OK?

DR: OK. But I wonder what help I will be.

DI: I know. In some ways it makes my task more difficult. But there's something about the struggle to find a way to do it with you, without being creepy or giving an untrue impression of you, which is satisfying.

DR: Have you written about me since my death in 1998?

DI: Yes. In 2003, I wrote a text for the Deutsche Bank's online art magazine about your show at the Schaulager. It began: „The long-awaited retrospective of the mighty and majestic Dieter Roth has opened in Basel. The work is overwhelming in its beauty and in its diversity. It is astonishing in how many different manifestations of his vision Dieter Roth excelled. His inventiveness is unparalleled. After having seen just the first half of the exhibition, I was already filled with a feeling of exaltation which only an encounter with the very greatest of artists can produce.“

Want to hear more?

DR: Please.

DI: „In 1997, a year before his death, Dieter Roth invited me to participate in his exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Marseilles (MAC). Writing about my work in the catalogue, he said: „The better the artistic work of your lover is, the better you can love him/her, and the better you have a chance to grow (as an artist). Good work of a lover makes good talk for his/her lover.“

DR: I also wrote that „Dorothy and I (DR) lived together half of the time for 6-7 years.“

DI: Yes. We separated in 1973, but we remained life-long friends. You continued: „...I am fearful (full of fear) lover of her work and am not well able to distinguish between the two -- the person and the work or: the living being and her utterances --,...“DR: One of the things I was working on at the time of my death was the second volume of the MAC catalogue.

DI: I know. I came to Basel for the memorial ceremony a week after you died. On one of your numerous work tables I saw the original pages from the first volume.

On the very top of the pile lay the page on which I had glued one of my „75 Complimentary Cards,“ the 1972 work which I wrote with you in mind -- „In all the world I like your work the best.“ It made me happy, to see it there. I thought of it as a kind of last message from me to you. And one which you would have liked.

DR: Remember the text you wrote about me in the 1993 issue of „du“ which was devoted to my exhibition at the Holderbank Lagerhalle in Switzerland?

DI: Yes. You sent me a note saying „great text (language-and ideawise, I wanted to say) in „du“ about you know whom.“

DR: Let's hear it again.

DI: With pleasure.

1.

„After all the exuberant praises and ardent declarations, the suitable revelations and historical narratives, after all the many different things in the many different forms I have written for or to or about Dieter Roth in the past 25 years, I wonder what would be fitting for this occasion. From me, Dieter has heard it all. Attestations to his beauty, wit and judgment, to his astonishing honesty about himself, to his courage and to his generosity--these I have made in abundance. He alone has evoked my literary admiration for a profound (and rare) equalitarianism. His powers of transmutation are formidable, and there can be no question that he is the artist against whom all others must measure themselves, that continuous source of seemingly effortless invention.“

2.

By an interesting coincidence, three men with whom I have been connected (a brief love, a married love and a Dieter love) had each had the experience of choosing a winning horse the first time they went to the races. Robert Motherwell and his wife were taken there by her father, an authority on horse racing. Motherwell had written a book on Dada, and when he spotted a horse with the name of Dada, he decided to bet on him. And Dada won. The father-in-law was furious. The trouble with you, he said, is that you know nothing about horse racing. And the trouble with you, responded Robert Motherwell, is that you know nothing about art history. Then came my husband, James Upham, and he told me that on his first visits to the races, he went around to the stables in order to observe the interaction of the horses and he decided to bet on the one who appeared to be the dominant personality. That horse won, too.

Hearing these stories many years later, Dieter Roth told me that in fact, he too had once gone for the first time to the races and bet on a horse. And how did you decide which one to choose? Oh, Dieter said, there was one who was so small and puny that I felt sorry for him. So I bet on him and he won.

3.

Dieter knocks himself out to earn money and then gives it away to everyone or to anyone. This kind of openhandedness is unparalleled. The almost all-pervading desirability of material accumulation seems never to have touched the heart of Dieter Roth. He pushes the boundaries of his own physical endurance. He ruins himself time and again and then he rises up because there is, in a sense, yet another poem to be written. He's outrageous, he's elegant, he has the cosmic humor and, of course, he is adored by multitudes, (but I think, too, that many people deeply love him). And to all these

compliments, Dieter Roth might quietly suggest that maybe their opposites are just as true. Yes, but not for me. Dis-attachment permits appreciation and esteem for the qualities of my old friend to grow in me more and more.“

DR: Thank you.



DI: Just now, I was thinking of the reasons I am so moved by your work. Seen in its immense range or even just recollected, it evokes something like reverence. That one person could give so much of himself and that there was so much to give. You could do whatever anyone else could do and -- it's not too much to say because it was true enough times -- do it better. These days, I think it seems to be widely agreed that you were that rare being, a universal artist, a poet, an author (I mention these first because you once told me that it was writing which brought you ecstasy), visual artist, maker of books and prints, video and filmmaker, jewelry and furniture designer, musician, performer, publisher, teacher. It should be difficult, especially in the, face of the superb retrospectives at the Schaulager and at MoMA to deny the magnitude of your achievement. But yet... In Germany, the land of your birth, for instance, one senses a certain reluctance to embrace the master.

DR: Never mind.

DI: I don't. Though you are outside of it now, time is on the side of your work.

DR: How will you end this text?

DI: I was thinking of offering „Miss My Muse“ which I wrote almost two years after your death. It's part of a painting I made of you.

DR: Though I never told you explicitly, you know it pleased me being referred to in your work as your muse.

DI: As much as it pleased me, though I never told you explicitly, being referred to in your work as your lioness.

DR: Goodbye, Doro.

DI: Thank you, Dieter.

„If you were awake, if your heart were receptive, or even if, for just one moment you were in touch with yourself, then you could not have resisted the overwhelming charm and goodness of Dieter Roth.“

His standard was truth. No one suffered more than he when he could not support it. Mostly though, he could. Neither his awesome self-imposed responsibilities, nor his urge to create a gargantuan body of art, could obstruct his heart's allegiance to reality.

Tormented, exalted, drunk and sober, he enchanted, he inspired and he gave energy to anyone who entered his field. The King is dead, long live his work.“

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#### ROBERT KUSMIROWSKI INTERVIEWED BY YILMAZ DZIEWIOR

Yilmaz Dziewior: Tell me about your first encounters with art. Were your parents already involved in culture? Did they take you to exhibitions and museums? How old were you when you decided to become an artist and do you remember your motivation for this?

Robert Kusmirowski: I came into this world thanks to my mother's strong resolution. The doctors had suggested the pregnancy be aborted because the fetus was damaged by the strong medications she was taking to stay alive. The risky birth was followed by a time of chronic illnesses and overcoming of the organism's resistance to all kinds of medicine. Protracted hospital therapies meant that I came to hate closed isolation rooms stuffed with the color white, and strengthened my conviction that what was white and pure was also soulless...

My only escape into the „world of normal“ was a pencil or a pen borrowed from the nurse, with which I expressed, line after line, my visual needs. That state lasted for a dozen years patched with short interruptions and frequent visits to sanatoriums until the moment of my rebellion, when I threw away the medications, turning instead, against my doctor's decision, to profession cycling. It was a turning point and a victory of the body, physical exercise, repeated regularly made my organism virtually indestructible. I have not taken a single drug or vitamin for 16 years now, and I cure the common cold with my father's method, by swallow-



ing down many cans of beer before going to sleep. I can hardly imagine myself today in a rocking chair or fiddle-faddling at some holiday resort. Strong physical effort is the remedy for and control of everything. Because of being confined to bed as a result of the many illnesses from which I had suffered in my childhood, I developed many skills uncommon for my age. No one stimulated my interest in art, or prompted my ideas for drawings, no member of my family made it farther than to high school, and certainly none had any knowledge of, or interest in the field of Art.

My parents worked all the time to provide us with a future, and when they saw I was drawing instead of doing my homework, they would destroy everything I had drawn, right in front of my very eyes. Such tactics strengthened my character, and I was drawing even more than before. The hatred I felt towards my mother for destroying my works enabled me to notice how a drawing would improve if remade with a touch of adrenaline and the experience gained with the previous version. That is one of the tricks I use to this day.

Upon reaching mature age, I refocused all my energy towards music and the making of it. We played our first concert in 1989. I have been writing music since then, and the need for designing and making covers for my own albums pushed me to enroll for the art course at the Maria Skłodowska University in Lublin. There I came to realize that image combined with sound was the greatest power of all, but I also found my own language for making visual statements. It was a moment when I began to appreciate every sound being made. I started to transform everything ethereal into a certain composition, which meant that art absorbed me completely.

YD: You told me, that your teachers at the academy were rather traditional. How was general the climate in Lublin during your studies there? Who or what had the strongest influence in your own development as an art student?

RK: It is a city permeated by the post-Communist spirit. There is no one like the “artist” at the academy, you can be a sculptor, a painter, a graphic artist, a draughtsman, or a photographer, at best an artist without education. It is the academy professors and the never-changing curriculum that close the door to being an artist, that is an independent person, aware of his or her achievements and ready to combine all the above-mentioned “artistic disciplines” into a single sensible arrangement.

When someone forbids or prohibits me from doing something, they create an obstacle that needs to be overcome, or circumvented. That was in the academy and in life. If you are broke and need a ticket, and also need an ID to get a discount—I simply make such an ID, and the problem is gone. When I was starting my studies, I did not think of it solely in terms of drawing. The idea crystallized in my second or third year of studies, and, more precisely, during classes with Jan Gryka. In his studio, the notion of drawing concerned many things, especially those that were not drawings proper. This makes sense, especially this that far into an art course everyone should have their drawing skills in place if they want to be able to express themselves this way. From that moment on, everything became simpler and clearer. I would visit all studios of all specialties, but without enrolling for any. That gave me a certain credit of confidence, as a result of which I was able to work twenty-four hours a day. That is a rare privilege at an arts academy, where the classes usually end at 6 p.m. The Lublin academy is good people and good studios if you want to spend time in them, and there are unlimited possibilities in gaining knowledge via the university’s extensive educational offerings.

YD: How did it come that you went to study in Rennes, France? Where there any exchange programs between Lublin and Rennes or why did you choose this rather remote city? What was your experience there? How did it differ from your experience in Poland?

RK: Jan Gryka offered me the possibility to study in France in the art faculty’s corridor by shouting to me from twenty meters: “Robert! Do you want to go to France?” Without thinking about what it all meant, I replied that I would very much like to. It turned out I was to be the first Polish art student to participate in the Socrates-Erasmus student exchange program. That trip completely changed my life, and it was there that I made my first project in collaboration with the Fundacja Galerii Foksal where, for the Cultural Territories exhibition, I covered within five days the distance of 1,200 kilometers on the historical Paris-Luxembourg-Leipzig route on an original bicycle from the 1920s and in a period suit.

While in France, I made it to the fine arts academy in Rennes, where I made the Piano and other experimental works, to test the properties of new materials. At the Rennes 2 University I deepened my knowledge about (traditional) laboratory photography, though that is as much good as I can say about the place. Generally, it is a mass production plant, where no one cares for the individual and what matters is the number of material, i.e. students, “processed.” There is no focus on manual

skills—the idea is rather that it is better to talk than to act. The Lublin studios offer better quality than those I visited in Rennes. That was a place where it was the number of graduates, not their quality, that mattered, unlike in Lublin.

YD: You were born 1973 in Lodz, a former industrial and at certain times culturally important city which has undergone major economic, social and political changes. A lot of these developments happened during your adolescence How was this experience for you? Did this influence your own artistic practice?

RK: My origins are a concatenation of various stories and places where I have lived. I lived in Lodz only for a short time, and remember little of the period. There was a time when we lived in barracks in Gdansk near Lodz before we got a flat in Sieradz. Then we changed the flat for another one in the city. Then came Sandomierz, a fundamental place for my growing up. Here I could watch the painters at the open airs, and the small-time draughtsmen on the central square, it was astonishing someone was able to draw better than me, and so fast. I remember that such observations would always cause me to run back home and try to make similar sketches. Seven years later my family and I arrived in Lublin, where I completed all my studies and where, at least for today, I want to stay.

YD: For one of your first exhibitions at Galeria Biala in Lublin 2002, you sent letters to the gallery where you drew the stamps and they looked so real that the Polish postal system did not recognize that they were faked and by stamping them confirmed their authenticity. You did a similar project with identity cards and train tickets. I like very much how you blur the boundaries between art and real life, how you subversively at the same time use and work against economical structures. For me these works also comment on what one could call political or social practice in contemporary art. Is this a topic you are interested in or was it more the craftsmanship in producing them and the practical uses of these stamps, tickets and identities card that you were concerned with?

RK: I usually do not enter into the political issues and keep away from them if the project does not require it. I often fought the administration or the institutions. I do not like the system in which it has become my lot to live. For a number of years I was making monthly public transportation tickets for my whole family, because they cost an awful lot. I was making documents enabling me to get more than I was entitled to. When I started my art studies, I decided that was not very interesting and discontinued those practices. I returned to forgery only in my third year, but now as part of artistic activity. I liked the reaction to my first exhibition in the faculty corridor. I showed a dozen documents, from the entry exam chart, to a supermarket bill. Generally, they resembled a set of selected documents from someone’s life. And that was what the viewers largely saw. No one realized that the entire collection had been made manually, using drawing techniques. It was handicraft, the art of production, ready to become part of everyday life as a “fake” or a virus, if you modified a given document’s history.

YD: One aspect which seems in this connection crucial and for almost all your works important is the performance producing the work. Part of this is that the post or the person checking the student cards or train ticket believes in the authenticity of your objects.

RK: This is one of the happier theories that I have managed to develop. With all projects, what I am interested in is hard work and long duration. Only with such an approach am I able to control the matter being processed and enrich it with the information gained throughout the process. I like the state I find myself in when I am on my last legs and the mind still cries for more. This manic approach leads me to deeper aspects of the ordinary act of copying. The moment when we cannot tell the copy from the original is nothing but balancing on the border of two different worlds. I like such games and their consequences. They are variations on motifs already well rooted in history and those that will only make it to its pages.

YD: Also in your other works, your sculptures and installations you always need a lot of time and physical energy to create them. The production also, if not in front of an audience, makes itself visible through the objects themselves. Is the aspect of time and energy consuming practice an important factor in your work?

RK: It is very important for me for the effort put into the making of complex works not to interfere with the final reception. Demonstrating how much time and effort it took to make, say, an installation, creates no new value, lest perhaps the public’s admiration. This is not what I expect. It is much healthier to concentrate the whole effort into the material. That is also true for the Ornaments of Anatomy exhibition at the Kunstverein in Hamburg. If I start boasting how many books I have made and in how little time, no one will notice the meaning present in this installation. I will deliberately divert the viewer’s attention away from the exhibition’s

construction towards the concept and the glamour of the objects collected there—the time and effort are something only I need.

YD: In this connection I would be interested to know, what difference does it make for you if you take found objects or if you rebuild the single elements of your installation with your own hands out of simple material like wood paper etc?

RK: It happens automatically. I use the materials available here and now, at hand’s reach. With the early projects, I did not even have money for the paper, and in my head a complete plan of making, say, a railroad car. I would be visiting all kinds of warehouses and storage sites. Today, when I have a studio and financing, my works have not lost their character. I still reach for the material in front of me. I do not want to move away from the analyzed and then processed object. If I left it and went to the art store, I would lose contact with it. It also happens that a found object tells a story that when processed, is refreshed while remaining recognizable, thus creating new value. Snatch the best from history and use it in the present. It is my choice what I show in the gallery and how I approach an obscure subject. In many cases, it is something of an homage paid to the old perfection of many professions.

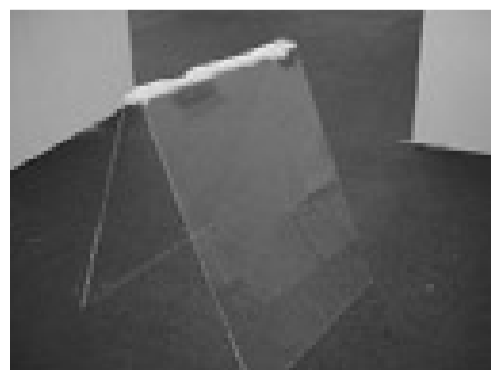
YD: What does it mean to you to transform a perfect white cube into a cemetery, a railway station or into an old library. Very often it seems to me that these works on the one hand destroy the aura of the white cube and therefore work against its conventions and at the same time increase another aura with a very nostalgic atmosphere. This again fits very well into the notion of a museum.

RK: It is sometimes impossible to turn an idea projected in the head into an actual exhibition in a fine way. That is why, when working on a project in a certain space, I make many corrections and modifications to bring me closer to the architecture of that space. Today I know that before making a presentation in some space, I should visit it first to get to know it. I cannot imagine a different approach. That is why, after the project has been executed, I expect a surprise in the shape of good relations between the two aspects. I like to insert purely external situations in the gallery and argue convincingly on behalf of their presence there. It is a special experience to feel wind in your hair in a closed space. Everyone needs that from time to time, I guess. Building an aura from scratch in an unfit place is another challenge and effort that I have been pursuing. The D.O.M. cemetery installation at the Johnen Galerie in Berlin had one more important aspect: death and dying were the base of the presentation for the first exhibition at the newly built gallery, i.e. a place that had only just been born.

#### CHRISTIAN FROSI INTERVIEWED BY LENA KIESSLER

LK – I should start by saying that the only work of yours that I have ever seen in real was your foam performance at Isabella Bortolozzi’s gallery in Berlin, and since I came late to the opening the whole thing was pretty much over when I arrived. But it somehow didn’t really matter. It is strange but my feeling is that your work is at least as much about being seen as it is about being not seen.

CF - The indifference of the presence of an art object in my work sounds good to me. I’m working on this possibility. In the construction of the potential of my work I try to be immobile, I don’t want to give a clear direction. I want to control the accumulation of possibilities as a structural part of the work. I don’t want to talk about eclecticism or postmodernism. The neurotic accumulation of potentiality without the utilization of it is part of the deconstruction of particular structural steps about the production of art. The flow of foam is simply a sweet and soft consideration that something is happening; a sort of stand-in, or apparition of the object.



LK – There is the live event of the foam performance, which is of course a lot about absence and presence, both of the art object and the viewer, and on the other hand there is a photograph I remember, a photo of an awkward round shape made out of what looks like shaving foam. The photograph somehow reintroduces an object hood, which the ephemeral foam object resisted.

How do you see these two works connected?

CF - The photo is a surface that I like to use like a space. The position of the different shapes on the surface is a completely new and different thing, separate from the original subject. It is a postproduction absolutely free from the original structural intentions. I try to find the residual fascination of the image, and I need to do experiments with it. I’m really interested in the photo documentation of the live performance in art and music, especially when the performance is not programmed for the image dimension.

LK – So it is a lot about creating a dynamic structure, which maybe is related to what you called earlier an interest in accumulation, in sequences of forms, where you have performances and objects and images and audio pieces all next to each other. Could you explain in that context what you did in the Panda Project?

CF - “Panda Records” is the name of a Thai music label. I was thinking about an object that starts physically in a room. After this starting point, the object has another dimension, more invisible and ethereal, expanding out of the walls, in the space of the city (Prague) and the architecture, and then, at the endpoint the result is a sort of structural extremity with a geographical intercontinental dimension, describing a sort of gradation from the immediate perception of an object and the perception of a really remote distance, space and culture. It isn’t so interesting describing what I did exactly. The most important thing is this description, the scenario of the work and the possibility to believe in it again.

LK – I would still like to know more about it. What object did you start out with, what was the collaboration with the label all about, in what way did you extend beyond the existing space? And what do you mean by structural extremity? I am also asking because I had this idea that your work is in a way a lot about going through and challenging the parameters of sculpture and its vocabulary: its materiality, the process of finding its shape, its physical presence in the space and so on.

CF - The involvement of the Thai Label was just a contact, an exchange of information with these young guys, their “start up” energy and the geographical distance from me to them. So I asked them to give me their label’s logo. Then I gave this symbol to a graphic studio in Milano and asked them to modify it with the specific style of the studio. The loss of control in this modification is the description of an emotional distance. This is what I mean by the edge of the structure of this idea. The middle step, going beyond the existing space, was represented with 15 random photos that I took while walking through the city of Prague. In the space I fixed one visible shaped wood element and two invisible elements made from transparent plexi. The two transparent plexi works were there to indicate the other formal directions of the work. Those where installed in the gallery with part of the architectural space and part of other works present in the space between them. I’m just trying to make formal instruments that could be combined together like single characteristics of a future object.

LK - It sounds like a very associative process, where one formal element leads to the next, but altogether not into a coherent net of references but rather an ephemeral and complex structure of relations. On other occasions you give a hint on thematic interests, for instance in the work you made for a recent exhibition curated by Luca Cerizza in Milan where you integrated 3 books: one on Modernism, one on symmetry and one on peacocks?

CF - It is a series of works where I assume different systems of determination/definition about the matter on the top of the shelves. I want to consider that physical point on the shelves, a sort of a sensible philosophical-cultural point. Like a teletransportation point of formal ideas. A sentimental representation of the Art system (the structure) and the Art work (its image). In the last version of this work currently installed at Fortescue Avenue Gallery I put on the top of the shelves the gallerist’s shoes.

The books were a sort of a secret potential font of forms. Secret because the books were closed and installed at 3 meters height. Just the titles were visible. The more important thing was that I found very rare books, so the image of these objects was really mysterious, like the invisible (beautiful! - I saw them) images inside of them. I decided the subjects of the books reflect the place where I was showing this work. To give a different sight about the history of Milan, science, architecture and the peacocks that were present around the city in the past.

LK - You once beautifully said, “the thought slowly fades in what it has realized until a certain amount of matter begins to dominate over form. It is always a disaster from this moment onwards”. I am very interested in this doubt or skepticism about formal definition...

CF - I want to imagine that art is not yet ready to be material. I am thinking about evolution of art like a flow of possibilities trying to define the absolute object. In this way the contemporary organization of the art system is going to be the better representation of this object. When the system of art will start to think of itself as the

definitive proposition, the support of the artist will have a functional presence and not merely symbolic.

LK – What do you think is the role of the Wrong Gallery in this art system?

CF – Art has the task of creating wrong words, so maybe wrong galleries. The art system is a delicate, invisible structure, frightened and intimidated. Whatever experiences a rapid evolution in art is reflected in the system as a mere shadow of what it could have been. The consequences of a greater or lesser sense of responsibility are equally divided. The artist finds his own dimension in the positive, participatory betrayal of the loftiest ideas of art. It is only human to try to share the resulting sense of guilt and to become everyone, the distracted audience of mutual shortcomings.

*TALK TO THE HAND: MATT KEEGAN INTERVIEWS JAMIE ISENSTEIN*

I walk up to Jamie's hand, which is set in a golden oval frame with a blue background and is illuminated by a picture lamp, at PS1 in Long Island City. She is trying to look like a painting, so she holds her hand still for minutes at a time in various art historical gestures. She has been sitting behind the wall performing her work *Magic Fingers* within the Greater New York 2005 exhibition since March and it's now July. She will be here until the end of September. Her commitment to performing this work has led me to receive e-mails such as, "Sorry I've been so bad about emailing, I've been in the wall at PS1 for 4 days this week." I watch the audience examine her hand. "Is it real?" asks an entranced kid to his mom. I saw Jamie execute a prior version of this work in 2003 at Andrew Kreps Gallery, but I never get tired of watching people fall under its spell. I lean in and whisper, "Jamie, I'm here" and then I go around to the adjacent room. Jamie leaves her post for a moment to open the make-shift entrance to her secret chamber. I enter her little bat cave and see the *Wiz* behind the curtain. The following conversation took place in this hidden space. Jamie's left hand continues to mesmerize the exterior audience while we talk. Occasionally people blow on her or touch her. A few gasp or scream when she changes gestures.

M: Something that has always interested me about your work is your relationship, comedic or otherwise to death. Paradoxically though, most of your work emphasizes the fact that you are alive, whether by your actual physical presence or by your suggested presence with the "Will Return" sign you hang when you are temporarily absent from the performance. With this work I've noticed that once your audience realizes you are alive by seeing your hand move, they try to interact with you by touching you, blowing on you... You told me you get licked and that once someone gave you a paper cut. What do you think about the idea that unlike a regular artwork that is framed or a sculpture or whatever, you confront your audience with your aliveness and they need to let you know that they are living as well?

J: Yeah, that explains to a certain extent why I've gotten such strange responses, really visceral responses like being stroked and licked. I hear people say that there must be a camera set up somewhere so I can see them even though I can't. They feel like they're being watched. M: So your presence makes them aware of their own presence. J: Exactly! Also I am always surprising people and spooking them. I think people go to museums expecting that everything in the museum is going to be fake or a representation of some kind. Then I work with that pre-supposition and turn it on its head, so that something that looks fake or inanimate is actually real. M: Maybe it's the surprise at finding something a little too familiar that causes them to respond with their own body. They don't believe you're real so they have to touch you to know for certain what they are up against. J: That's my guess.



M: Have you read *Inside the White Cube* by Brian O'Doherty? I thought of your work and the question of you being alive in the exhibition space when I read this. O'Doherty writes that "Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of 'period' (late modern) there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbolike status. One has to have died to already be there". J: I don't know that, but it sounds like it's up my alley.



M: Yeah, the idea is that the exhibition space is timeless, but in your work you make the viewer aware of time by placing temporal work into traditional exhibition spaces. At PS1 you are here growing older while you sit in the wall, and in the Wrong Gallery installations there was a melting iceman with a slowly descending top hat in the large space and the "Will Return" sign with a working clock in the small space... All these works are presented in types of vitrines that frame the work as relics, as something that is supposedly suspended in time, but you are doing the reverse. You are displaying time and movement; melting ice, a clock that is set ten minutes ahead, your moving hand... J: Actually that's the catch. I'm simultaneously trying to do both, suspend time and display it. My hope is that the eternal space of the museum will make things that would normally die last forever... which of course is impossible. But I'm looking for that loophole. M: So in the scheme of death versus eternity is the "Will Return" sign the next life, the after life or is it the fountain of youth? J: It's more of a placeholder. I like to use the "Will Return" sign in my performances because it implies a human presence when I'm absent. It's a promise of my future presence and in this way it prevents me from really ever being gone. So it's not exactly a fountain of youth but it does prevent my death in a way. M: How do you see your work functioning when you are dead? Will the "Will Return" sign still reference you when you are dead as it does now while you are around? J: It's my intention that I never die. I just ignore that issue. Intentionally. M: Uh huh. (laughs) J: Sure the conceit is that I will die and the works that are about me living forever are really about my mortality in a way. But according to the sign I'm just temporarily gone. M: It seems like the Wrong Gallery "Will Return" sign is the most useful version of the sign as your permanent replacement because it is always set ten minutes ahead. You never have to go back to advance it. J: Yeah, it's true- that silly gag clock is my permanent replacement. I'll have to put it on my tombstone one day. M: You can have the grounds keeper change the battery! But you're not going to die. J: No way! M: So moving on, another thing O'Doherty writes about is how installation shots are always photos of the uninhabited gallery and if there is a person in the photo they are only there as a physical reference to the height or dimension of an art work. Basically O'Doherty suggests that the gallery is like a tomb – a space reserved for the dead to live eternally. And the installation shot emphasizes this by usually being devoid of people. I always consider photographs of art as something that freezes that moment of the art on display, but with a lot of your performance installations, that's not possible because of the temporality of your presence in the space. So do you think about this issue when shooting installation shots to document your work? J: That's a really complicated question with documenting my work and my photos in general. A lot of my impetus to start performing live for such long stretches sometimes has to do with getting over the problem of documenting a performance because photographs and video never depict what actually happened. Nothing can replace the real thing so if I want the work to exist as I conceive of it with a living component then it has to be live.

M: But you do document your work, and even present this documentation as art. And I love this documentation because it does archive what happened, but it's also

an artwork and it's also a document of you being alive and present. It reminds me of something we've talked about before, Barthes' *Camera Lucida* and its discussion of death, and how Barthes writes about photography as capturing a specific time, a lived moment that has passed. So do you see your performances and the subsequent installation shots or performance documentation as having a relationship with death? J: I know what you mean and I do see my photographs as having a relationship with death in a way by capturing me at a specific moment, especially with the installation shots. But when I photograph my performances for display, I don't think about them as documentation but more as proposals.

M: Proposals- so like a proposal for a future project? J: Or just a proposal for a sculpture that has a live component to it, in general, not even something to make in the future. Because documentation is so deadening, like you were saying.

M: Yeah, especially with a lot of performance documentation.

J: I often think about Charles Ray's *Plank Piece* where he's in the studio propped up on the wall draped over a plank of wood and you don't know how long he was there and it's not endurance art, it's just that time is not a consideration... Sure it's documentation of this ephemeral event but I like to think of it as a proposal for a sculpture as well. M: It's also related to your work in that his body does not become physical anymore. In that moment he's like this lifeless slab just as architectural as the board and it doesn't matter what he does after, or what he did to get up there, it just seems articulated perfectly. J: I want that same approach to this work. I want to imagine that if Charles Ray was asked to put that work into a museum then he'd go to the museum and hang. And well, I guess I'm doing that.

M: Yeah, I like the idea of thinking of all these different things as proposals because a proposal isn't finite. If the vernacular of the work is about temporality, a proposal always allows for some kind of fluctuation in the work. Obviously, when you sell work, it exists in a finite form for the collector, but the idea that there are other permutations is so relevant to your work. It's so nice to think about what you do as something that isn't finite and is not a statement with a period at the end. J: Yeah,... sculptures and even photos risk dying when they become so stagnant and stationary. But if I try to think about everything I make as proposals than they can grow and change- and there's a lot of hope involved in that idea, and that is a way of living forever. Just through possibility rather than through completion.

M: I think that's a good place to stop for now.

J: Ok.

*SILKE OTTO KNAPP IN CONVERSATION WITH JASON RUBELL*

Jason Rubell: Silke, thanks for agreeing to this interview for the *Wrong Times 2*. I am neither a writer, nor critic but for some reason I have been asked by the editors to interview you as a collector. Hope it works here we go...

When we first met at your London studio with Daniel Buchholz about two years ago I was taken aback by the subject matter of your paintings. On the one hand, we saw overgrown tropical landscapes and on the other, the fantasy of an American landscape (Vegas in all its glittering glory!). Why the juxtaposition of such diverse imagery?

Silke Otto Knapp: I was interested in the extreme artifice of Los Angeles and Las Vegas and the way their representation feels both familiar and exotic. The architecture of Las Vegas casinos comes alive at night and the resulting spectacle of dissolving lights became the starting point for a series of paintings in which I used the white of the canvas as a negative space for the black of the night. The city lights and casinos translated into pools of paint dissolving on the white surface of the canvas. The tropical landscapes you saw were also based on photographs I took in Los Angeles—in the Huntington Gardens, an amazing botanic garden where different habitats exist next to each other in the actual landscape, rather than the confined space of a greenhouse. The juxtaposition of different plants—cacti next to palm trees, next to flowering fruit trees etc.—appears like a staged composition. Both the garden paintings and the cityscapes at night are based on an existing structure that seems to be in the process of dissolution. This becomes visible on the canvas where the uncontrollable nature of the watercolor collides with the composition of the photograph. At the time you visited the studio I had also just completed the first paintings with figures in them: stage sets with dancing showgirls in various formations. I think the showgirl paintings would not have been possible without the gardens: the choreography of the girls on stage, walking down a staircase in their feathery costumes, directly relates to the all-over pattern of the subtropical foliage and the way it is translated in the paintings.

JR: The technique you utilize is also quite unique. The use of watercolor on canvas seems to accentuate the dreamy almost abstract feeling in the works. Isn't watercolor on canvas almost an oxymoron? Or is that the only way to control the desired emotional content of the painting?

SOK: The watercolor has an immateriality that I really like—it sits on the surface of the canvas like a translucent layer. Initially I draw the image relatively close to the photograph, but it soon gets caught up in the different layers and washes, slowly emerging out of the process as something different from its source. It is almost as if I am witnessing the painting process, observing what is happening to my concept of an image and reacting to it as I go along. I am often surprised by the result.

JR: Today there seem to be a numbers of painters, such as Laura Owens and Peter Doig to name just two, who are becoming increasingly adventurous in both their control and selections of mediums. I recently saw, during a trip to the Basel Art Fair, a large, new Laura Owens painting where the watercolor became the primary medium. The watercolor demanded a sureness of hand and decisiveness that made the painting quite vital and essential. Does the demand for complete control of the watercolor on the slick canvas "excite" the painting in a way in which oil or acrylic simply cannot?

SOK: I saw that painting and really liked it. She is very bold and unafraid in making decisions both in terms of subject matter and handling of the paint. I am much more hesitant—my paintings emerge out of a slow process—building up the image, removing it again with washes or sprays of water, then continuing with the traces, building it up once more. Drying marks, drips, blotches and layers of color often collide with the image and lead to new decisions. The surface ends up very worked and quite dense and I guess that's in contrast to qualities associated with watercolor. Using it on canvas enables this process and makes it visible without building up a heavy surface. In a way I try to gain control over the watercolor by slowing the painting process down but at the same time coincidences and unpredictable effects are incorporated into it.



JR: I know your source materials come from photography, both found and taken. I was with a painter recently who said that his professor said that a painter should not use the photograph as source material in his paintings. Does the actual photo reference make the painter less of a painter? Should imagery and subject matter come simply from the head?

SOK: For me, using a photograph as a starting point has always felt liberating because the initial decisions regarding the composition are already made. Once the image is drafted onto the canvas, I feel very free to do with it whatever I want and the photograph becomes less important. My paintings develop in series or groups and the one I am working on is usually some sort of reaction to the one I just finished. A whole wall in my studio is taken up by photocopies of images that I always regroup in new formations as a way of developing ideas and deciding which ones will eventually end up as paintings. It's a bit like imagining future exhibitions even if in reality things take a long time to evolve.

JR: I went to see the Venice Biennale last month and was taken aback by the American Pavilion exhibition of Ed Ruscha. His rehashed historical look at the Los Angeles paintings of his past was for me a slick trick. These newer works felt almost like some form of conceptual or documentary exercise on the changing American landscape. The romance of the 1960s and 70s L.A. landscapes from the older paintings was turned into some sort of sociological game. I was curious about your views on these works since you share an affinity and reverence for this slice of Americana in your own paintings.

JR: I really liked the new paintings. It seemed totally in keeping with Ed Ruscha's analytical approach to painting to revisit earlier works and then showing both versions together in the two identical sides of the pavilion. The fact that the rules were so transparent made the results even more interesting. I thought the new



paintings had a subtlety and humor in them and the use of color is surprising. They had a strong presence as paintings and their strange atmosphere seemed almost in contrast to the epic cinematic quality of the black and white originals.

JR: Why did you choose London as your home base? Your voice seems outside much of what I have seen in London.

SOK: I didn't consciously choose London as the place to live—I stayed after completing an M.A. almost ten years ago and still don't seem to be able to leave.

#### JONATHAN MONK WRONG TEXT

Have I done enough ?

To put forward the idea "I have done nothing," as my contribution to this text would appear to be slightly unreasonable. Moreover, the request to utilise a certain amount of space in which "to do nothing" seems to compound this unreasonableness. Nevertheless, in putting forward the above idea as my contribution to this text, it becomes necessary to examine the implications of such a decision.

The questions that come immediately to mind are : in the context of this text

am I simply putting forward the idea "I have done nothing" as an idea (abstraction),

or am I claiming to have fulfilled what is asserted by the statement, namely, that I have done nothing (here implying, that I have done nothing as my contribution to this text).

If the latter is the case, what do I mean by "I have done nothing" ?

Leaving aside a more general semantic issue, i.e., does the statement "I have done nothing" make any sense (any sentence containing the word "nothing" seems to raise difficulties, how is this statement likely to be taken in the context of this text?)

It might be taken to mean that I have done no special work of which there is evidence (of one kind or another) in this text. But such an interpretation would have to exclude the means whereby the idea "I have done nothing" is communicated.

This written material is evidence of having done something.

Let us suppose then that this written information does not exist. This simply raises the question, how would it be known that I put forward the idea "I have done nothing" as my contribution to this text.

In the absence of this written information, supposing the question were put to me, "What have you done as your contribution to this text?" Would the reply, "I have done nothing" be meaningful?

The question would not have been asked in the first place unless the questioner had assumed that I was making a contribution. This would presuppose some prior knowledge on the part of the questioner which must refer back to the initial agreement on my part to contribute to this text. Could such an agreement (the evidence of which might be only my name, printed in the newspaper, with no other information) be construed as having done something (if only to agree to have my name printed)?

The interpretation put upon the statement "I have done nothing," which might be taken to mean I have done no special work for this exhibition, might well include the making of decisions that in any way relate to the text as part of a definition of "special work."

It would seem then, as a contributor to this text, I can put forward the idea "I have done nothing" as my contribution to this text, as an idea only. My interest, however, is in implementing any possibility of doing nothing (meaning "no special work") as my contribution to this text.

What if I change the statement "I have done nothing" to "I will do nothing"? Is it possible to fulfil the claim made by the modified statement which could be taken to mean "I will do no special work for this text"?

Does this claim "I will do nothing" necessarily imply that I have done nothing in the context of this text? Any claim to have done nothing for this text has already been shown as false.

One might object to the claim "I will do nothing" on the grounds that it calls for a decision that has to be effective throughout the duration of the text and is, as a decision, a special case of doing something for the text. The difference here is that there is and can be no concrete evidence that would make any kind of sense in relation to this claim. The statement "I will do nothing," at any given time, always refers to the future.

To sum up: The claim "I have done nothing," made at any time throughout the duration of the text would be false for reasons already given. The claim "I will do nothing," made at anytime throughout the duration of the text, implies intention only and as such would further imply temporal and spatial considerations.

If, as a contributor to this text, my intention is to do no special work for the text (as my contribution), I must, during the period of writing the text, be doing some-

thing else.

If I'm doing something else I must be doing it somewhere. Somewhere might be anywhere. Anywhere might include the location of this text.

The location of this text might include this newspaper. If I do something in this newspaper (meaning in the future course of this text), it does not necessarily follow that whatever I do is to be taken as having done some "special work" for this text.

#### MARTIN BOYCE AND STEPHANIE JEANROY IN CONVERSATION

Stephanie Jeanroy: You were part of "We Disagree" group show at Andrew Kreps Gallery in February. What made you agree to be part of this show?

Martin Boyce: With group shows like this one for me it really comes down to the other artists in the show. I already knew some of these artists and I was interested in others.

SJ: Which one in particular?

MB: I suppose people like Evan Holloway and Florian Pumhosl whose work I know from a distance but would like to find out more about. Then there is people like Jonathan Monk who is a very old friend, and I'm always happy to show with him.

SJ: The pieces in the show were all so different. Did you think this dynamic would make the show more interesting?

MB: To be honest I haven't seen images of the show so I don't know how it turned out but I heard good things.

SJ: Your work conceptually lends itself to be exhibited in a large space with "no" other work. Do you think that being exhibited in a different environment – in a group show, so to speak, would change the way people look at your art? or would it change the concept of your art?

MB: I seem to have an ease with big spaces, I suppose this has to do with thinking of the exhibitions I do as landscapes or fragments of places. But these situations are very special and only appear every now and then. I also like to make works that can exist happily with others. Most of these works infer or produce a place for themselves even if that is a conceptual or imaginary place. I'm also generally optimistic about the chance encounters that brushing up against other works can produce.

SJ: "Now You Are Spring" is the title of the piece. Would you explain it? Are the pink and blue colors of the piece related to the season?

MB: I made a piece for a show at Johnen and Schottle in Cologne, titled "Now You

Are Winter". It took a similar form but was entirely black. I was in a group show some years ago at the Kunstverein in Düsseldorf and I showed some black painted steel screens with a daybed sculpture. These were shown in the same room as a huge piece by Pae White, a kind of cloud of colored paper suspended from the ceiling. I remember the curator telling me that as she approached my piece from Pae Whites, she could feel the temperature in the room drop. I was really excited by this as it was physical reaction somehow associated with a conceptual one. With "Now You Are Spring", I wanted the combination of textures and color to introduce something warmer.

With the clothing pieces hanging from the painted steel branches I was thinking about that moment when something lost or discarded is no longer out of place in the landscape but instead dissolves into it, becomes part of it.

In terms of the colors, yes it's like different textures of an urban park, the painted steel, the cherry blossoms, a figurative presence, something lost, all collapsed into this melancholic configuration.

SJ: Color seems to be very important in your work. How and why do you choose these colors?

MB: I'm not so great with choices. Generally I have a pretty reduced pallet of materials and colors and forms. When I began to introduce more color I

started to look at industrial colors. The colors of kids climbing frames in swing parks, the colors of the gates and fencing around light industrial areas. Basically, red, pale blue and yellow. It dawned on me too, of course, that these were the colors favored throughout modernist design, from Le Corbusier to Jean Prouve. The first show to involve the specific use of these colors was "Our Love is Like the Flowers, the Rain the Sea and the Hours", at Tramway in Glasgow. The huge space became a park with chain link fences, softly glowing fluorescent trees, park bench frames and trash can sculptures.

SJ: the clothing piece hanging on the steel seems new to your work. Does this mean you add a human presence to your work, like the "Figurative presence" you'd mentioned?

MB: Yes the clothing, like the distressed t-shirts and sweatshirts, introduce (in my mind at least) a kind of mythic teenage presence. I've always been very interested in fashion and in particular designers and I think

this idea has been interestingly explored by people such as Raf Simmons. The Tramway show I mentioned earlier, "Our Love is Like the Flowers, the Rain the Sea and the Hours", takes it's title from a line in New Order song. This is the music I was listening to in my bedroom as a teenager and in my studio preparing for that show. So these things become like the 'method' preparation for the work. Now of course what that music and the record sleeves we would obsess over and the clothes we would wear mean very different things now because of the space set up through time and memory. In a sense that show and works such as 'Now You Are Spring' are about imagining into existence that space.

SJ: You use the term "melancholic". I agree that there is a kind of poetic melancholy in your installations. Some critics say there's a certain sense of "anguish" in your work, "reflecting the fear of our contemporary society"? Do you agree?

MB: The body of work preceding "Our Love is Like the Flowers, the Rain the Sea

and the Hours", very consciously dealt with fear and paranoia. I was working with very specific design reference points, such as the Eames and was reading Mike Davis, City of Quartz and Brett Easton Ellis. So The work increasingly felt like a genre project. Like these are the 'Noir-Moderne' sculptures, with shows titled "Fear View". As much as these works did inform themselves through thinking about real society and real values this was always passed through some kind of fictive screen. So the work always felt like it had been snatched from a darker, parallel place. "Our Love is..." feels like a breaking point, exploring a more open and poetic approach. The melancholy comes from the stillness I think. The sculptures and installations often appear like frozen moments or images you can pass through.

SJ: The title is a very powerful thing in your work. Is it supposed to explain the piece to the viewer or is it supposed to be as conceptual as your art?



MB: I like to use the titles to bridge the gap between what the viewer is thinking and what they might be feeling. I often use inclusive language, such as "We are..." or "You are..." it also helps to conceptually occupy the landscapes or places conjured up by the installations or works.

SJ: Would you ever call a piece "Untitled"?

MB: Quite often the titles come way after the works. The titles are incredibly important to me but sometimes there is a bit of a 'satellite delay' between the work and the title. I occasionally get emails from collectors asking if their title is ready yet.

SJ: The way you assemble your work creates an "environment", a place in itself, do you expect the viewer to build his own place while looking at your installations?

MB: It's somewhere in between I think. The installations take you part of the way. They introduce an archetypal place; a park, a corporate lobby, an abandoned pool. But then you have to climb in. I always think the experience is a combination of the imaginary and recollection and where those two things bleed into and influence each other

SJ: Do you create or design your work for a particular gallery or museum space or do you conceive these objects first and fit them into the space later?

MB: The installations (for want of a better word) tend to be influenced by the qualities of the specific gallery or museum space. But of course it can be a combination of things.

SJ: Some art critics and historians talk about artists taking inspiration from life to create work, representing life the way they see it. Other critics believe that artists create the world they dream of. Would either of these be the case with you?

MB: I take the forms and textures of the things that are around us and then try to destabilize them as they go

back together to form the work. In a sense its similar to the way memory works or when you're trying to recollect a dream. The details are fuzzy and things keep changing shape.

SJ: You use a lot of fluorescent lights. Why?

MB: I like the selfness of them and its like drawing with lines of light. There is a bit in Rem Koolhaas's S.M.L.XL where he talks of fluorescent lights being gasses in a constant state of explosion, and I really liked this microscopic drama buzzing above our heads. I also realized that for a work to light itself and to create the lighting conditions for the exhibition was something that was worth exploring. The first of these works was a huge spiders web drawn out with standard light fittings. I remember thinking it was like taking Dan Flavins and returning them back to the ceiling...

SJ: There's seems to be a feeling of expectation in your work. For example: the chair where we sit and wait; the bed as a place of meditation. Is there a reason for this or do you disagree with this interpretation?

MB: Yes I think it comes back to the stillness in the work. I remember trying to

arrange the chairs in the exhibition "For 1959 Capital Avenue" at MMK in Frankfurt. No matter what I did the chairs always seemed to be going somewhere. Then I placed them in a classic, two chairs facing two others, conversational cluster. That locked them and rooted them to the spot and then everything was still again.

SJ: Do you hate interviews??

No, it's the paparazzi and people going through my trash that I hate.

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Cheers - Martin

#### HAYLEY TOMPKINS INTERVIEWED BY FLAVIO DEL MONTE

How did you start being an artist?

I think playing as a child with my identical twin sister, Sue. Probably sitting in the pram together, watching. I think we were maybe left alone a lot to play, so it probably started then. Looking back now I think it maybe came from that early. But at the same time, it wasn't a burning desire to do it, I never thought to become one. It wasn't really in my background, or family or peers.

I think going to art school was only a conscious decision made when I was 18 - 'to go to art school', I didn't know then where it would lead. I wasn't thinking that far ahead. Later, when I met friends who were living in Glasgow and doing it, putting all their intentions, effort, mental and physical into making art - I saw a way to do too.

Abstraction is crucial in your work. Do you feel your work is close to the Avant-Guards?

It comes from a natural place, there's no forced appeal to abstraction. I made figurative pieces all way through art school, then suddenly felt easier or fell easier into the abstract, literally, more lost, but freer at the same time, a sudden other route became possible. I try to find the lost feeling every time I'm sitting in front of an empty page or staring at the wall with a brush in my hand.

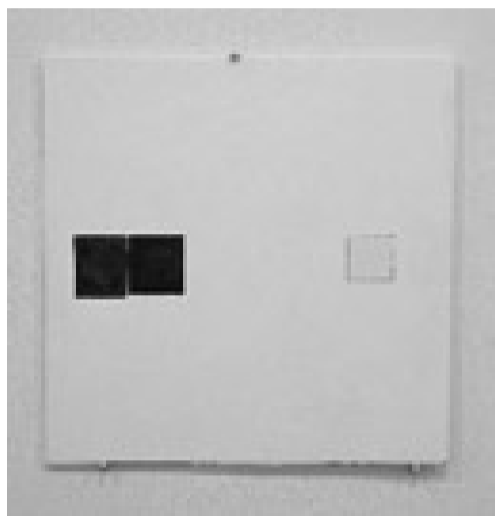
Your work is based on simple materials: paper and colours, mostly. Are these cheaper?

Yes they are. But I like them, that's why I use them I think they have value. I like the way they felt. At the moment I'm using wood that I saw into bits to paint on and so the depth-and weight changes a lot. How they fix to the wall, the way they are encountered-registered on the eye and in the mind, I'm thinking about making some photography a lot these days too, I've used ready made magazine pages before. I haven't the answer yet. I'd like to try... any change comes slowly, but forcibly I feel, when it does come. I'm not naturally drawn to production techniques. I should say here that I never learnt to make a stretcher in art school.

Let's talk about installations and exhibitions. What is the process you follow to get to the final plan?

I make a lot in the studio and keep reconsidering the whole-or the final entity that becomes the installation very up till the last day before the show opens. The work happens at the installation again. It's like these things I've made all turn up with me and I have to deal with them all over again. It can be like a huge puzzle that eventually and with the help of a final deadline, get located somewhere, dealt with and organised. I never do what I thought I would. There was no final plan. And it's like, they settle in a place-the place is so important, the total emphasis has arrived. Where on the wall, in the room, apart from each other. How? And then it feels right. It's like the exhibition just allows for a stop in the process and the show is an interruption. A display-yes-but just what it can be, what I can do at that time. The shows, I treat more as rooms-or walls-should look like they are 'becoming'. I think I like the idea of filming my work, in installation, it feels like the right way to experience them. Photographic documentation always looks inferior and dead, when it comes to my work, it looks like nothing happened.

Explain to me where your drawings come from. My mind-like pictures, some quite clear and I try and repeat them in a drawing, on the wall, in a new work. They often feel like things I miss already, before they have existed, so I miss them, and I make them. then they are produced. Also instincts. occasionally, something I see in the world outside. A window, a grating, a ceiling, a door, but mostly, they are things I haven't seen before. Georgia o Keefe wrote a book, 'some memories of drawing' which inspired me at some point. I've always loved the humanity and strangeness of her descriptions there, for example' this is a drawing of a headache I had', -something like that. They sometimes come from depressions, surges of great energy, a speed. Essentially a curiosity to see them exist. They won't exist otherwise. I think I have to be in a meditation, forgetting myself, but listening acutely and paying attention. I'm interested in my own levels of judgement and attention towards another object, the piece itself,.. they are very mind led-I have to get up and walk round the studio, or clean up, to move from this reflecting position. I'm usually standing up a lot too.



You sometimes use paper-shopping bags. Are you a shopping maniac?

Haha No - I probably could be, given more money to indulge it - like anyone. I make some bad decisions though when I do have some money. I do like the experience - sometimes its near perfect. I like wrapping and plastic bags. Like the best Japanese wrapping you've ever seen, the perfection, functionality. The use of it.

Tell me about your studio. Where it is, how do you like it.

It's here in Glasgow, in Robertson Street, near the central station. It's above Toby Webster's space, the Modern Institute Gallery and office. There's a lot of us in the building. It's an old red brick Glasgow building. With long corridors.

I've been in a new studio since January this year, just a room to myself, which is what I need. I feel very self-conscious sometimes just entering the building. Ideally, I wouldn't like to meet anyone when I coming to the studio, isn't that awful to admit? I must feel quite at home talking to you here, I just like to go and get on with it, when the moment comes and I feel compelled to be there and work. I worry I'll get caught in conversation and then unable to get away and the moment will pass. It's a room, painted white, that has great sun. Two windows, two doors and no real table or shelves at the moment. It's looks like I'm having a picnic in there, with work about, water containers, paints and palettes, wood stacked up to cut, a saw, a metal easle, (that has a beautiful shape, like a person), on the walls, and floor, I lay things out a lot, make a lot of piles. It's sandy feeling, like a beach. It has a nice atmosphere, the best when there's something going on in it.

Objects and sculptures seem to feed your imagination. Do they?

Relating to objects yes - but specific ones-not that often. Touching things, yes, walking round and through rooms yes - I like beautiful and incidental objects.

May I ask you about your daily routine? (if you happen to have one)

I think I'm always inconsistent. I do not go to the studio every day. Sometimes I still like to work at the kitchen table. If not, I'm doing emails, or reading a book, or going to the bank, doing errands, I can make those tasks last days. I don't think I work well in long stretches also, so it doesn't promote long hours in the studio,-it won't help.

I work fast sometimes and make lots of decision that

don't work out and have to be changed, altered, moderated, obliterated. So it's sometimes longer that I think. I do feel like I'm working all the time, but actual hours, per day say, it's difficult to say. I sound guilty already - it's a tendency. My work doesn't have an A to B ness about it, in the way it's conceived or produced, there's always discrepancy, loss, change of mind, change of heart. Lack of energy even. I want the intention to be there at all times, whether it's a good idea or not. I have to believe in it utterly.

Part of my interest in your private life relates to drawing, which I feel is very much an intimate practice. True or false?

True, it's like speech. I'm asking questions, talking. Not giving definitive answers that end game it all. I like the debate. But then the language is harder to decipher. It can be foreign looking. I am miscommunicating a lot. Its not deliberate. And sometimes, it's saying 'silence'that's the statement.

It feels like I'm delving, devining, like water, to seek something within myself, that makes sense - I spelt that wrong there - but like it - it is a sensation that's coming through. It needs to have a form that someone else can read, recognise. It's working when I feel like someone understood. Like a smile, a nod, a laugh, a shaking of the head, whatever - they saw it. It was there. In a way, I'm trying to be like everybody, Not just me. The work isn't an autobiography. Warhol said that better... but I need to open up these thoughts. fears, drives, and let them out to the world to join in.

Katerina Gregos talks about expression and exploration when talking about your work. Are you an adventurer? Not naturally, I'm often scared of life situations. making a phonecall often, arriving somewhere, I'm worrier by nature. I over analyse. I hope I get over it eventually. But then I feel like I'm clearer about this one area of my life and I can be forever changing and moving through ideas, I have great trust there. that it won't run out, whatever keeps the ideas coming. I want to see the work change over years.

If you were to be another artist, who would you be?

Hardest question. my first instinct is to say Agnes Martin. In the adobe hut, painting. But with my husband and some children. Also Blinky Palermo, making wall drawings. If I could make sculptures on a reasonable scale, Isa Genzken would be an ideal. Ah - now I'm thinking of everyone I missed out. This question will haunt me tonight. In another life, I'd like to be an artisan. Some sort of making- jewellery, pots, tables, large carpets working away, losing hours.

Noise or silence. What do you like best?

Silence probably, but noise is good for me.

Soundtracks and music are any important for your work?

I think about the nature of music a lot, it's time and spatial existence, the way music begins and you cannot remember it- as it's happening. It's in the future. It's like sex, or a conversation, or an exercise. it's not like you monitor it or take notes or recall yourself through it. In ways, thinking stops. I want my work to inspire that similar quality. It offers this space. As I'm writing this, I'm actually listening to my itunes library. That sounds totally depressing doesn't it! It's playing built to spill, 'carry the zero', now Madonna, what it feels like to be a girl - with Charlotte Gainsbourg talking at the beginning from the film, the cement garden.

In the studio I used to listen to David Bowie's low, a lot. Not so much anymore. I like Justus Kohncke too, on repeat, I think I have need when I'm working to play songs on repeat. A lot. Men don't do that much do they?

Bye - it was nice to talk to you

*IT'S TWENTY SIX OF JUNE AT 14:11 AFTER A BIG MEAL AT THE HUNGRY HORSE PUB. SIMON HAD ROAST BEEF AND DAD HAD THE MIXED GRILL FOLLOWED BY A KNICKER BOKKA GLORY. OVER TO SIMON.*

Simon--Hi dad I just want you to ask me some questions? Just wondering if there were some questions you had?

Dad--Like what?

Simon--Like what Have I been up to

Dad--What have you been up to simon?

Simon---How long for?

Dad--The last hundred years

Simon--I cant remember. After I got out of school I was a skateboarder though.

Dad--And isn't it true you nicked your dads trousers and put them on for your skateboarding?

Simon--Yes thats true.

Dad--And isn't it true that you used to skateboard in his trousers with the crotch down round your knees?

Simon--Yes thats true.

Dad--And what about my shoes?

Simon--Wasn't I concerned only with skateboard shoes?

Dad--No you used my Gucci boats. Yeah that rich arab gave me his gucci boots

and you wore them down at the heel. But not to worry.

Simon--Oh

Dad--And my best cords, You cut the legs off them.

Thank god you gave up skateboarding and got into Art.

Simon--What do I take now.

Dad--Money and everything else. Right, now your art?

You started off in watercolours right?

Simon--yeah

Dad--And where do you get your leaning for art from?

Simon--I always wanted to do it. I was very romantic about it. I only did skateboarding when I was young because I had too much energy.

Dad--But wasn't it a way of expressing yourself?

Simon--Yeah

Dad--And didn't you work for a magazine?

Simon--Yes i used to write for a skateboard magazine called R.A.D. I did that after leaving school at sixteen. Did it for about four years

Dad--Does this linx into what you write on your pictures now?

Simon--Probably. I was always writing, trying to. Working for the magazine

was a good way to learn. I was a teenager with deadlines. I had to get it done.

Dad--And is it not true that now your art is a mixture of drawing and writing, so you get the best of both worlds?

Simon--I dont know about the best. In this world Text and image are the same thing to me. I see billboards and shop signs instuctions and logos on

t-shirts, historical monuments because they say so. Theres just so much

infomation.

Dad--And what about your materials?

Simon--I try to use everyday materials, wite out, scotch tape, paper, pens.

They make me feel closer to something. I also like the way they look.They are fragile and will someday soon fall apart.

Dad--Topical?

Simon--No typical. I dont know whats going on.

Dad--But your work has a punch to it.

Simon--That's nice of you to say dad.

Dad--So whats your message Si?

Simon--I don't know what my message is, Maybe hello.

Dad--And what about Gulliver? He always appears in your pictures. Is this your way of saying your on a journey?

Simon--I read the book in America when I was in a difficult situation. He was a person from an old world in a new world. Fantasy is the easy way out,

satire is hip fantasy. I just want to be hip.

Dad--What do you mean hip?

Simon--I dont know, modern or something. I did my last Gulliver picture in january though

Dad--And that was for the show at the moma right?

Simon--Yeah the SECA show.

Dad--I understand your doing quite well. How you handling it?

Simon--I dont have to work a crap job. Yeah, I dont know. I'm still able to hate myself.

Dad--Are you a fraud?

Simon--I don't know

Dad--Do You like what your doing?

Simon--I dont know. I see so much wrong with what I'm doing. I think I've been working too much. It's perverse. The distance between me and the world

feels like it's getting bigger, which is the exact opposite of what I set out to do.

Dad--Is that why you've come back to england now?

Simon--Partly yeah. To tell you the truth though it's pretty overwhelming in london. There's so much everything, so much culture and history, people,

memories. I havent been here in 12 years and I'm not used to it.

Dad--You dont have to stay here you know?

Simon--I know.

Dad--What about the next ten years? Where do you see yourself?

Simon--Hopefully I'll still be making art.

Dad--What do you mean hopefully?

Simon--I dont know, if it's still exciting to me, if it's

still evolving, and I'm not just trying to make money out of it. I dont want to be a bad impression of myself, which is already starting to happen and I havent even been doing it that long. Dad--Is there anything else you want to tell me? Simon--No. Dad--Do you like knicker bokka glorys? Simon--No but you do.

*ROMAN SIGNER INTERVIEWED BY MASSIMILIANO GIONI*

1. What's an accident for you?

I can only say what is not an accident. If I construct something and would like it to fall over, it's not an accident; if it falls over when I don't want it to, it's a mishap. It's only an accident if I break my foot.

2. What was your first invention? The first object you transformed, attacked or changed?

In 1973 or 1974 I made a plaster cube which contained a partially inflated balloon. I attached a tube to the balloon and pulled it up a hill. At the upper end I positioned a tarpaulin to collect rainwater which was subsequently channelled into the cube. Then I left it alone for two weeks. When I returned to check on it, I found that the water had caused the plaster cube to burst into many pieces. A natural explosion.

3. What was the first explosion you witnessed?

I was twelve years old when I saw the military blow up an old wooden bridge. It was an amazing thing to see. A ball of shingles was up in the air. I can still see it in my mind's eye. It was scandalous that this bridge dating to the 18th century was demolished for training purposes. I put the ridge board - which had the year of construction carved into it - on my bicycle and took it with me. A photographer from Appenzell documented the explosion, put together a photo series, mounted it on a piece of cardboard, and set it up in front of his studio.

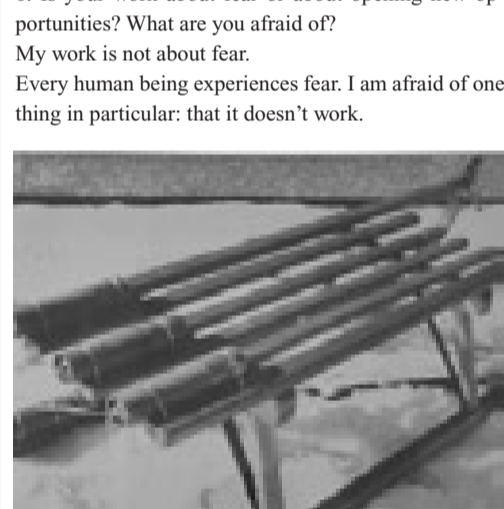
4. What was the first explosion you created?

In 1975 I blew up a wooden box and marked the splinters scattered on the field with little pennants.

5. Are you more interested in inventions or in sabotage? Inventions.

6. Is your work about fear or about opening new opportunities? What are you afraid of?

My work is not about fear. Every human being experiences fear. I am afraid of one thing in particular: that it doesn't work.



*MICHAEL SAILSTORFER INTERVIEWED BY CECILIA ALEMANI AND SIMONE SUBAL*

Simone Subal: When did you start looking at art?

MS: I started to look at art at an early age, because my parents are interested in art. My father is a sculptor. The first big art experiences were Documenta 8 and the sculpture projects in Münster, where I went together with my father. That was in 1987, and I was 8.

SS: Do you remember what impressed you most while there?

MS: I hardly remember anything - Thomas Schütte's cherries and the mini kiosk architecture of Fischli and Weiss in Muenster.

Cecilia Alemani: You once told us that you grew up in a little town in Southern Bavaria with more cows than residents. What did you do when you were a kid?

MS: My father had a workshop, my grandfather too. That's where I spent a lot of time. They gave me different things to do to keep me busy. I always liked building things. I think I spent almost one year building Titanic 2 when I was around 5 or 6.

CA: Would you talk a little bit about your childhood



in the Bavarian countryside, and how its surroundings influenced you?

MS: I spent a lot of time outside. I still like building things. I documented some pieces in the Bavarian countryside, like 3 Ster mit Ausblick, Heimatlied, Sternschnuppe, D-IBRB, and Waldputz. Almost all of my pieces are made for specific locations, and are only finished when they are finally installed there. For these pieces the countryside was the right venue. Maybe that is because they have something to do with my childhood.

SS: Were your parents supportive of your choice to become an artist? When did you decide to do what you do?

MS: My father is an artist so for my parents it was nothing new. My father told me not to become an artist. I decided when I was 19, the year after I had finished school.

CA: If you wouldn't have made this choice, is there another dream job in the back of your mind?

MS: I don't know. I am happy with my decision. I also applied for architecture school. Got in, too, but I decided to do art school.

SS: If you could pick two artworks from any period of time, what would you choose?

Marcel Duchamp, *Bottle Rack*, 1914. The former usable thing becomes a sculpture, which is interesting because of its former function, the question of the production of the artist, and it is less spectacular than the "fountain". But it is difficult to select one single piece by Duchamp. I like all of his pieces. The second would be Gordon Matta-Clark's *Splitting*, 1974. I like the energy of the piece or the persona Gordon Matta-Clark — one single cut, super clear and a big result, sculptural and architectural.

CA: Apart from Duchamp and Matta-Clark, which artists have most influenced your practice?

MS: Bruce Nauman, Mike Kelley, Isa Genzken, Thomas Schütte, and Manfred Pernice.

CA: After a year in London and some months in Los Angeles, you are back in Munich now. We heard that quite a few young artists are leaving Munich? Is that true? What's your relation to the Bavarian capital?

MS: I studied in Munich. I think there are a lot of interesting things happening and that there are a lot of interesting artists. The difficult thing is that you can make a good show there but for sure more people will recognize it when you do the same show in Berlin, London or New York. Munich has the reputation of being conservative, which is why a lot of young artists are leaving. But at the moment there are a lot of people who are trying to establish a young art scene, and this way they make people look at what's happening there. They do a really good job and I think it is definitely worth a look.

CA: In your mind where is the best city for artists to live right now?

MS: Maybe Berlin. Because apartments and studios are affordable. A lot of artists live there, there is a vibrant scene and many things to see. I think it is important to live in a city with a vibrant scene.

SS: What was the most important thing you learned during your one-year stay at Goldsmith?

MS: That you can't make all decisions with your head.

SS: You recently spent three months in LA in the Villa Aurora residency program. What are your first impressions of LA? You told us that in the first week there you bought a truck. Any other immediate American influences?

MS: I like LA a lot. The weather is great. It is a good place to produce things. You have a lot of space and I have the impression that you can find every kind of material or workshop there and immediately. Of course you need a truck, new sneakers, I became a surfer and stopped drinking...

SS: What was your last really good art experience?

MS: The last piece I really liked was a big sculpture by Seb Koberstädt shown at Luis Campana 4 weeks ago. I am not sure if the show is still on.

CA: Let's talk about some of your pieces... One of your most well known works, 3 Ster mit Ausblick, depicts a little wooden house consuming itself by gradually burning its structural parts in its own stove. A consequence of this implied self-destruction is that the viewer witnesses the house seemingly acting in its own right. In general, the house seems to be a motif in your work. Could you explain this reoccurrence?

MS: When I began to study at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich, in 1999, I was looking for a theme that was basic and important enough to spend time on it. As it was important for my private life during that period, the subject to choose for me was home. 3 Ster mit Ausblick (2002) is the last piece in this series of work.

SS: Thinking of D-IBRB, a little airplane you turned into a tree-house, what does the relationship between mobility and being rooted at home mean to you?

MS: Maybe that contrast is even more clear in the piece Heimatlied. There are more aspects in D-IBRB. Heimatlied (2001) is a house built from the material of 4 cara-

vans. For me it means homesickness. A man who does not want to travel any more takes his caravans and builds a house where he wants to stay. In this case mobility means no home. The house means having a home.

CA: You often use everyday materials and objects such as cars, mobile homes, and airplanes. Where do you get your stuff?

MS: Most of the time from scrap yards or from auctions.

CA: In your piece at Manifesta 5 – Breadboard Construction Marilyn (2004) – or in Sternschnuppe (2002), you combine engines and motors to create complicated but simple systems. Is this a new direction?

MS: No, it is not a new direction. I think the pieces are all similar. In Heimatlied I used caravans, destroyed their old function (mobility) in order to build something new or give them a new value. In the piece Sternschnuppe, I used a Mercedes and a lamppost to create a shooting star. For the Manifesta piece it is a former air duct that becomes an abstract sculpture or stage for Marilyn Monroe. With this Manifesta piece and also with the piece Dean & Marylou there was the attempt to combine an image or a story with an abstract sculpture. It helped that this skirt scene is so pop.

CA: Are you trying to construct a parallel reality?

MS: No it is more fiction, more about telling a story.



SS: You seem to make a deliberate decision not to be visible in the act of dismantling and reassembling your objects. Why do you only present the final stage?

MS: To keep as much open as possible. Everything is visible in the final product anyway: Thing A, Thing B and the traces of the transformation.

CA: A lot of your sculptural transformations are quite funny — probably because of the inverted functionality. Does irony play an equal part in your work?

MS: I think that irony does not play a big role, because most of the time I mean what I say. I think that humor plays an important role.

SS: What is your thought process? How do you start? Are you using sketches? What are the most important decisions throughout your process? Take us on a tour how you come up with things.

MS: I don't use sketches very often. Sometimes collages, more often models. One thing leads to the next one. You are interested in different things, see different things, it all mixes up and finally, when you don't think about it there is an idea. I think 95% while driving a car. The most important decisions are how the piece finally looks: size, shape, material, color. Most of the time the final piece is much more simple than the first idea.

CA: How do you choose the title of your works?

MS: Titles are important. I always choose the title after the piece is finished or at least after the concept is finished. It is similar to the process of having an idea for a piece. I like choosing titles. It's fun.

SS: We Disagree at Andrew Kreps was your first show in New York. The piece you exhibited – Waldputz (2000) – shows a segment of a forest in which you have cleaned out a square of the undergrowth and brushed the bark of trees within that square, so that in the end you get the impression of an invisible cube. Would you explain how you came up with this idea?

MS: That's the first piece I did at art school. It is a simple sculptural practice, creating a sculpture or 3-dimensional space by cleaning the trees and the ground of the forest. Also in this piece it is much better to show only the final product and not the process of the cleaning because everything that might have happened there is left open. I did this piece in collaboration with Alfred Kurz, but the result were 2 different pieces as we could not find a solution together in this question, Alfred decided that his piece is the documentation of the process of the cleaning of the forest and my piece is the cleaned forest itself, which I thought is much more interesting for me. Alfred was more interested in the performance. I like the piece a lot because there are a lot of elements in the piece that are important for later pieces. We worked with or for an existing space or venue, and we used found material. We created a moment of irritation. The piece was not made for an exhibition. People who are coming by in the forest (after more than 5 years the piece is still there) have no idea what has happened there.

CA: Later, you often placed your sculptural interventions made out of industrial objects like cars or airplanes in the bucolic German landscape. Would you define your practice as site-specific? What was the

reaction of the locals to such pieces as Wohnen mit Verkehrsbindung —where you transformed local bus stops into functional living units?

MS: Yes, most of the pieces are site specific, depending on the situation. With some pieces it is easier to install them in the countryside because the contrast is bigger and people are more irritated, because they do not know how to deal with it. When I did Wohnen mit Verkehrsbindung the police was called 2 times. But I had a permission, so no problem.

SS: What, then, is the relationship between the actual site and its photographic documentation? For example, in 2004 you exhibited Heimatlied—the four dismantled mobile homes you talked earlier about—in the form of a slide projection, showing different shots of this house.

MS: The photographic documentation is a possibility to show the piece to the audience because almost nobody had the chance to see the piece itself. The piece is the house installed in the original location.

CA: Tell us about your current projects.

MS: At the moment I am working on a new piece called Hoher Besuch. That's a commission for the Museum Marta in Herford, Germany, run by Jan Hoet. There is a small concrete building next to the parking lot. All the electric supply for the museum comes from this building. Jan Hoet asked me to do a project for this building. I am going to put a helicopter on the roof of the building. The helicopter is painted in black. The windows are mirrored. You can't look inside the helicopter. The lights of the helicopter are switched on. The engine of the helicopter is replaced by an electric one. The rotors are spinning constantly—a situation where the helicopter is just about to land or about to leave.

LISA IVORIAN GRAY IN CONVERSATION WITH EVAN HOLLOWAY

EH: I am looking at a bunch of images from my last show (The Approach, London).

LIG: I know you said you wanted to discuss specific works, and avoid "art speak". I also have images in front of me. You had asked me what my first impressions were of this show. Well, I guess a sense of play-beautifully crafted sculptures, poetic use of color, a reference to Surrealist tabletop sculpture, a reworking of modernist forms, like Giacometti...

EH: Giacometti is present, and Surrealist tabletop sculpture- in a piece like "Power" (a welded steel table low to the ground, with two plaster sculptures sitting on top of the table with batteries imbedded in the surface of the plaster), ... it's not the primary motivator of the work, but I am aware that the form does have some precedence in art history, so that's something that I know I have to be addressing, and I don't mind admitting that I am borrowing or openly taking from that. I am thinking about Giacommetti and I am also thinking about Henry Moore. I like the sort of pieces that are cast bronze and the base becomes part of the work- all cast in one piece so that the figures and the base meld and it's all one big chunk of bronze. I think about the relationship to Modernism- I have to cop to it - I can't run away from it- not that I have ever tried to run away exactly, but let me say that one of the things- one of the ways I have been trying to justify it or explain it- I've been using this metaphor- if one has an electric guitar, an amplifier, and a distortion pedal, and if one is not necessarily a guitar virtuoso, but you know a few bar cords, you're going to come out playing something that sounds like either the Sex Pistols or...

LIG: You're developing a language?

EH: A language set by equipment and your limitations with that equipment. And I think something similar happens with my work- and it has to do with my shop, and my tools. I am not a virtuoso welder, and I don't have a lot of equipment, and so I am working with somewhat traditional modernist materials of steel and plaster, and I think the way I put rod sculpture together I think it is automatically going to have a bit of that look to it just by virtue of the materials and the tools.

LIG: So, would you say that your interests are based more in the materials and the formal language of Modernist post-war sculpture, or are you also interested in more Existential concerns?

EH: The formal concerns are there, they are like the armature of the work, and I see the ideas that get put - that are built - over that armature- that the armature supports- those are really what makes the work contemporary. I am curious about mid-century sculptors like Lynn Chadwick, Herbert Ferber, or Ibram Lassaw, or others, and I look at their use of texture, and their use of material and their use of form even, and I think that it carried a certain meaning in the immediate Post-War environment, and right now we don't see that meaning anymore, it seems more maybe it's more in the circles I run in- and I see, I tend to look at those scrubby textures as just a texture, and I don't really think that there is a relationship to the landscape of a battlefield or that sort of horror that was literally in the work or its relationship to mid-century Existentialism. I guess

I am trying to reinvestigate the meaning of a form or a texture, and I am not necessarily reviving its meaning from the mid-century period, but I am also not looking at it purely as shape and texture, or formally. So it is sort of about trying to reinvigorate form or re-occupy that place.

LIG: Yes, there is clearly an interest in craft and primitive forms.

EH: I may even be working with a lot of the same motives that many may have claimed in the 20th century-like instead of my thinking that I am just referencing 1930-1960, I feel like I am trying to reference a human relationship to objects that can be a little more- well, not exactly pan cultural- I am still a Westerner- but there is a relationship to Primitivism and certainly to ritual and to fetishistic objects- all of those things are present in the work and I am doing it quite genuinely.

LIG: It comes across as very sincere. That was my impression of this show. At first I tried to ascertain whether or not your intention was to make humorous works- or if there was an element of cynicism?

EH: I've been thinking about "Power" recently, because I had certain ideas that motivated it, but it's complicated and it's simultaneously symbolic, it's also very literal, and all these elements are in play, and I'm not sure what would necessarily come to the fore. It could be seen as cynical, it could be seen as humorous, and this is somewhat characteristic of my work-in that I actually work intuitively and I don't set out with a thesis that I am then going to explain or build an object around. I am working through it, and so a lot of ideas can come in and be present at the same time, and there can be a lot of contradictory references in the same object, so I would be curious to know what you think when you look at a piece like "Power" - what were your perceptions of that particular piece?

LIG- I saw it as the refuse of our society- you have batteries stuck in plaster that are going to corrode and eventually change the sculpture entirely over time. The piece will change color over time...

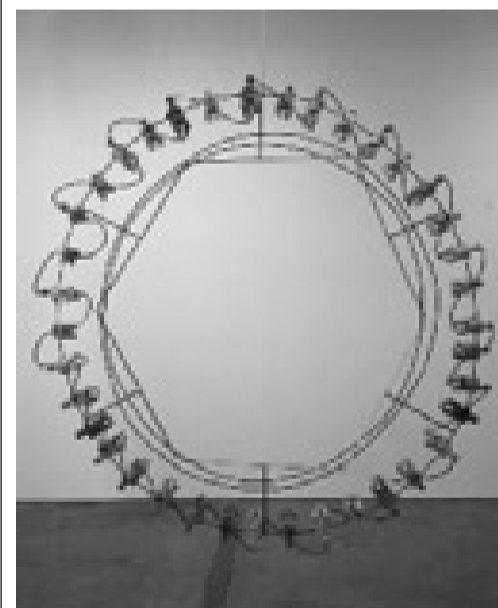
EH I was curious to see if the batteries would seen as a metaphor for something—that idea about waste is really in there for me and I wasn't sure if everyone would get that.

LIG: But it is also very fetishistic.

EH: Did you think of it as a Lingham and a Yoni? A penis and a vagina?

LIG: I saw it more as a satellite tower actually!

EH: This is going far afoot, but I remember a long time ago reading some sort of men's movement book, and they were talking about re-imagining the penis, as not being a knife or a club as a weapon- but to try to see it as a communication tower...



LIG: That's funny! Well there you go! It's all there...

EH: I can do it in a sculpture, but it is a little harder to explain it in language. I think a lot of the time that may be. When you do work about the male - female life cycle- that tantra / yantra or something - that it has got this- it's automatically benevolent and positive, and I am not being cynical about it, but I think I am just identifying that there's some kind of a, well, even for me it is hard to explain- how did the decay in the batteries relate to that sort of thing of human reproduction. On one level that is more personal and not so clear. I am often thinking of the damage that we can't help but do just by being here, and how I constantly have to make myself comfortable and negotiate that, because I did not design the world I live in, and it's incredibly destructive. In terms of the environmental impact, the 31/2 pounds garbage I generate every day. So there is something like that that is in there too... Did it seem like that to you?

LIG: Yes - and can we talk about your self-portrait piece? This piece seemed more playful in a way...

EH: Some works have a lot of social references and really direct references to the world around us whether it is an economic system or pollution and waste - and

they are more material metaphors, and this is more of an abstract sculpture but again with a kind of information overlaid on it, it is just my name. There are 12 rods that connect to this mobius loop doughnut, and the 12 rods when they're down on the base of the sculpture are in a line, and that line is painted with a grey scale, from white to black, and then each line ends up to the big mobius loop doughnut, and they're kept in sequential order on the surface of that loop, but that causes them to be very twisted and almost appear like randomly placed on that object- it's like a scramble from 2D space to a complicated 3D space. And so just by laying my name on it and shuffling the letters, (and a long time ago I just did anagrams of just my name) it felt like a kind of augury-like trying to find out my identity - what does it mean that they spell "Yellow Navaho"- or "hovel on a yawl", they spell out all these funny things- and ultimately there is a chance factor, and literally the symbolism is just a - "I feel Scrambled" and I don't know - every sane person must feel somewhat scrambled- or at least any person you would trust- so it is not a particularly specific piece about that- and maybe there is something in there about something going into a more complicated a little bit about inside and outside- again pointing to my reading habits which are never as contemporary as they should be. And I am reading some Lucy Lippard essay from 1971 or something, and she was trying to define characteristics of women's art, which is something I am really interested in for some reason, in the practice of women's artists in the late 60's and early 70's, and the assumptions of the materials that were made. Lucy Lippard was saying that it was characteristic to have this reversal of inside and outside, and I don't know if I would say that this was a hard and fast rule, and it would not be fair 35 years on to insist that it is, but for me it was interesting to think about because to some degree there are works that I think of that are exploring some ideas around androgyny or if not androgyny then maybe - this is kind of embarrassing - but the Jungian idea of the anima or the female principle within the male or vice versa. It is important for me to say a thing like that because my interest in Feminist art is that there was an idea for a while that the women were going to make an artworld that was different, where the work could actually be about transformation, and now we are in a very cynical artworld and people don't talk about art in these terms, and certainly there is a lot of bad therapy art in the world, which is probably what put people off it in the first place, but things that do motivate my work are - - for me there is a great deal of personal investigation, and it's not always literally expressed. I certainly don't want to make people look at my therapy sessions, but that is a factor in the work, and there are ways that I can think about it that are terribly personal --that no one else would see. But that idea of androgyny I do see in that work- or the Anima/Animus.

I am trying to figure out why - what are the best parts of being an artist and of being in the artworld- and trying to focus on that, and there are so many different ways trying to participate in the artworld- and for me now the most interesting thing about it- and this relates to the title of the show- "Analog Counter Revolution"- is that I am interested in very small personal encounters. I make work that one person at a time looks at in person- that is not a mass audience- and I am interested in that encounter between a person and a thing- it's very unique. I am interested in the discussions I have with artists in their studios, and encounters I've had with works intimately- and they may not be the greatest artworks in the world, but it's more that I want to have an experience and a conversation- that's the best part- more than that whole other thing around Museums and gigantic spectacle pieces. Some of those are great too, and I get a kick out of them. But what will keep me happiest in the art world, and with my job, is focusing on the things that I really like, that provide me with opportunities to have conversations that are intimate, and to meet a lot of artists. This maybe relates to the kinetic works that I am doing- like "Pas de Deux".

LIG: Are these the first kinetic sculptures you've made?  
EH: Yes, they are really. The idea would have been- how can you present these in an institution? Do you tell people they can pull on them? How do you present this to a large audience? And I am thinking I don't know and I don't care. Maybe someone tells you it's okay, and maybe they never have to be in a mass audience. Something shifts on that small scale; it creates a different ritual. People forget that the art viewing ritual is really very established- I mean you knew that you weren't supposed to touch it before you were asked- it doesn't lend itself to mass presentation- you're there- your hand is moving- a little plaster hand is moving - it is an action- a totally unique experience that you certainly couldn't get on a computer or a picture. Even my earliest mature work which started late in graduate school was based in performance art, and I guess I was interested in the fact that if you are at a performance, and watching that performance, it is so specific to where you are standing,

and it all goes by at once and will never be the same. LIG: It can't be replicated.

EH: Yes- it can't be replicated. I was doing performative work in graduate school that was trying to isolate that, and separate it from the idea of the cliché of performance art, and the idea that there is a performer, and that the artist's persona plays an important role. Whether they adopt a fictional persona, or something else, there is still a narrative around a character. I mean not always obviously- but that was something that wasn't most important to me. I just wanted to focus on the real time, very particular-- a moment that can never be replicated. These works appear kind of crude- not really sophisticated - they're kind of corny.

(long pause)

My wife Karin has just finished eating a plum, and she drew eyes on the pit and just gave it to me.

(Both laugh)

*MONIKA SOSNOWSKA INTERVIEWED BY  
MICHAEL CLIFTON*

MC: You participated in a group exhibition at the Andrew Kreps Gallery, which was organized by The Wrong Gallery. Did you travel to New York for that show and if so, did you encounter The Wrong Gallery 'proper' space?

MS: That's strange, but it was a unique work of mine, which was not dedicated to the exhibition space. It was also a unique case, that I exhibited a model for a work, which supposed to be a big, architectural installation. I did it because I have never realized that work on a bigger scale and decided to not do it in the future. I also did it because it could potentially be realized, in modified version, at different spaces (probably except The Wrong gallery "proper" space). So, actually I feel that I exhibited a concept rather than a final product.

MC: Well, I ask only because your work seems perfectly suited to the concept of The Wrong Gallery. It could almost be a Monika Sosnowska ready-made! (I hope you don't take offense to that comment). After all, it's a tiny street-level gallery located on a prime Chelsea block with a door that never opens to the public. It's obvious that the architecture presents a 'something wrong' scenario, yet you still desire entry - in part, because access is denied. It exists, partially, to confound an eager art audience. Your work seems to have a similar effect on viewers.



MS: I don't take offense on your comment. I will use your idea for the future project! Ha, ha! Actually I have never seen The Wrong Gallery. I know it only from photography. And I think that the gallery space has a stronger provoking character and it's easier to access. To enter my model one has to drink a magic mixture, while in the gallery a regular hooligan can do it. But seriously, I agree with you. I also think that illicit and impossible things are very attractive. I've experienced it many times on my works. For example, a work that looked like a very long corridor, but built in coregent perspective, was a very seductive object for experimenting with the impossible. The beginning of the corridor was regular size, but the end was very tiny, and on the back wall there was a door 6/12 cm big. I observed that people were trying to go through it.

MC: 'Magic mixture' smells like an Alice-in-Wonderland distorter of perception and performance, but the inability to fully experience a person/object sounds more Proust. Of Proust, Samuel Beckett observed, "The artistic tendency is not expansive, but a contraction. And art is the apotheosis of solitude." Your claustrophobic corridor and disorienting labyrinths offer no escape but they evade melancholia and instead rouse

pleasure through the act of discovery. In this aspect, your work strikes an unnatural balance.

MS: Things, which can't be fully executed, stimulate imagination, and because of this the experience of them is fuller (in the sense of art). Actually, the exposed mystery is usually a bit disappointing. Indeed, the process of discovering is more interesting for me, more than the discovery itself.

My ideas always seem better when they are in my mind. There is something missed in the realized projects. I always struggle with physicality. The literature seems the best medium for me (but I am only a reader).

MC: It sounds like you have several projects in permanent or temporary limbo. What's missed in the realized projects? The physicality of your work seems very controlled and confident. Each piece is a Wunderkammer of serial precision: a family of doors, a corridor of rooms, a maze, etc.

MS: I just wanted to say that an idea, in its ephemeral form, seems more interesting to me. When I prepare a new project I imagine the final effect.

Once the work is done, an image of the produced work pushes out the idea.

Probably nothing is missed in my works. They are complete in their physical form. But the first impression after I see my finished work is one of disillusionment and depression. And it's not because I don't like the production or I didn't find a perfect form for the idea. That feeling evokes the comparison 'this is what I had in my mind' to 'this what is done'. I think: "is that all?" Also once the work is finished it doesn't stay in my zone of interest anymore. That's why I don't have problems with destroying my installations. Most of my projects don't exist as objects.

MC: If literature is the best medium for you, do you ever envision compiling these unrealized projects and ideas into a book format?

MS: No. If I were able to write, I probably would do it instead of visualizing my ideas. My admiration for literature comes from the big flexibility which words give. Saying for example "house", one can imagine many different things, which are sometimes more universal and closer to the imagination of different people. It also seems a bit magical to me, that just by reading these abstract signs (letters), many images can be projected in one's brain. But maybe I am exaggerating. Maybe my feelings result from the belief that I am only an amateur in this discipline.

MC: Do you think that presenting a concept without the benefit of physical realization somehow seals the fate of that idea?

MS: Expressing an idea in literature is something else than transforming an idea, which ought to be visual, into another medium. Visual art should express what is impossible to express another way. My ideas appear in my brain together with images at the same time. I formulate myself better in visual form. That's why I accepted to exhibit my unrealized installation in the shape of a model instead of writing a text about it.

MC: Speaking of unrealized projects and physicality, the Robert Smithson survey just opened at the Whitney Museum in New York. Can you cite any artists or personal experiences that have been particularly inspirational to the development of your art practice?

MS: Everything is inspiration.

MC: Can you cite a recent example?

MS: This is the question which everybody asks me, every time, and which I don't like to answer. Actually, everything can be an inspiration. The best inspiration is life itself. But I probably would perceive reality differently if I did not read particular books or listen to particular music, etc... The consciousness of very banal things can be an inspiration. Creating seems a very complex process.

I can't separate one particular thing! Maybe I should go to a Psychoanalyst?

MC: I would love to hear a Psychoanalyst's interpretation of your work. I always thought that would make a fascinating coffee table book: assembling a group of therapists of varied backgrounds to make critical observations on contemporary works of art. Imagine Jacques Lacan faced with the tiny 6/12 cm door at the end of your corridor!

What's your favorite book or CD of the moment?

MS: I read everything. From fiction, stories, biographies to dictionaries, cookbooks, notes on the pickings... At this moment I am reading a very interesting guidebook about a not so well known area, which is located partly in East Poland and mostly in White Russia. I just came back from a short trip to that region, so it is particularly interesting to me. The book is rather a writer's diary from his trips to that region than a regular guidebook. It describes amazing places like a preserve of nature at the zone close to Chernobyl. The completely abandon area, where nature is left on its own and is not disturbed by humans, with empty villages, left in hurry by people after the cataclysm in 1986 (remember the explosion of USSR nuclear power-station?). Mostly swamps that cover land. In some places there are cem-

eteries of Russian tanks from WWII and everywhere graves of unknown Polish and Russian soldiers.

You better stop me now otherwise I will describe the whole book to you...

MC: I understand. Let's keep the mystery intact.

*AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN ANONYMOUS AND  
JAMES YAMADA*

A - So you were born in Bat Cave, NC?

JY- Well, sometimes.

A - That's nice, do you consider yourself patriotic?

JY - I don't go around with Uncle Sam tattooed on my back, but I am interested in what it means to be an American, and more specifically, what it means to be an American artist now. The question of being patriotic seems somewhat fraught. I guess I fall into the typical leftist camp where I think it is patriotic to question your government and the values of the culture you live in.

A - That is pretty general. I think that many people in the art world would probably say that. Can't you be a bit more specific? What does it mean to you to be an American?

JY- Well, I really don't want to be ironic, but it would be the easiest way to answer this question. I guess I see many things as being paradoxical or at least having many different sides that all need to be considered. In my work, I attempt to present multiple perspectives that modify, negate, or argue with each other so that no one perspective is dominant. I seek a situation that opens up questions and dialog. I guess that my take on being an American is roughly similar. For me, especially now, it is a time when, as Americans, we have a responsibility to be informed. And, we have a responsibility to look reflexively at ourselves and to consider the image that we project.

After the start of the war in Iraq there were articles in the papers about other countries perspective on the US. One of the qualities that people talked about was American optimism and how they thought it was being somewhat buried by aggression and paranoia. I think I have that right. I think that optimism is a real American quality, and it is something that the country seems to be fighting to maintain even if that means sometimes being in denial. I don't necessarily think that I am an optimistic person. I try and maintain a fairly neutral position. I think that when some things move forward others retreat. I do feel a great deal of possibility in life and I believe that this is a privilege that can be somewhat attributed to being an American.

The superpower status of the US has slipped somewhat, or at least that term is in flux. The US still has the military power to obliterate just about anything it wants to, but as we have seen in Iraq, blunt force isn't as compelling as it once might have been. So much of the US being a superpower has to do with its cultural influence though.

I keep thinking that as a reaction to the US's recent actions the cultural influence of the US will slip in a significant way and that this erosion will be what has the most effect on the US in the long term. I don't know if this is happening though or not. I do agree that the US will lose some cultural influence due to media being more diffused. Even though the US is moving quickly to remain dominant online, as more things become digital, losing some ground is somewhat inevitable. I think that the vast fluid nature of digital media and our inability to control it produces some sort of collective anxiety, and that this feeling might affect Americans, more so that others, due to our being dominant in media for such a long period of time.

I think I'm ranting.

A- Aren't we all! Are American artist's cooler than other artists?

JY - Sure.

A - Are artists leading the way?

JY - What does that mean?

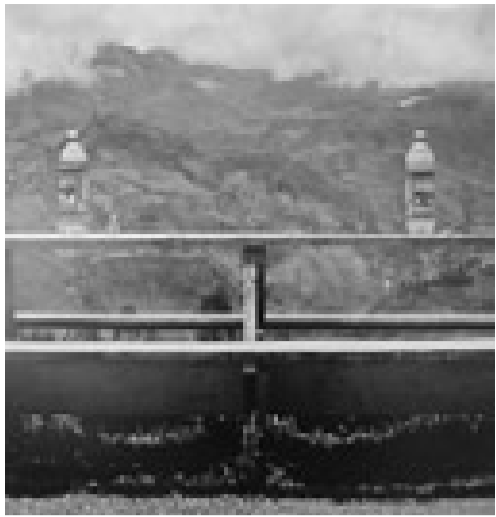
A - I don't know

JY - I do think that the art world is very tolerant of lazy thinking. I still see work that is addressing ideas that I think have been addressed in other fields years ago, and this work is being received as if these ideas are new. So in these instances it feels as if the art world is following other trends and idea makers. I can't claim to be absolutely up to date on big ideas, but sometimes, I am surprised at what the art world tolerates.

A- Yes, it is awful isn't it. The States, and many other parts of the world, seems to be enjoying a conservative blossoming. Do you think that is happening in art too? How is it affecting your work?

JY - I really don't know. Many people say that the world is becoming more polarized and that seems to be true. Conservative opinions are getting a fair amount of play. I have always wondered if there was a genetic link between political viewpoints. That is sort of a creepy thought. I was talking to someone recently and she thought that artwork was beginning to dematerialize more now, or at least she saw a trend towards dematerialization. That sounds good to me.





A – Wonderful, I hear that you are interested in China? Are you buying mainly things made in China, too, or do you like to “Buy American”?

JY – Yes, I think that China is like a growing counter weight on the other side of the world from the States. As a kid, China was always the place you would come out in if you dug through the earth. We are interested because we are afraid of the Chinese taking over our role in the world. I think that in many ways it is seen as already somewhat inevitable that the Chinese will dominate.

Americans, myself included, have always looked at developing economies with a sort of motherly or fatherly pride. How many times have you heard people say that such and such a country is like the US in the 50’s or 30’s. I have yet to hear anyone say 60’s, 70’s, or 80’s, but I’m sure it will happen. China seems to have blown that paternalistic position away. We are interested now, out of fear, of losing our lunch.

I was talking with someone recently who said that art was the second most popular thing to study in China after computer science. This person said that it was because students had learned that you could get rich making art and selling it to Westerners. This person was fairly familiar with contemporary art in China and had traveled there to look at it. She said that the one characteristic she found was that artists who hadn’t been picked up by a gallery would try making work in many different styles to, in effect, hunt for a marketable trend. Now I don’t know if this is true or not, but let’s suppose it is at least partially true because the same can be said for art students anywhere. It certainly takes the romance out of the image of the artist. It makes it look more like a job, which I like. Although, perhaps naively, I do also believe that deciding to make art is a political and spiritual choice as well.

A – ...and the second part of the question?

JY – Well, I suppose that many of the things that I buy are made in China, but, like many people, I frequently do not know where what I buy comes from. For some things, obviously I pay more attention than for others. I guess I do as a habit, during the course of owning something, eventually look to see where something was made.

A – Interesting. When you find out where something is

made does this change the way that you feel about an object or how you relate to it, in particular if it is something that you have owned for awhile?

JY – We’ll yes and no. Sometimes it is a bit of a surprise to learn that something that you identified with one country comes from another place, and I would think most of us, assign values to locations in terms of quality, politics, etc. This is pretty obvious.

A – Do you think that a cultural residue is left on objects by the country that produces the object, for example a DVD player?

JY – You mean like an aura or something, I don’t know. I guess what you are talking about is mostly manifested in terms of design, but design can happen in one place and manufacturing in another, and it usually does. But, as I mentioned before, we do imbue a set of values and ideas around an object based on where it is made and these values are probably on a curve of sorts that lags behind the reality of a given location.

A – And how does this impact your artwork?

JY – I like to travel. I am interested in how we bring meaning to objects. Talking about globalization sounds trite. The word is overused and is too general, but thinking about what it means is important.

A – Yes. So your work tends to be fairly eclectic. In fact, I sometimes don’t recognize it as your work from piece to piece. Why is that? Are you schizophrenic or do you just like the idea of the affectation? Are you a romantic schizophrenic?

JY – I have always tried to bring the things that interest me in the broadest possible sense into my work. I think that being fragmented and scattered is a current human condition at least in large parts of the world. I see no reason to maintain a consistent style although the market and a lot of people prefer that. I was talking to a friend whose work is even more eclectic than my own and he said that eclectic is the new consistency. Thomas Friedman, the New York Times, columnist, said something similar, that being eclectic and able to adapt is necessary for survival in today’s world.

A – You have some pictures with little birds and bugs in them. Do you like spending time in nature?

JY – That series of pictures, which is ongoing, was a response to my frustrations with photography, a desire to be outdoors making art, and some other stuff. I tend to work in parallel ongoing tracks so that group of pictures might continue for a while, or as long as the project continues to keep my attention.

A – If you could have a nuclear weapon for a day what would you do with it? It would be one of those really tiny ones that could fit in a briefcase, be totally undetectable, and be failsafe. Let’s suppose that you could just carry it around if you wanted to.

JY – Maybe I would go to the Hamptons.

*ROBERTO CUOGHI IN CONVERSATION WITH DIEGO PERRONE*

DP: How do you imagine a monster?

RC: It has to smell when you get close to it. It has to have a weakness without showing it and it should be the color of wet soil. When you touch it, it should feel like wet soil in a cemetery. Which kind of monster do you want? Do you want a monster behind a glass or a pickled one in a vase? Do you want me to talk about a hidden monster looking at you without you knowing? That is the kind of monster that you realize is obviously carnivorous, but only when it’s too late, still you try to run away.

DP: I can’t really choose. I like them both. Probably I prefer to spy on monsters in their natural habitat, or possibly to look at them from the inside. How should I do it? Would it be better to cut a monster in pieces or to be swallowed by it?

RC: You won’t find any differences inside. Monsters are only outside.

DP: Your monsters look like shadows to me, moving around as they like, but without hurting me. If they’re really cruel, why do they only scare me instead of knocking me down from behind?

RC: Monsters only hit a bastard from behind, because he’s not happy or they hit the guys who have sex with the girl you like. If they don’t have red eyes, or green blood and if they have no corrosive slobber, you would call them people. Maybe you want me to talk about my mother.

DP: Can you please be meaner?

RC: Ok. Let’s talk about your mother then.



DP: What do you want to know?

RC: Did you ever try to strangle her?

DP: No, never. But I’ve wanted to do so for a lifetime.

RC: In the worst case she wouldn’t react, she would close her eyes and remain still. So then the guilty monitor’s pointer would spin around 360° and you would end up in a bad place.

DP: My monsters though, cannot be people because they don’t have ideas: they are ideas. When you can finally see them, you figure out that they’re not real, they just grow between your bones, they conquer you, they seduce you.



RC: Right, your mother in a “new flesh” version. It is bad to complicate something when it is easy. If you’re chased by a 15-ton reptile, you can put off your problems because you only have one really big problem, but it’s easier to handle. It weighs 15 tons; you can see it and it doesn’t need to tell you where it wants to go. The day the Twin Towers went down some people called me to tell me... They were laughing.

I don’t think we need to look for a monster. It would be better to try to build an image or an action without any possible references. If we get rid of anything we can possibly imagine, what do we go on with then? I am talking about an image which is organized in a totally exclusive way, a vision which has never existed before, and that will never happen. Unfortunately this is a two-minute conversation topic, because it has nothing in common with imagination. We’re not interested in our memory, to begin with: any steady element, any geometry would be wrong. In this case the only effort of fantasy would be self-incrimination. Any attempt at a structure would fail. It could be a reason for life, but we need to begin defining the purpose: any image we could think of is determined by our electro-chemical wiring system. The first thing we need to do is to find an alien and hope he understands what we want him to do.

*THE WRONG ME AND REAL US: MICHAEL ELMGREEN & INGAR DRAGSET IN CONVERSATION WITH JENS HOFFMANN*

Jens Hoffmann: Let’s not talk about art, as that would be wrong. But tell me anyway, what is wrong with the world?

Michael Elmgreen: The world just seems to be a bit hung over. What is wrong with the world right now has been wrong for such a long time that it has almost become a normal condition. The biggest danger at the moment is of course that the American president gets so moody whenever he stops drinking. I am sure he was a much nicer person back then when he was still a full time alcoholic. And as soon as someone invents a pill which can cure the current, widespread religious insanity—Christian or Muslim or whatever—everything will be get back on track.

JH: I think we should use the word wrong in any question and any answer of this interview. Do you think there is something wrong with you? I think everything is wrong right now.

ME: Eh, do you say that you think everything is wrong with me?

JH: No nothing wrong with you as far as I know. I am thinking of doing a show with artworks that are wrong in some way. There is a nice work by John Baldessari that is called “Wrong” made in 1967. It is a photograph showing a man on the street in front of a palm tree. It looks as if the tree is growing out of his head. I guess it is a bit of a parody in regards to amateur snapshots while ridiculing art photography of that time. He also made a piece called “Right” exactly 30 years later.

ME: The Baldessari show in Vienna must have been totally fantastic. I just missed it, though I was in Vienna recently. Wrong timing. To follow up on one’s concept 30 years later is really cool—very anti-short-term memory.

JH: I forgot we did not want to talk about art. Why do you think we can say that something is wrong and something is right? What are the criteria that determine wrong and right?

ME: The only thing I am certain of is that there are absolutely no criteria of such kind. We are left without any reliable parameters and this is exactly what freaks out some politicians and turns them into obsessive fanatics. They are scared to death by this uncertainty. They want some strict guidelines and become hardliners. Their spiritual or materialistic beliefs turn them into butterflies that blindly follow a strong white light and in that light they want to burn for some abstract, noble cause; it’s very frightening. I prefer to be left in the darkness :-)) In our personal lives we often try to do the right thing, be nice and well behaved human beings and make the right choices, act and react in the right way—so many considerations just to discover after a while that we were totally misjudging the situation and rather should have dealt with it differently. But that makes everything a bit more exciting, doesn’t it. Sometimes you even do things while you are fully aware that your actions will harm you, but you get a kick out of doing it anyway and you go for the pleasurable rush rather than calculating the long term consequences of your actions. The time aspect of the Baldessari piece is interesting because so much that seems to be wrong at a particular point in time is actually just due to wrong timing.

JH: Wrong or right, it’s all relative at the end of the day of course. Ingar wrote an e-mail earlier today and said he is in the wrong city and that is why he is not able to participate in our conversation. What is wrong? I do not understand. I thought both of you were inside of my computer. How is this working? Are you not?

Ingar Dragset: I’m in! When I said wrong city, I only meant that I feel like I’m in the wrong setting for doing a long distance e-mail conversation of some interest for other people to read at the moment, but I’ll do my best to keep up with you guys. I’ve wanted to learn Spanish for years, but never seemed to find the time for it. Also, having lived in Berlin for the last few years, I’ve had more than enough juggling of the German grammar to some satisfactory level. In the end, I chose to go abroad for some weeks to be away from my daily context, which proves to be difficult, since I’m constantly connected to the world outside. (I’m inside your computer, and you’re inside of mine!) Then I chose the wrong city for learning Spanish, of course, since this is a Catalan city. And the city itself constantly distracts me and lures me into doing “wrong” things; activities that take place on beaches, bars and roof terraces and are not very suitable for this context, nor do they enhance my Spanish skills. Anyway, I find learning a new language from scratch an interesting process. It is desperately humiliating. I think it’s good to occasionally put yourself in situations in which you are worth no more than the drain residue in your kitchen sink. If one just moves in the same circles and constantly has one’s persona confirmed by the same people and the same contexts, one might easily get stuck, become un-daring, and self absorbed. Sorry for mentioning the art world again, (Don’t you think it is too much of a construction to try and write art out of this conversation? Do we actually want to make such a division between art and “life”?) but I think the art scene as a whole has a very negative effect on artists, in the way that it encourages repetitiveness, both in terms of aesthetics and behavior, or rather in terms of self (re-) presentation. But of course, as artists we have the main responsibility to pull ourselves out of this mainstreaming, ever demanding treadmill.

One thing that scares me a bit is that for each new language you learn, the other ones you know diminish. This might not be true for your mother tongue, which apparently is stored somewhere else in your brain, but definitely for second languages. This means that I further increase instability in my life at the moment, considering that language is such a crucial part of life, but I’ve decided to embrace this. I never really feel at home anywhere, and somehow I feel that this is good in order to sustain a creative mode. It keeps you on your toes and forces you to find new solutions, ways to communicate, to use new sides of yourself and try to make life comfortable, or at least bearable.

Speaking of languages, I have to mention the book I’m reading at the moment, or rather the fictional character Alex in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Everything is Illuminated. He is a young Ukrainian man that partly tells the story through letters directed back to the actual writer, Safran Foer. Following the advise of Foer, he (like all of us) uses a Thesaurus to find synonyms and alternative expressions in order to vary and develop his English. The thing is that Alex completely overdoes and creates a sort of parallel, unique language. Through the constant use of almost or not-very-befitting synonyms, a genius literary character is created that speaks to us with an incredible force: simple, searching, self-exposed and wonderfully poetic.

JH: Something was wrong with your last email hence the late reply. It was trapped in the spam filter and I only discovered it today! I think not to talk about art is a nice idea, just to see if there is anything else we can actually talk about. Right now everyone here in London is only talking about the bombings two weeks ago and

the things that have happened since, in the last couple of days. Here is the wrong thing to say in London right now: it is sad and unfortunate that people were harmed and died, yet it was totally clear that something like this would happen. Blair and Bush are calling the bombings “barbaric acts” while they sent troops over to Iraq that killed countless innocent civilians, which are simply filed under “collateral damage.” What do they expect? If we bomb their cities, they will bomb our cities. The Independent was the only newspaper here in London that took a similar point of view and I think that that was very brave of them. It is the truth, as we all know but not a very popular truth.

ME: I really don't want to deal with such political events since I consider them so much out of any reasonable proportion and there is really nothing to comment on. I don't want to be trapped into their infantile and insane rhetoric. Blair together with the Bush administration and the fundamental terrorists on the other side are all just fucking psychopaths and we have to disregard any statement from them since starting to take them seriously will only lead to disgrace and regression. There are so many other important things to worry about, I believe. I can't use the kind of freedom that Mr. Bush is claiming that he will provide the world with—he can stick his talk about human rights and democracy up Rumsfeld's ass—and I can't sympathize with Islamic religious nut heads who think that all fags should have their hands chopped off. As Bright Eyes/Conor Oberst, my current oracle of banalities says, “We made love on the living room floor to the background sound of a televised war... When it's a war about nothing you better just join the side who's gonna win...” Let's rethink what is really important for us, in our own lives, let's not be pushed around by the media and told what is relevant and what is not. Let's turn our backs to them and continue our own paths. Let's allow ourselves to do wrong and to be beautifully sentimental and stupid and nerdy and poetic and horny and wild. Let's fuck it up boys and make some noise!

What interests me is how we can be better at doing things the wrong way, because if we start to try to do them the right way we mostly end up being neurotic and fearful and too tight-assed. How do you see these things? Did you experience any change during your own transformation from an independent “curatorial enfant terrible” :-)) to your present position as head of the visual arts department at ICA?



JH: I cannot have any sympathy for any of the sides [in the war] either, yet the whole conflict is a current reality that we have to deal with, especially when one is exposed to it in a way that we have been in London. I would not be able to turn my back on these matters and articulate my concerns by simply moving on with things, following what you describe as “our own paths.” There are simply no own paths in this world any longer. But you are right: doing the supposedly right thing often ends up simply being the wrong and vice versa.

There are many ways of looking at the move from working as an independent curator to become the Director of Exhibitions at the ICA. It has its clear benefits but it also raises a lot of questions that I was not confronted with when working independently. While I might describe myself now as an institutional curator I feel that I am still far from being an institutionalized curator. I am not sure on what level I should elaborate on this question. It is extremely challenging and interesting to develop an overall exhibition program for an institution with five to six exhibitions a year in a complex environment such as London, a context I was not really familiar with only 18 months ago. At the same time the restrictions in an institution such as this are enormous and it is a constant struggle of conflicting interests and realities. I must admit that I believe that the ICA is also a particular case, with very specific problems. I would not go too far as describing the ICA as a schizophrenic institution in search for a clear identity and unfit for society! And this has been going on for a number of years. Apart from that, the discovery of such wonderful things as Performance Appraisal Forms, Financial Procedures Manuals, Sickness Absence Procedures, Smoking Policies, Internal Communication Agreements, Finance and Expenditure Codes, Three Step Disciplinary Procedure Manuals (Oral Warning, First Written Warning, Final Warning), Holiday Forms, etc. at the ICA was truly a revelation!

ME: Regarding the recent incidents in London, I totally disagree with your perception “there not being any own paths any longer”—that is exactly what these guys' strategy is all about—both sides—to make us forget about our own lives and desires so that they can manipulate us to take standing points on ethical matters which in the end turn out to have nothing to do with our personal views. There are more people killed in traffic accidents in London per year than people killed by bombs, but that doesn't make us sleepless at night or influence our beliefs. Maybe we should get more upset about inhuman city planning. Maybe we should be more opposed to the control mechanisms that limit our everyday lives directly and to the media manipulation which fucks up our brains and blurs our perceptions of what is good and relevant for us and what is not. I am convinced that the most efficient weapon against the neo-conservatism and the radical Islamic reaction to it, is to simply refuse to participate in this fight on any level, but instead to mobilize substantial alternatives and to show the next generation that there are other, less black-and-white ways to view the world and that there are so many different modes of life and thinking patterns in this old, but ever expanding universe of Western boredom. Anyway, they are not gonna succeed in persuading me to accept that I have anything in common with them, that there is any unification of any sort or that there is anything which concerns all of us. Even if it came to war in my own backyard, I would be the first one to run away.

It sounds both challenging and a bit heavy at the same time to work in an institution like the ICA. Do you still shock total strangers at Starbucks by surprisingly taking a bite of their cereal bar? Do you still freak out and scream in train cars and in posh uptight cocktail lounges? I loved your wrong behavior when we first met. It made us all so insecure. You have been the neatest and smoothest looking punk kid I ever met.

JH: Yes, I still do my stunts. I cannot help it, they keep me sane and life seems too dull and too boring otherwise. After a day of filling out Expense Claim Forms I need to scream. I need to do these little disruptions here and there. The more things are in shape, the more I need to play around with them; so uptight cocktail lounges are the best. I got kicked out of Claridge's for doing something wrong. It is actually something that is part of a tradition, just look at the Marx Brothers, Dada, and even absurd theater. Sometimes people also understand what I am doing and play along or they just think I am nuts like most people in the office here. They think it is already crazy when I answer the phone and say CIA instead of ICA.

ME: The CIA reply sounds cool. Do you think the director of MoMA also picks up his phone and says, “Hello it's Mama!”? Some years ago when we were all trapped in the Swedish capital Fuckholm for a long dark winter you turned into an addict of the disgusting 7-11 hotdogs called hot bites. Remember you could eat three of them in a row, which gave you the nickname Mr. Hoffbite. Have you found a replacement for your malnutrition in London?

JH: I wonder what happened to Stockholm... something went wrong there. You came up with that Hoffbite nickname! So funny that you remember this. I liked Stockholm, even if only for the three months we were there, and not only because of those hot dogs. I was turning into a wiener myself after eating all those sausages. Now I actually started to watch out and be more conscious about what I eat, so no more malnutrition! The overall quality of the food here is rather bad too, but there is this whole rather strange, but maybe sociologically interesting phenomenon of people aiming

towards changing their eating habits to become—actually it's mostly for appearance—more sophisticated. It is another one of those class related phenomena in England, the middle class aspires to “greater” things and culinary delights seem to be the understanding of high-end sophistication.

ID: Sorry again for just joining in to this conversation sporadically. Feels like I'm in an even more off-beat place right now, driving around the state of Maine, USA (the homeland of CIA and 7-11)—where one of the state slogans that you see on stickers everywhere is, “The Way Life Should Be.” For some people that may be true, but personally I repeatedly find myself thrown into moments of despair and bewilderment. The nature is picture beautiful here, of course, but I never found much use in that kind of beauty, and people in general seem very easy-going, down to earth and without attitude, but that also scares me sometimes—it brings back memories from growing up in Norway, where everyone is sweet and nice as long as you behave exactly like they do. My boyfriend and me were holding hands getting out of the local movie theater in Augusta the other night and one could almost touch the tension building up in the parking lot.

“The Way Life Should Be” is a pretty telling slogan for a number of things, e.g. how most of the western world perceives itself: the way life should be is how we live it. Like, we're better than you guys. In a way this links up to the “what happened to Stockholm?” question. When people become too self important and overly self-sufficient, it puts innovation and progress at a standstill. This happened to Copenhagen as well; 10-15 years ago, when things were still a bit fucked up there, people tried to find their own ways and new ways to deal with things, but now everyone's just trying to have a piece of the existing cake while sipping their macchiatos. To a certain extent this might also be true for New York and London. It also slowly happens to Berlin, but the lack of capital and excess amount of space in that city seems to halt that development.

Like myself, neither of you seems to have much to do with the countries where you were born/grew up anymore, Denmark and Costa Rica, respectively. I find it impossible to miss or cherish memories of a nation state, which in itself I find an anachronistic construction—however in vogue it might be at the moment. But for sure there must be things that affect us, on shallower or deeper levels, having spent so much time in those places?

JH: “The Way Life Should Be” is hilarious! What's that going to be like? Pleasantville or Celebration? No thanks! Wrong exit! One thing is certain; life will never be like that for us. As much as I am bored to hear about the (post-modern) concept of our nomadic existences or the idea of the so-called non-places and the consequent estrangement from our own sense of self, one cannot deny that there is a point. Consequently, there are places like Celebration. I guess what Ingar said is right, our identities are strongly connected to and fundamentally shaped by our relationship to places and their culture and history. We all left our countries voluntarily taking parts of these histories and cultures with us. I wonder however what the difference really is in terms of our sense of self when voluntary migration becomes forced displacement, which is something that many people actually experience every day. Vaguely recalling Homi Bhabha: The world is a global village for those of us who can afford it, for those who are refugees no walk is longer than the one across a frontier.

ID: Yes, we are incredibly privileged of course. I think it is important to try and maintain a critical distance to both one's own way of life, context and environment and also the world as such, and then let these micro- and macro-cosmoses meet, play with, inspire and sometimes collapse each other. There is probably no way that us voluntary nomads can really understand the anguish of people that feel forced to relocate themselves. Still, everyone's got personal experience that can be used to get closer to some kind of understanding. Again, just think about how painful it is to learn a new language, for instance, especially a language that you find difficult and didn't want to learn in the first place. Endless situations of disgrace. Many of our friends in Berlin have lived there for years and don't even try to learn German. Of course this creates some problems for them, but at the same time it is generally accepted since they are white and come from rich countries. If you are a refugee or immigrant from a less well-off region of the world, you are often forced to join a federal language program. In the Nordic welfare states this is seen as a way to help immigrants to integrate in the society, but is forced integration really the way to go? Everyone should have the option to fully integrate of course, but if we speak about equality, everyone should also have the same option to live and work in their own ghettos. If I look at my own middle-class background, everyone lives extremely ghettoized lives, only seeing people with the same income, level of education, tastes and values. I also operate in very closed circles, for the most part the art scene and the gay scene, and it can

feel very wrong, be it in Maine or Trondheim, when I am in a place in which the codes from those two worlds are don't exist.

Leaping back to the end of your last entry, Jens, national sovereignty is the root of many evils. It is time that we open all borders and let people find each other anew.

JH: Let me respond to your last comment with one of my favorite passages from Nietzsche's Will To Power: “And do you know what “the world” is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by “nothingness” as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be “empty” here or there, but rather a force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there [...]”

#### PETER COFFIN & MAURIZIO CATTELAN IN CONVERSATION

MC: What is the best moment of the day?

PC: The massage moment. You're very good with your hands. You must be a sculptor.

Did you know that every watch advertisement you'll ever see will indicate the time at roughly ten after ten? It may be a special moment of the day. There are some great conspiracy theories that explain this phenomenon if you can call it that. The clock around Flavor Flav's neck stopped at 10 after 10 the moment he started smoking sherm and then it continued working after he quit. It might have been the other way around, I'm not sure. And Abe Lincoln was shot at 10:10. The list goes on. Really, I think it may just be a comfortable moment during the day, am and pm. Moments of comfort and pleasure are my favorite -talking with a friend, discovering something interesting, listening to music...



MC: What kind of music do you listen to at the moment?

PC: I'm into the Nonesuch Records, “Explorer Series”, field recording from the 70s. The Throat Singers of Tuva I like. I like the cut-up Terry Riley stuff. Some pop. There's so much I haven't even listened to yet that'll blow me away any day now I'm sure. I have been thinking about how music operates like a language that allows for associative play. Something I've been curious about is the color and tone designation that Isaac Newton came up with; the note C corresponding with the color red, D with orange, E with yellow, F, green, G, blue, A, indigo, B, violet, and in combinations between. I tried it the other day and it looks ...and sounds right. Music operates in interesting ways.

MC: Do you listen to the radio?

PC: I hear it more than I listen to it actually. Know what I mean? And that's just because commercial radio bugs—that'll be the day when in between paragraphs of a novel there will be an ad you have to read. But, hearing a radio somewhere sometimes just reminds me that its great that we have music with us. Music is pretty powerful in comparison to what we produce in our studios and then show in galleries. I don't believe in a hierarchy of these really but I like to remind myself how great other kinds of art are and how they operate.

MC: What books do you have on your bedside table?

PC: I checked and there are none there. Not even a bedside table. I've been reading lots by I. P. Freely.

MC: Do you read art magazines?

PC: Sure. The Barnes and Noble stores have the coldest air conditioning in Manhattan -it can make for a nice five minute break between errands or during a lunch break. I catch up on art magazines this way and buy is-



sues with articles I like. Outdated art magazines can be an interesting read when you let yourself forget what's important in the moment you're in and pretend you're reading about what's current. Your Charley project had that effect.

MC: Where do you get news from? do you believe them?

PC: I sometimes look at the news the same way I 'hear' the radio instead of listening. I like to watch it as though I am observing it -pretending to be objective. It can be an interesting activity. The news can be believable. The content may not tell us as much as what we can learn from how it is conveyed and in what context, right? 'Like why are they telling me this now?' A kind of meta-reading. I am interested in other ways of reading like this.

MC: Do you notice how people are dressed?

PC: Yes. You are wearing all white and it gives you a glow. Maybe it means something.

MC: Do you care?

PC: If it excites me, I care what people wear. I like the idea of a 'Birthday Suit'. Do you know what this is? In German they say 'Textil-frei' as a way of similarly identifying something that is nothing. Nonsense language in a way.

MC: Do you have any pets?

PC: No. Do you think having a pets around reminds us we're human? I think I heard someone once say - "animals are people too". It reminds me of something I wondered about when I was young. What's the relationship between Pluto and Goofy, -both dogs? One is Micky Mouse's pet dog and the other is just Micky Mouse's friend, who happens to also be a dog. I've searched to see if I can find Pluto and Goofy interacting in the cartoon but found nothing. Maybe its uncomfortable for them.

MC: When you were a child did you want to become an artist?

PC: Yes and the other way around sounds good now too.

MC: Where do you work on your art?

PC: Where-ever. My thoughts are with me most of the time and sometimes they wander. Some environments encourage new thoughts better than others. Maybe you had something like this in mind when you asked about the best moment. They go hand in hand. The 3-4 seconds under water following a dive make for a great moment and place. The adrenaline feeling on the Cyclone roller coaster is more about the moment I guess. Bed is an important place for deep sleep and half sleep among other exciting things that influence my art and are part of the work process. The dance floor. My reading chair. The woods. On my bicycle, no hands, no rain.

MC: Who or which organization would you like to develop something for?

PC: Do you mean for what audience? I think you mean for what specific organization or individual. I might like to develop something for a secret organization that will help them reveal their secrets.

MC: Do you discuss your work with other artists?

PC: Yes. Do you mean my ideas before the work is realized, or after? Either way I think it's a good idea. Its all part of a broader dialogue that should or just will happen one way or other. I even like some half-baked ideas very much.

MC: Describe your art, like you would like it to be described.

PC: Potentially interesting. Suspended belief/disbelief. I am pleased when I find that a work catalyzes something for someone and I'm curious how.

MC: Is there an evolution in your work? Which way do you think you are going?

PC: I was just thinking about this sort of thing apart from my own evolution or direction. I am interested in vectors used to illustrate the path of an idea the way cognitive scientists sometimes use them to convey the evolution of a thought. You reminded me of this with this question of which way I think I am going. ...Flow charts function the same way, like an idea map. You've seen flow charts before? Well, Albert Einstein said that the shortest distance from one point to another is not necessarily a straight line. I like this idea very much especially in the context of cognition. That a kind of indirectness towards an idea can be more direct. Thought progression cannot be mapped so easily probably because of so much interesting indirectness that contributes to our thoughts.

MC: What project has given you the most satisfaction?

PC: Well, I enjoy surprises. Sometimes the satisfaction of a work I make or experience is delayed and sometimes its premature. The projects that continue and keep me interested have been the most gratifying. I've had the opportunity to work with musicians on a project in which I invited them to compose and perform music for plants. Its not such an original idea, and people have been curious about this for a while but I wanted it to be non-scientific with emphasis on the experience and the potential to consider the phenomenon itself -not a display as evidence of the phenomenon. The project

simply encouraged people to consider plant consciousness. Many of the musicians told me that the invitation became a kind of challenge that affected their creative process. Some people who observed the musicians performing for the plants said they felt encouraged to think about what kind of exchange that might be and imagined it. I was satisfied that it took on a life of its own.

MC: Is there any artist from the past or present you appreciate a lot or

you feel is close to your sensibility?

PC: Yes, there are many. Affinity is nice. I like California Funk and its part of a kind of 'lite' conceptualism that is typical of the west coast. Less self-serious and still self-reflexive. Arte Povera. There are interesting things happening now too that I like. Many artists are faithful to the challenge of what art can do. The term 'experimental art' is an oxymoron in my book.

MC: What are you afraid of?

PC: Things that are painful, abuse of power, poor judgment, selfishness. shellfishness, fishnet pantyhose.

MC: Do you care about the future?

PC: Yes. When a person says 'looking forward', its meant as a positive thing. The future is potential and that must free up the present some. The same way a daily moment might, whether its 10:10 or the massage to look forward to. In the future, there is opportunity for more dialogue and surprises. Its going to be great.

#### GEDI SIBONY AND ELIZABETH SCHAMBELAN IN CONVERSATION

ES: When I was writing about your show at Canada, I pulled some clips about your earlier work, which I wasn't familiar with.

GS: Oh no.

ES: Uh oh! But it was intriguing to me, because it seems like there has been an interesting =trajectory. In the mid-'90s you did a series of abstract paintings. . .

GS: The residue of academic training. For my Brown graduation show in '95 I Xeroxed the ubiquitous grainy video still from the Rodney King beating, which was in the news at the time, until it became void of readability, and presented those copies on the walls. Then I started finding weather maps from times of tragic events, like plane crashes, and blowing up the pixels that corresponded to the location. So I suppose in a way I was taking the based-on methodology to an absurdist extreme, where there was such a complete disconnect between the object and the thing that it was based on. Then I thought, why not just make it up? The whole thing just felt lost and I had no connection to it. It was a hoax. But it became a door to its opposite.

ES: The work you make now does seem to be the opposite of that early work, in the sense that it seems to come from this very internal, almost intuitive impulse.

GS: Well, for me the question became, how can I make something that begins with a less decipherable logic, no clear reasoning behind it? And so the first thing I did was make this flat upright monolith out of stacked pebbles. But I felt like the labor was too dominant, and all this energy was siphoning down a tunnel. So I broke the thing apart, which freed something, it dispersed that energy. I liked having an object that was incomplete or broken, because it relieved me of having to succeed with an object. So I could play, look at relationships, and orchestrate something more broadly, concentrated more in the spaces between objects.

ES: In terms of relationships, there seem to be a lot of contradictions, like abjection and elegance, that are operating in and creating tension in your work. Like your piece in "Make It Now" at SculptureCenter—the main element is a pre-existing sheetrock wall that's been stripped to show its internal structure. It's very monumental, but at the same time it's transparent, and its found-ness and roughness are left visible. So there's never a comfortable stasis. There's a sense of disparate elements teetering in the balance.

GS: Doing their different jobs. In the place I wanted to work there was a wall from the previous show being torn down. It was like an apse. Without the sheetrock I thought the silver studs could bring you from the sky to the floor, where there was a warped piece of painted cardboard wedged under a folded rug. Or you could start there and go up, too.

ES: Speaking of that rug: Industrial carpet crops up in your work a lot, and in general there's a utilitarianism to the materials that you use. They're industrial or they're culturally devalued in some way. But in contrast to other artists who use similar materials--I hate to use the term "beauty" because it's so loaded, but it does seem like you're paying particular attention to color and formal properties and aesthetics.

GS: I feel a certain tenderness towards these things that are sort of the pieces that make up the city. They're the things that are on the street or in these closets or left in hallways or sort of fallen off. And they have these different material qualities that I really love. Some fold, can be building blocks, have color. And I think that, because they're so available and cheap, I can move

through them faster without feeling too self-conscious. I tend to hoard things and be too protective of things so I'm working against that too.

ES: When you mentioned the other day that you like Wittgenstein I started thinking about his propositions, some of which really hook into my sense of your practice. His idea is that a proposition is a picture of reality, and it's self-contained and just is itself as such. And I sort of think about your work that way. And yet at the same time, through the use of materials that are recognizable from these other contexts—recognizable as the detritus of the city--there is a constant allusion to the external.

GS: Well what you said about Wittgenstein is really great. When I read Wittgenstein my understanding of the condition of perception and investigation became flatter. As if digging wasn't vertical, but horizontal. I had thought horizontally before, around simulacra or whatever, but it felt sorrowful. In this case it feels very hopeful. I like that in setting these things into relation with each other, the train of thought or the experience of the viewer goes around the room, and is enticed to decode the work somehow--maybe emotionally.

And in that way the work kind of describes something. But I think that a large part of it is also coping. And maybe that's related to a tension between harsh and elegant. That kind of push and pull is a reflection of a certain way of coping, where maybe a lot of love and tenderness needs to be masked behind a kind of aggression. I don't know which comes first. They're both at play.

But also you mentioned the proposition, which I think is ultimately what's exciting to me about art. I like to ask: Is this going to fly? And what about it even makes that question arise? I remember seeing a Michael Krebber painting recently in a Greene Naftali show. It was just green lines, and that's been coming back to me over and over again—that guy's really confronting something in his life and in his practice and he's willing to say, does this reflect something significant? Does this have something complicated embedded in it? And I see that as a generous way to make that proposition--to put it out there and not even know or be sure what it means.

ES: I guess that's one thing that makes convention useful. It allows an artist to know when something's finished. And once you subtract that, you're in uncertain territory, which then becomes part of the experience not only of making the work but of looking at it.

GS: When Wittgenstein proposes the phrase "a rose has no teeth," it's a similar uncertain territory. With "a baby has no teeth" you understand where the teeth would be, but when you say a rose has no teeth, you have to flirt with the possibility that the teeth are in the mouth of the beast that dung the rose. To make that kind of gap in language and in art, you give someone the chance to make a leap. And then it can become, for example, about the fact that a rose is not a single entity, that everything is connected, that everything is a cycle.

ES: That seems to raise the question of narrative, which is something I wanted to ask you about. In your artist's statement at Canada you said, "I want to convey a kind of discovery by moving through things the way allegory incorporates various energies in a harmonious environment. This might be understood as an alignment of symbolic thinking and material tactility." I was curious about the implicit analogy between allegory, with its narrative connotations, and the experience of looking at your work.

GS: Well, I think the experience of time, the necessity of traveling temporally to decode the series of decisions within the objects and in their connections with each other and the space they occupy-- If there are different tensions playing off each other, there's a story being told. In polytheistic mythologies the gods don't sit still. Characters and conflict emerge together, and generate archetypes that embody general things. So I can imagine my work this way. Not that the objects are characters necessarily, but that they have qualities. And the interplay can happen in a stage space. It is interesting for me to think about the works as props of themselves, where they are kind of standing in for their particular facts, which are the facts of their material and what they evoke. And then the play, which happens amongst them or between them. So it's not quite narrative, in that there isn't a specific story being told, but there is the kind of fabric of story, there's the form of story.

I think that it's fun to look at it as psychological space too. The place where this stuff happens is in the individual. These grand stories, or whatever, these conflicts, these occurrences and events, all happen in the experience of life and they're all part of development, and part of coming of knowledge and understanding. To me it's very important to look for the patterns that I follow and interrupt them; let the buffoonery out.

ES: So in other words you think of your own process of making in those terms—as enacting those kinds of conflicts?

GS: I very much like when they happen in the work. When I come to the studio I don't really know where

I'm going. It's not until things get moved around and complicated and broken and cut and displaced and stored and taken out again that there will be some inadvertent accidental moment or weird misplacings. I try to be attentive to that kind of magic. When an unexpected event occurs, I can imagine the lead-up activity functioned in a way to allow that event to happen. And if the event that happened is absurd or strange enough, or alarming, then it's very much alive. It's hard to know if something's a work or not. That's an interesting question to me. Leaving things in mid-sentence can reveal a lot. Sometimes I see something so secret about myself, and it's so scary and it's out there and it's in an object and the object goes out into the world. It can be this huge relief, because I can go back to myself and say, I am connected to the world. Which isn't to say that the work is entirely an emotive expressive tool, but sometimes there are aspects of it that I find potent.



ES: I think your work does sometimes come across as having this almost a pathos to it, because there is a provisional quality to the way that it's constructed. An object will be propped against a wall instead of secured for instance. And it's interesting to think about this in light of a term you used before--"coping." With the word "coping" what's foregrounded is the optimistic rather than the melancholy or the active rather than the reactive, though it's still a push-pull dynamic. That puts a different spin on it, particularly in thinking about the way the work intervenes with the architecture and the space around it.

GS: There's always an acknowledgement or attention to the space. In some instances, it's more pronounced, when the space is weird. At Socrates, for example, I noticed this visual tunnel towards the skyscrapers of midtown framed by a circular window in the trees. So I hung a ladder from a crane behind the trees and planted a dead sapling in front of the trees that seemed to reach up from the earth. From one special point in the park the whole thing had this perfect alignment that bisected the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building. From park through city to infinity.

I recently saw that Daniel Buren thing at the Guggenheim, which I thought was so so great because it took on the space in such a way and maybe even trumped it. He made a front and a back as you go up too, which is just so incredible. And what something like that does is allow so much space for us. Allows us to be imaginative and to daydream. A real gift of art is to be able to give more space than there was before. Rather than trying to fix meaning to something or to pinpoint something in an autonomous object, I like it to keep moving. And the challenge of a normal gallery is to activate spatial relationships as well as material and psychological ones. That's a fantastic opportunity. To give an experience of psychological response or reaction to something. I think that somehow those simple acts can be much more generous because even though they don't give you all the petals of the flower they give you the space that the flower could occupy.

ES: Well, that relates to what you were saying about Michael Krebber and how that kind of gesture is very generous. It's interesting because the intuitive response is to say the opposite--that when an artist doesn't present you with something that is easily explicable, that that's not generous, that in fact it's like they're preventing broader access.

GS: I see it more as giving the viewer an opportunity to decode, to make meaning out of a mess. To live in some discomfort. I keep seeing shows where the objects are stated referentially to discrete information and its such a denial of mystery. It offers swift consumption and I don't see the risk. I like when you have to invest the time and slowly feel the effect of the orchestration without being able to flee to the press release. I like to be in this kind of breathing empty airy environment. The

world is full of these pockets of spaces.

ES: I think that it's always a conundrum--how do you address that kind of historical or, more generally, factual content in an art context?--but obviously it's particularly acute when it's objects as opposed to say a moving-image work. You see these kind of over-determined but ultimately somehow arbitrary references all the time. And it reminds me actually of the Freedom Tower, which is a huge pet peeve of mine because it's supposed to be 1776 feet tall--

GS: Yeah, it's a bicentennial thing. Yeah, in that family.

ES: It just drives me crazy. To come back to the beginning of the conversation, it's what you were saying about a disconnect between the object and the thinking that generated it. This notion that the height of this tower would be meaningful in the way that it purports to be is so absurd.

GS: I have to believe it's OK in art that objects can still be insubstantial in a way. You have an arbitrary number that corresponds to the amount of years after Christ that this country found independence, and then this other arbitrary number, which is approximately the span of an adult foot.

ES: Yeah, or the span of an adult foot like 300 years ago when people were presumably much smaller! It reminds me of the difference between carving into a block of stone or building something up from discrete objects--maybe there's some kind of analogy there. Between work that's engaging facts or discourses in a rigid way--you could say that that's sort of carving into cultural space, making it conform to a predetermined model. And maybe that's less ecological than building up from the flotsam that's already at hand. This is pretty far-fetched.

GS: So would that make Mount Rushmore the ultimate kind of . . . ?

ES: Yes! There's an Americana theme here. But maybe that is a segue into something we should touch on--the political: How do you think about the political as it relates to your work?

GS: I think that that's the principal character of it. I think that if there wasn't this kind of faith in the human being in society and the transformation of the human being in society, then what's the point? In terms of morality it's tricky to say one thing is good or another is bad in some sense or another historically. I'm more in awe at the contingency of it. There's an opportunity in all aspects of life to be present or engaged in the communication of our experiences of the world and to be able to check if we're all the same and in the same predicament. I don't know if that effects change though. It's a proposal.

ES: That sounds very Zen!

GS: I don't know that much about Zen, but there are a lot of things in it that seem very abrupt or humorous--things that are insolvable or funny and meant to break through habits.

ES: And absurd.

GS: Absurd, yeah. I was just reading this text about the form of riddle and Hericlitus had this idea that an unapparent connection is stronger than an apparent one. It helps you see convention with perspective. I think that humor does that in a really effective way. It says, I acknowledge that you expect me to end up here and with that expectation I'm going to end up there, and you're going to feel that break and have an uncontrollable response. And I think that that's useful, and political. That's exactly what power doesn't want. Socialization is the opposite of space pockets.

#### EMAIL CONVERSATION BETWEEN FERNANDA ARRUDA AND MICHAEL CLINE.

MC - Hi Fernanda, Hope all is well. Sorry it took me so long to write you. A day after our meeting, my little dog became seriously ill. After surgery and a million other dramatic turns we finally have him back home as of yesterday. The first pic is of the Wrong Gallery installation and the other is for the Boesky show. I'll follow this email with another containing two other paintings that are to be in the Boesky show. Thank you for the snack the other day. Hope to hear from you soon. Kindly, Michael

FA - Hi Michael, thanks for the email. Hope your dog is feeling better. The new painting looks great. It's different than the ones I know. It's very dense. I enjoyed meeting you the other day. We talked a lot about your work and life. I felt like we should have recorded it, and our job would have been done. I would like to start talking about the Beyoncé episode - do you actually like her? We never talked about it. Were you offended by the fact that your painting was once gifted wrapped with her images? You don't look like someone that would like her, or looking at your work I would certainly assume you don't - but again based on your work I would never imagine that you are a skater.

MC - Hello Fernanda, Hope you had a good holiday. Well, first I am not a skater. I skateboarded and surfed a lot as a kid and young adult, but I can assure you I

consider myself neither surfer nor skateboarder. It is true that after about a thirteen year hiatus I have taken up skating again. This time around though, my intent is to merely sidewalk surf, a way of making up for limited accessibility to the beach. No, I was not offended to learn one of my paintings was wrapped with photos of Beyoncé. I thought it was neat, though I am not a fan of her music. In fact, I'm not sure exactly what her music sounds like. I never listen to popular music stations, the closest I come to commercial radio is when I listen to Howard Stern. The rest of the time I listen to NPR. I enjoy the Beyoncé story because I liked hearing about the new life my work is living, a life I never imagined for it. Plus, I rarely get to meet the people who buy my work, so that was an added bonus.

And as for myself not looking like I listen to Beyoncé or my artwork reflecting activities I enjoy, I say Hmmm... This opens up something very big. I thought about how to respond to this and found myself engaged in the kind of thinking that makes you look at your hand and say "Why five fingers?"



FA - So let's talk about inspirations. How do you get your ideas, how do you come up with your characters and figures? They seem very dreamy...surreal. MC - I give myself a lot of latitude in terms of what to paint. The characters in my paintings are part of an unnamed community. The aims of this community are unclear, but it is assumed that its inhabitants strive to create an ideal society. By choice it is isolated from the greater community at large. The time it inhabits is indeterminate, it is neither past, present, nor future. Oh yes, and it is in America.

America has had many of these kind of communities. So many -ists. Theosophists, transcendentalists, harmonists... it just goes on and on. There must be something in the soil.

So anyway, using this community as a point of reference there are endless possibilities. I make paintings about work, play, indoctrination, transgression. And I think the characters look dreamy because I try to place them in a quiet frame of mind regardless of the activity. I just try to slow everything down. The characters are really mindful of the moment and are caught up in a reverie.

FA - I've never thought about your work as a narrative with a linear thought. Your notion of an indeterminate sense of time helps me see it. It's fascinating to imagine all these characters living together. I can see all the 'ists' in the paintings. Is there any wish that this society would exist? Is there any of your own existential hope?

MC - I'm content to let this community exist in my mind's eye. I am happy to internalize it all. And yet, I wish that this society might exist. I'm no didactic or manifesto scribbler, just a dreamer. And maybe I don't always dream of the right things. So then what? Flesh and blood, bricks, and mortar? I think my wishes should

remain tethered to fabric and paint.

FA - How does it relate to the project at the Wrong Gallery? Was it a study of this imaginary world? Was it an attempt to turn these allegories into a human experience? What did you have in mind?

MC - Yeah, the installation at Wrong Gallery was a kind of study, a tableau, probably the closest I've come to bricks and mortar. I felt like the space was generous and intimate and shouldn't be squandered on a straight hanging of a painting or two. So I brought things that are important to me and that I have collected over the years. Photocopies of pictures, frames, chairs, photographs, magazines, books, unrefined blocks beeswax, essays, left over bits of paper from collages, hair, a few very small paintings, etc. Again intimacy was key, but I wasn't entirely sure what would happen when everything came together. Before long I had a kind of flow chart, a mapping of this community, a peek into its infrastructure. And somehow I was implicated. It became clear to me that not only do I invent this, somehow I am this.

FA - Unrefined blocks of beeswax - that's funny...Some of your paintings have this color! Talking about video art I had the impression that you are a painter interested in painting and that it's hard for you to relate to other kinds of medias. Why is that? It seems that your show at the Wrong Gallery was a kind of art installation...

MC - You've got me! It's true, I really do love this color, it's like late afternoon sun, it's like decaying books... And yes, I'm a painter in love with paintings. But perhaps I gave you the wrong impression when we spoke, I do not have any trouble relating to or enjoying other mediums. It's just that painting and looking at painting is my primary preoccupation. It's my favorite dish. It's true, the set up at the Wrong Gallery was an art installation of sorts, actually it's the first of it's kind for me. The process of putting it together was strange. I dunno.. conceptually like painting but...

FA - I am curious to know about your art references - I can see Dürer, Ensor, Schiele...

MC - When I first saw reproductions of Schiele's work I knew I wanted to be an artist. I remember seeing a photo of a book by Jane Kallir on Schiele, which was advertised in Art in America, and being intrigued and wanting to see more...things just kind of happened from there. I think about and look at his work often. It's funny, I think Schiele is one of those artists that you are not supposed to own up to when you are past your student years.

And you're right, I think a lot about Ensor, Durer, and the Northern Renaissance, also Klimt, R.B. Kitaj, John Graham, Jess, Balthus, Bochner, Blake, Dix, Schad, Munch, Hodler, Toorop, etc...

Also, I am a collector of illustrated religious (Christian) pamphlets and books, especially for children and teens. Whether they are sweet or frightening there is an underlying feeling which I find compelling.

FA - Any contemporary references?

MC - Oh well, I guess Jess just passed away recently, but Kitaj is still alive and working, he's contemporary! Yeah, I like many of the contemporary artists who are currently championed in art magazines. I like the usual suspects.

FA - Anyone in particular you would like to meet - work together?

MC - Oh, there are more than a few artists I'd like to meet. I'd really like to meet Rita Ackermann because clearly she owns some sort of operating time machine with direct connections to the late 19th & early 20th century...also Thomas Chimes, Mamma Andersson & Jockum Nordstrom, Lucy McKenzie, Daniel Richter, Tal R, Fred Tomaselli, John Bock, Birgit Megerle, Kitaj... and of course there are others. I don't know too many artists personally, so it would be great to meet some of the artists whose work I admire.

Work together? Oh yes please, I can assure an interested party that I'm a hard worker and I'm nice...

#### DAVE MULLER TALKS TO MATTHEW HIGGS.

Dave Muller: Is this thing working?

Matthew Higgs: I think so ....

[Sound of tape recorder being switched off.]

[Sound of tape recorder being switched back on.]

Matthew Higgs: It seems to be working ... Okay, how did your Wrong Gallery project come about?

Dave Muller: I got a call from Lisa Ivorian Gray on the morning of Wednesday, April 27th, 2005 asking if I would like to do a project for the Wrong Gallery that would open the following Wednesday or Thursday (i.e. May 4th or 5th, 2005).

Matthew Higgs: That was short notice. What was your response?

Dave Muller: We initially talked about using one of my "Top Ten" drawings, and seeing if we could get one framed in New York in time. But then I went on this long walk, initially to pick up some small drawings of mine from a friend who had used them in a magazine project, and then on to Eagle Rock to eat lunch. Whilst

I was walking, I began to think about ditching the idea of using a framed drawing because the Wrong Gallery is kind of a frame in its own right (actually it is more like a vitrine). So then I was thinking of simply pinning a drawing onto the back door of the gallery. About a hundred yards later it occurred to me that I'd rather dispense with the paper all together. Cut down on the extraneous mass. I'd do my drawing directly on the back door, or at least on a door that could be hung in place of the original door. So I called Andrew Kreps on my cell phone, and Stephanie Jeanroy (from the Andrew Kreps Gallery) was kind enough to go down to the Wrong Gallery space, take the door's measurements and then email them to me. Mind you, I'm still on my walk ... I pick up my drawings out of my friend's mailbox, and head to lunch. On the way I called my Los Angeles gallery Blum & Poe and told them what I was up to. They arranged for a shipper to pick up the work the following Tuesday morning, crate it, and FedEx it to New York. I then called the Gladstone Gallery in New York and told them to expect a crate and myself, arriving separately on the following Wednesday. I asked them if they could help me hang my door in place of the original, and also hire a locksmith for Wednesday afternoon, as we would need it install the original lockset in the new door. After my shrimp burrito, I walked home, got the door measurements (roughly 84" x 36") and headed off to Home Depot. I expected buying a door right off the shelf, but quickly found out that the normal height for doors at Home Depot was only 80 inches high. Thwarted, I went to a contractor's lumber supply, called Short Lumber (I can't make things like this up), and ordered two custom doors that they told me should arrive Friday morning. I headed off to the art supply store to get gesso. When I got home I booked a flight to New York. On Friday morning I get a call from Short Lumber, the doors didn't show up on the truck from San Bernadino. Yikes! ... But they tell me that I can pay a courier to schlep the doors in his pickup for \$120. Cash. Okay, I need to get started as soon as possible. "Send him over." So I gesso up one side of a door, paint the other side with white exterior enamel and set it up for drawing. Working furiously, I finished the drawing during Monday night and the shippers picked it up on Tuesday morning.

Matthew Higgs: Can you say a little more about what the "Top Ten" drawings are?

Dave Muller: The "Top Ten" pieces are portraits, in that they are drawings of the spines of a person's ten favorite long playing records (LPs). Each drawing is as tall as the person that chooses the records. They are drawn/painted with watered-down acrylic on paper that is 7' high by 3' wide (almost exactly the size of the Wrong Gallery back door). For the Wrong Gallery show I decided that I would draw one of the "Top Tens" that had been lined up as a commission. (I'd combine some business with pleasure.) One of the promised commissions was for Larry Gagosian. Now, LG runs a tight information ship. He rarely speaks with the press. He's an enigma, even to his staff. I heard that when LG submitted his list of ten records, it was passed around throughout all of the Gagosian Galleries (New York, London, Beverly Hills). That list contained probably the most revealing information about LG that they had seen. As far as I know Wrong Gallery shows don't have labels with the work's title, date, etc. on them, so few people would actually be aware that it was in fact Larry Gagosian's "Top Ten" [the work's actual title is Larry's Top Ten (on a door)] So I liked the idea that very specific, personal information could be displayed in a public space (effectively) anonymously. And I also liked the fact that the specific information related to an art world power holder whose own space - as large as the Wrong Gallery is small - was only four streets away on 24th Street in Chelsea.



Matthew Higgs: What is your understanding of what the Wrong Gallery is trying to do?



Dave Muller: I might start with what I misunderstood about it. I thought that the Wrong Gallery was open to the public all the time, 24-7. And I loved the idea of a gallery that was effectively a glorified shop window. I remember when Barney's was in Chelsea, and I used to walk by at all hours going to and from the School of Visual Arts. I liked that you might not be able to go in to Barney's, but you could look at their windows any time of the day or night. So when I saw Andrew Kreps rolling down the security shutter over both his gallery door and the Wrong Gallery (one night when we were going out for a beer), I was a little heartbroken. To me, the Wrong Gallery is part of a lineage of occupations (by artists) of "surplus" spaces, spaces that are eventually swallowed up by more commercial concerns. For example, lofts in Soho, the East Village gallery scene, Williamsburg, now this little piece of Chelsea. These spaces are (initially at least) havens for generous transactions, it seems to me, precisely because the commercial world hasn't been able to figure out how to make money from them. Artists apply an entirely different economy in these spaces. You know, one day it's an empty doorway, and one glass-and-aluminum-door-with-vinyl-lettering later it's an art gallery. I admire the autonomy of such a project. Very few strings attached. Anything can happen. In a 1998 interview between myself and Hans-Ulrich Obrist I said, "I want to work in an organic manner, to maintain a direct relation between the desire to hold an exhibition and the exhibition itself. I've always entertained the notion that a concept could be proposed for Three Day Weekend and the show could open the next week. "Kinda prophetic, don't you think? Just substitute Wrong Gallery for Three Day Weekend. Matthew Higgs: As an artist who has organized a lot of shows (under your Three Day Weekend banner), do you see any parallels with the artist Maurizio Cattelan's involvement with the Wrong Gallery... where the curatorial activity becomes an extension of your own work (or, in the case of Wrong, Maurizio's work)?

Dave Muller: I can't speak for Maurizio (or Ali, or Massimiliano for that matter), but I think people create things and situations as models for things that they would like to see in the world. I know that Three Day Weekend exists mostly because I would like a first-hand view of what artists that I like and/or admire would do in various specific circumstances. I just want to see what other creative people do. With Three Day Weekend I'm trying to set up games that I would like to play, and then see if others might like to participate. So when I first saw the Wrong Gallery, I immediately saw it as a game that I might like to play, some day. I will also say that Maurizio and I both seem to be interested in what other artists do. And our approach, relating to a lack of boundaries between practices, seems sympathetic, at least.

Matthew Higgs: Of all the Wrong Gallery projects you have seen (in person) which left a lasting impression?

Dave Muller: The Paul McCarthy / Jason Rhodes Christmas display. It was the first Wrong Gallery project I saw, and it really left a lasting impression. The (closet-sized) gallery as a container. When I was invited to make a project, I knew that the "filled" gallery option had already been done so well (by Paul and Jason) that I better go for something that was (seemingly) mass-less.

Matthew Higgs: Of the Wrong Gallery projects you didn't see - but heard about or read about - which did you like the sound of?

Dave Muller: Being based in Los Angeles, I just don't get to see enough of the Wrong Gallery shows in person. I think that the Wrong Gallery is especially useful to the people who walk by every day. So I think that my relationship, based more on hearsay, is very different. Stories figure in a lot ... so I liked the idea of Andreas Slominski's project, where I think he had the Wrong Gallery's door FedEx-ed to Germany where it was used it as a table to serve a dinner on. I didn't learn about that project until I was taking the original door down for my own project. I wish that he could have eaten dinner on top of my drawing. I also really liked the sound of Jamie Isestein's "Will Return At ..." sign. Lawrence Weiner... I just adore Lawrence Weiner: he could do just about anything and I'd be happy. And Pawel Althamer's project: I really love busted stuff.

Appendix

Larry's Top Ten

Miles Davis - Sketches of Spain

Charles Ives - Complete String Quartets

John Coltrane - A Love Supreme

Mozart - 40th Symphony

Bob Dylan - The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan

Jimi Hendrix - Electric Ladyland

Glenn Gould - Goldberg Variations

Van Morrison - Astral Weeks

Frank Sinatra - Come Fly With Me

Scissor Sisters - Scissor Sisters

Dave's Top Ten (Week of 9/5/04)

Sun Ra and His Arkestra - The Other Side of the Sun

Leon Thomas - Gold Sunrise on Magic Mountain

Captain Beefheart and His Magic Band - Shiny Beast

(Bat Chain Puller)

The Beatles - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

The Flying Pickets - Only You

Archie Shepp - Coral Rock

Wire - Pink Flag

Celia Cruz/Tito Puente - Quimbo Quimbumbia

Creation Rebel - Starship Africa

The Rolling Stones - Goats Head Soup

Matthew's Top Ten ('79 - '83)

The Pop Group - For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder

The Slits - Cut

Basement 5 - In Dub

Arthur Russell - Let's Go Swimming

ESG - Come Away

Public Image Limited - Memories

Dennis Bovell - Brain Damage

Lizzy Mercer Descloux - Press Color

Linton Kwesi Johnson - Forces of Victory

The Fall - Early Years 77-79

#### HARRELL FLETCHER AND JIM DRAIN IN CONVERSATION

JD: --- Harrell

why are people apathetic?



HF: Jim, I wish I knew. I guess it's just our human nature or culture or something, it seems to be pretty deep. Actually, I try to not believe in the idea of "human nature." Maybe there is something to it, but I feel like it's better not to think in those terms. I like to think that there is very little essential self, that our character comes from learned experience. As for apathy in US political terms it probably has something to do with people's general disconnect from non-suburban, TV style reality. We are socialized to believe that things are all okay, and are kept at a distance from the things that aren't okay. People are affected by things that have personal impact on their own lives. So if someone close to us suffers or is killed we feel bad, but if someone suffers who is not directly connected to us we don't really register it. If our pet dies we feel terrible. If millions of cows or chickens are killed to supply fast food restaurants with meat we don't seem to care at all, at least most of us. In the same way we don't really react as thousands of innocent Iraq citizens are killed and injured because of our government.

JD:--- Harrell

who are the powerless?

HF: Ultimately, I think everyone has power, it's a matter of realizing and applying it. Of course there are many situations where if you apply your power you will get punished or killed for it, but that's an option that people have always taken who feel like it is important to attempt to change things that they think are wrong. When I was in Vietnam a few weeks ago, I went to this War Memorial Museum and besides the documentation of horrible atrocities, there were also photographs of people in the US during the war destroying draft cards, people all over the world protesting, and even people in both Vietnam and the US (sometimes very average looking US citizens, not hippies or anything like that) who chose self-immolation in an attempt to express their opposition to the war.

I think in general in the US, the Gov. and big corporations want people to be as powerless as possible so that they do not disrupt the existing power structure--making rich people richer at any cost. To achieve that effect the majority of the population are kept under-educated, uninformed, overly entertained, disenfranchised. A good book to read on the subject is Savage Inequalities by Jonathan Kozol. It's all about the disparities between rich and poor public school districts in the US. Pretty

shocking stuff.

JD:--- harrell

To go back to your first answer about people's apathy, you said that human nature is divided into an "essential self" and a "socialized, learned self."

How do you separate the two?



HF: Well, I think there is a popular idea that we as people have what you could call an "essential self," something like a spirit that we are born with and that does not change. With that in mind you can say about a criminal that he was just born to be a bad person, so he should be put in prison with the other people who were born bad and kept away from the people who were born good. In this country the conclusion from that equation would be that most people that are born bad are non-white, because the majority of people who become incarcerated are not white. You could also conclude that there is no reason to provide adequate education, social services, health care, recreation, etc to those essentially bad people, because they are just born that way and nothing is going to stop them from being bad.

Another take on that situation, the one that I agree with, is that people are born with some essential things, the way that a soup can start off with hot water. But then different things are added to or

left out of the soup which makes it unique. You can think of living people as this soup base that is being added to everyday with each new experience. Sometimes you might realize that too much salt was added to the mix, at that point you can choose to ignore it and hope that the balance gets restored, you can add more water, you can add sugar, all of these decisions make the soup whatever it is at a given moment. I think people are the same way, whatever is added--education, love, hate, trauma, positive or negative experiences, exercise, good or bad food all of these things determine who we are. So I would say that we contain very little "essential self" and are instead very much "socially constructed." Still of course people have individual qualities that might be derived from something more essential that they were born with. For instance I'm a shy person, and I was probably born that way. But because I feel like sometimes there are situations that require me to get past my shyness I have developed, or constructed an ability to engage in social dynamics that really go against what I feel like is my "nature." If you follow this reasoning then no one is stuck being good or bad, or shy or anything else. The crucial thing then is who is determining how people are being constructed. My sense is that we are mostly being constructed by TV and related media which is controlled by large corporations and the Gov. which wants to perpetuate and maintain the existing situation--rich people getting richer.

JD:--- harrell

To take this in a different direction, do you feel you ever had a "mystical experience?"

HF: Totally, I have them all the time. I especially had lots of them when I was a kid, then it seemed like mystical experiences were almost constantly happening. I guess I'm defining "mystical experiences" as unexplainable, non-tangible occurrences that seem to have some kind of

significance or meaning, and leave me feeling in some ways happy or in awe. These are moments that seem to fall out of what is normally defined as reality. I encounter them when I'm going for walks and just start to trip out on trees and grass and the sky, also while eating sometimes, swimming in rivers and oceans, gardening, meditating, listening to music sometimes, often while napping, sometimes night time sleeping too. I'm pretty open to that sort of thing, but somehow when I was a kid my whole world seemed mystical, everything was always opening up to completely unexplainable feel-

ings and situations. I even had several encounters with what I thought of at the time as ghosts.

JD: I have two more questions. You seem to conclude that much of the world's suffering is due to the desire by the rich "to get richer." Are there any positive aspects to wealth, to being rich? Lastly, are there things you do to prevent yourself from being negatively "socialized?"

HF: I think there are positive aspects to having enough money to live comfortably, but I think everyone should be able to do that. It's all about wealth distribution. The capitalist system that we in the west use and that is quickly spreading to the rest of the world encourages vast disparities in wealth. A few people get all most everything and the masses get almost nothing, then there is a middle class who are largely unwilling to do much about the ones with nothing because of the hope that someday they (the middle class people) will be part of the small minority who have it all at the cost of the masses who get nothing. It's the same way the art world works. But anyway, as long as we are operating within the system then yeah, certainly there are good things about having wealth. If you have money and decide to share it then all kinds of great things can happen. I just got a fairly sizable grant and I decided to give a pretty big portion of it away to other artists who are at the beginning of their careers. I'm always encountering an "all or nothing" attitude about how things should work and I think it comes from living within a capitalist world. It would be nice if everyone tried to share a little more, in both the art world and the real world. I don't think I'm any kind of model for how things should be, I include myself in my criticism, I'm a part of the system and for the most part I'm just going along with it all.

As for avoiding negative socialization I think the best way is to stop watching TV. That's the giant pacifier of the people. It is so effective at getting people to think and look and act the same way. I

watched a lot of TV when I was a kid and I know that it was wreaking havoc on me then. Life has been much better without it. Of course there are probably some good things to see on TV, but I think the majority is really about getting people to conform and consume, and should be avoided. The more active thing to do is expose yourself to new and different ideas and experiences. I highly recommend reading some of John Holt's books, Escape From Childhood is especially interesting.

It's all about how children are left out of civic life and responsibilities and the effects that has on them. But once again I don't think I've done an especially great job at avoiding socialization

myself, I'm fully socialized, I'm just slowly trying to break out of it in whatever ways I can.

Photo by Adam Reich

#### LAURA OWENS INTERVIEWED BY ELYSIA BOROWY-REEDER

Hey- Laura completed the interview questions and I am sending off to you. Let me know if you need anything else. Best, Elysia Borowy-Reeder, General Store of Milwaukee EBR Scott and I really don't know too much about babies. When I went to buy you a baby gift I realized I was way out of my league and needed guidance- right now we're at the level where we're just responsible for a few house plants - not even at the level to handle caring for a dog or cat yet. Do you think becoming a mother will change the way you work?

LO I would be a pretty crappy mother and artist if it didn't change my approach to making art, ideas and all around way of being in the world. In the past I have been really open to friends, family, travel and other experiences influencing the way I work, so hopefully I am already a pretty flexible person.

EBR Recently General Store has been working on a show called "The Early Show" at White Columns and its all work made by artists while they were in early college years, high school or before. Can you think of anything from that time period that really had an impact on what you do now? (art or anything else) what kind of work were you making then?

LO I think the most profound thing was just the decision to become an artist at an early age. I had a clear idea that this was the only thing I wanted to do. I don't know if one event or circumstance precipitated this, it is more likely it was the entire environment and my natural attraction to art.

EBR What'd you do for fun in high school?

LO High school and fun are not words that go together for me. I mostly tried to get out of my town. Drive to Cleveland or Elyria and go see bands or go to clubs. I also made a lot of art, but that was more an act of resistance than fun.

EBR Any funny stories?

LO No. The most fun I had was being somewhat destructive or sleeping on the beach in Huron.

EBR boyfriends?

LO No.

EBR Nicknames?

LO No.

EBR How much time did you honestly spend at Cedar Point? (we all went there about once a year and on “Senior Skip Day”)

LO I had a season pass at least one year, I spent quite a bit of time there only because it was a meeting place for people from different schools who were of like minds. We didn’t really ride rides as much as sit on the sidewalk and try to engage other teenage tourists from out of town, either negatively or positively.

EBR What are your thoughts more generally about school, or more specifically art school. How do you think your time at RISD and Cal Arts affected your work?

LO I think they had a profound influence on my development as an artist. At RISD I received this amazing introduction into the craft and technique of drawing, painting and sculpture. Figure drawing and many classical techniques were emphasized Also I was transported to the early days of modernism, as some of the classes were basically introductions into modernist space in painting. There was no room for a students own creative vision or ideas, a drawing either did exhibit flattened modernist space or it did not and there were rules to follow. Also all the art history classes were amazing and I took a class at Brown with Kermit Champa where it felt as if he was channeling Clement Greenburg... I don’t know where an art student could be here this sort of thing now. I really loved that aspect of it but at some point I realized most of what I was hearing was in some sort of time warp. I also realized I wasn’t at all being encouraged to think or create for myself. So as I was graduating a really wonderful visiting artist named Nancy Chunn told me to apply to Calarts. I had never heard of Calarts but it seemed as though it would be the opposite of RISD. Once I arrived I was immediately treated as a peer and an artist, which was shocking. I also felt a real sense of competition from the other students as everyone there were such great artists and complete freaks about making the most ambitious projects. It was a really hard school to go to but I learned so much in such a short amount of time, about art, myself etc. And it was great to get out of the time warp that was happening at RISD and talk to artists who were making work and showing and having an influence on the contemporary art world. After feeling beaten down a bit at the beginning I came out of Calarts with real self confidence that I had figured something out on my own and could exist among all my highly qualified peers.

EBR All your work is untitled- was it always that way? Can you remember any early titles?

LO I only remember that they were really bad, probably from high school or college.

EBR How do you feel about an art world filled with so many painters right now?

LO I feel totally out of touch and haven’t noticed the swing towards painting. My students and friends are a big mix of different types of artists.

EBR How about old ones?

LO I like a lot of painters, unfortunately they are all either students or friends of mine so it seems rather biased to mention them.

EBR What about good painting music?

LO I can’t really paint with music on. Sometimes if I have already figured everything out, but it is not the norm.

EBR Your work relies so much on the original context it was made for, what was it like to see all of it thrown together for your recent retrospective show?

LO I don’t think it does rely on the original context. Sometimes the context influences the work, like I tried to explain in your first question, however I never feel like there is a determined meaning that ties a work to a specific space.

In the big show, I tried to bring paintings together that made sense in some way. I found the new combinations to be interesting and add something to the works.

EBR Did it change a lot from location to location?

LO yes it did quite a bit.

EBR You’ve done a few collaborative projects over the years, how do you see that informing your overall project?

LO I find it really challenging to compromise my own vision for some other artists half-assed ideas.. just kidding, sort of. I am sure this is the way most people feel but ultimately it is a great thing to have to suppress your own habits and ego for a period of time and do something in a totally different way. I think it always changes the way I work in either subtle or overt ways and I always find it to be really liberating afterwards when I go back into my own studio, like I have a whole new way of approaching the work.

EBR Nature is a recurring theme in your work- do you think you spend more time observing nature directly or how nature is represented in other art?

LO Probably both quite a bit. Some general questions about your likes and dislikes, etc.:

EBR Have you ever walked out of a movie theater because the movie was so bad? What movie(s)?

LO Beverly Hills Cop 3

EBR What’s your favorite food?

LO Breakfast.

EBR What’s your least favorite food?

LO Right now the smell of coffee makes me sort of ill, but that’s because I am pregnant.

EBR Who’s your favorite Beatle?

LO Morrissey

EBR Who’s your favorite muppet?

EBR Who’s your favorite President?

LO George Washington

EBR What’s your sign?

LO I am a Virgo.

EBR Do you wear perfume? If so what do you wear?

LO No

EBR If you were an animal what animal would you be?

LO I would hope to be a Polar bear or a shark , predators of man. Unfortunately in the Prufrock reality I am probably more of a squirrel, gathering, hoarding and nervous.

EBR Where do you like to shop?

LO Totally hate shopping.

EBR If you weren’t an artist what would you be?

LO Sad and lonely.

EBR Give us a list of your top 3:

books,

too hard

flowers,

I really like all the salvias

bands,

too hard

trees,

I wish I lived near an Oak tree.

Also very envious of those with avocado trees.

Olive trees are very beautiful and always remind me of Jesus.

vegetables,

buildings,

natural wonders,

I like the planets. Pictures of Jupiter Mars and Saturn have been fantastic.

musical instruments

EBR What is next for you? You mentioned in a past interview that you were creating some large scale weaving with an Atelier in Guadalajara, are there other subjects or mediums that you want to try out? Ceramics?

LO Yes that sounds great, ceramics. I hope to make more tapestries and embroideries also. I have plans to make books and do printmaking projects.

I have tentative plans to do some shows in Europe next year... we’ll see how it all goes.

*DELIA GONZALEZ + GAVIN R. RUSSOM INTERVIEWED BY CARLO ANTONELLI*

CA: I would like to concentrate on a song: “El Monte”. What the fuck does it mean?

GAD: El Monte is the title of a book by Lydia Cabrera. It is a document of the orally transmitted folklore of the African inhabitants of Cuba about the persistence of their religious beliefs and practices in the new world. El Monte is the place where these people can go to find everything they need for their magic, herbs for healing, elements for protection or self-defense from outside powers, food... It is a spiritually charged place in which everything has its owner in the spirit world, every leaf, every twig, every tree has a purpose and a meaning. The African people of Cuba humanized all of the parts of their environment, thus El Monte must be respected and treated as a living being or it will get mad.

CA: Are they references in the song to some directors? Monte Hellman? Alexandro Jodorowski?

GAD: Although there is not a direct reference in the song, the films of Alexandro Jodorowsky have been a big influence on our creative work. Particularly in the way that he creates a synthesis from mythology, ritual, traditional religions, and magic which exists and functions in the contemporary world in his films. Also in his attention to detail in that every image, piece of dialogue, camera movement etc. is imbued with a specific significance and meaning.

CA: Is this cinematic or visual music per se? Is this something that it has been written thinking in visual terms? If so, what were the visual images you had in mind?

GAD: The music is expressive. In a way it is an analog to experience, and an attempt to express aspects of experience that can’t be captured in words. For that reason it has the quality of a soundtrack, not of a specific narrative, but of an aspect of experience. So when listening and playing this music, visual imagery naturally arises. We don’t make a huge effort to control the music. The equipment we use (mostly analog synthesizers, some home built) is quite unpredictable and things can sound quite different based on small variations in the kind of speakers, or size of the room we’re playing in. The music comes from intuition and inspiration, and we are interacting with each other and with the instruments we are using, so the result is, in a way, beyond us. We

are also making visual art, and we think of all of this creative work as part of the same ongoing project, so much of the visual imagery arises from the music and vice versa.

CA: How do you elaborate difference from repetition? GAD: Repetition is used to achieve a state of being, a common device in all ecstatic music to recreate an atemporal moment. From this state differences arise as ones experience progresses expansively into the space created.

CA: Are you thinking sex while making music? Are you thinking music while you are having sex?

GAD: It doesn’t seem that thinking is something one does a lot of in either situation. The quality of both experiences is their ability to create a state which is beyond thought.



CA: Why the sound is so old-fashioned? Why new music is always old in our times? With regards to “El Monte”, is there a specific nostalgia for the Non-Robin Crutchfield era of the early 80’s?

GAD: It occurs to us that concepts like “old fashioned” are relatively new and false distinctions created for the purpose of advertising. It’s quite unnatural for things to be changing as fast as they have over the past 100 years or so. The reason that deer stare transfixed into the headlights of a car that is moving towards them about to hit and kill them is because it was not possible for them to evolve fast enough to physically understand that something can be that big and move that fast. Perhaps the reason that the relentless pursuit of the new that characterized musical production in the period from 1950-1990 has become more reflective over the past 15 years is due to a desire to actually process and deal with the vast amount of things that have happened over that time.

CA: Do you agree with some thinkers and musicians (like Brian Eno, for example) when they are saying that music is less important than other (artistic, technological) expressions in our present lives, that music is not interesting anymore in communication terms?

GAD: Yes and No. It is certainly difficult to find new music that is interesting or challenging. In the music world there is a lack of any kind of forum for presentation between the mass production of pop music in all its forms and the distant confines of academic music. There is more opportunity for a free and meaningful exchange of ideas in the Art world because Art has never been commodified to the extent that music has. Regardless of the commercial implications of the gallery system there is still a value placed on the innovative communication of ideas relating to understanding the conditions of contemporary existence.



*WRONG GALLERY EXHIBITIONS*  
*MARCH 2004 - JUNE 2005*

*MARK HANDFORTH*  
*Parking Meter (candles)*, 2004  
Parking meter and candles  
Variable dimensions  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*Fire Hydrant (candles)*, 2004  
Fire hydrant and candles  
Variable dimensions  
Courtesy the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise  
March 10 - April 3, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*MICHAEL WILKINSON*  
*Sewing Chimp*, 2003  
Poster, etched mirror  
102 x 71 x 3 cm/40.2 x 28 x 1.2 in.; 1 of 2  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*The Entertainer*, 2004  
Poster, etched mirror  
98 x 67 x 3 cm/38.6 x 26.4 x 1.2 in.; 1 of 3  
Courtesy the artist and The Modern Institute, Glasgow  
April 9 - May 21, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*PIOTR JANAS*  
*Untitled*, 2004  
Oil on canvas  
190 x 70 cm/75 x 27.5 in.  
Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation,  
Warsaw  
May 29 - June 23, 2004  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*TOMMY WHITE*  
*Untitled*, 2004  
Graphite, charcoal, crayon, acrylic, oil and paper on  
paper  
200 x 76 cm/79 x 30 in.  
Courtesy the artist  
May 29 - June 23, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*CAROL "RIOT" KANE*  
*It's All Wrong: Celestial is Dead*, 2004  
Mixed media  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy the artist  
June 26 - July 23, 2004  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*JUSTIN LOWE*  
*Waterfall*, 2004  
Plexiglas, water, wood, electric light, pond liner  
116.8 x 56 x 183 cm/46 x 22 x 72 in.  
Courtesy the artist  
June 26 - July 23, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*DARA FRIEDMAN*  
*Vertical Smile*, 2004  
Adhesive-backed vinyl; mirrored Plexiglas  
81 x 216 cm/32 x 85 in.  
Courtesy the artist  
September 9 - October 6, 2004  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*THE LANDLORD'S SHOW*  
Two color photographs by Ali Yaghoubi  
September 9 - October 6, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

“TRAILER”  
An exhibition featuring works by Philippe Parreno,  
Charles Avery, The Wrong Gallery, Jens Hoffmann &  
Claire Fitzsimmons, Charles De Meaux, Martin Sastre,  
Liam Gillick & Sean Dack, Makoto Aida, Mathieu  
Copeland, Norbert Schoerner, Alan Michael, Milena  
Dragicevic, Gail Pickering, Olivia Plender, Nathan-  
iel Mellors, Roger Hiorns, Keith Wilson, Erik Van  
Lieshout, Doug Fishbone, Carey Young  
September 11 - October 10, 2004  
Man in the Holocene, London

*TRISHA DONNELLY*  
*Untitled (cannon)*, 2004  
Audio recording, stereo system  
Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan 10-6  
October 7 - November 5, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*ADAM MCEWEN*  
*Untitled (Closed)*, 2002 - 2003  
Flashe on paper  
20.32 x 28 cm/8 x 11 in.  
Courtesy the artist  
October 7 - November 5, 2004  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*NORITOSHI HIRAKAWA*  
*The Home-Coming of Navel String*, 1998  
Live performance daily at the Frieze Art Fair. London  
October 14 - 18, 2004  
Courtesy the artist  
Sponsored by RS&A Ltd., London  
Special thanks Jeffrey Deitch

*SHIRANA SHAHBAZI*  
*Untitled*, 2004  
C-print mounted on aluminum  
81 x 216 cm/33 x 86 in.  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*Untitled*, 2004  
15 framed color photographs  
10.15 x 15.24 cm/4 x 6 in. each  
Courtesy the artist and Salon 94  
November 6 - December 5, 2004  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*ANDREAS SLOMINSKI*  
The Wrong Gallery door (from 516A1/2) was shipped  
to Hamburg, Germany for a week where it stayed for a  
dinner party and then it was shipped back to New York.  
Courtesy the artist and Produzentengalerie, Hamburg  
November 23 - December 14, 2004  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*ON KAWARA*  
*Reading One Million Years (Past and Future)*, 1993  
- ongoing  
Audio recordings  
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York  
December 14, 2004 - January 15, 2005  
516 A1/2 & 520A1/2 W. 20th St.

“WE DISAGREE”  
An exhibition featuring works by Peter Peri, Florian  
Pumhösl, Dieter Roth, Robert Kusmirowski, Christian  
Frosi, Jamie Isenstein, Silke Otto-Knapp, Jonathan  
Monk, Martin Boyce, Hayley Tompkins, Simon Evans,  
Roman Signer, Michael Sailstorfer, Evan Holloway,  
Monika Sosnowska, James Yamada  
Andrew Kreps Gallery  
516 W. 20th St.  
January 29 - February 26, 2005

*JAMIE ISENSTEIN*  
*Will Return*, 2005  
“Will Return” sign with working clock set 15 minutes  
ahead  
22 x 30.5 x 2.5 cm/9 x 12 x 1 in.  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*Inside Out Winter Hat Dance*, 2005  
408.2 kg/900 lbs of ice, top hat  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York  
January 29 - February 26, 2005  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.  
(Part of the exhibition “We Disagree” at Andrew  
Kreps)

*ROBERTO CUOGHI*  
*Untitled*, 2004  
Special print  
Courtesy the artist and Massimo De Carlo, Milano &  
Maccarone Inc., New York  
56 x 52 x 4 cm/22 x 20.4 x 1.5 in.  
March 7 – March 30, 2005  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*MICHAEL ELMGREEN & INGAR DRAGSET*  
*Forgotten Baby*, 2005  
Site-specific installation  
Dimensions variable  
Wax figure, baby clothes, carry-bed  
76.2 x 50.8 x 50.8 cm/30 x 20 x 20 in.  
Courtesy the Artists and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery,  
New York  
March 12 - March 22, 2005  
Parked in front of 516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*GEDI SIBONY*  
*No Title*, 2005  
Carpet, spray paint.  
228.6 x 96.52 x 43.18 cm/90 x 38 x 17 in.  
Courtesy the artist and Canada, New York  
April 1 - April 30, 2005  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*PETER COFFIN*  
*Untitled (Absinthe Drinker)*, 2005  
Mixed media  
216 x 114 cm/85 x 45 in.  
Courtesy the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York  
April 1 - April 30, 2005  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*MICHAEL CLINE*  
*Michael's Box*, 2005  
Dimensions Variable  
Mixed media  
Courtesy the artist and Daniel Reich Gallery, New York  
May 6 - May 19, 2005  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*DAVE MULLER*  
*Larry's Top Ten (on a door)*, 2005  
Acrylic on gessoed and enameled door  
210.8 x 89.53 x 4.45 cm/83 x 35.25 x 1.75 in.  
Courtesy the artist, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles &  
Gladstone Gallery, New York  
May 6 - May 19, 2005  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

*HARRELL FLETCHER*  
*With Our Little Hands: Reports From The Pacific*  
*North West*, 2005  
Painting on paper by Dana Dart-McLean, decorations,  
paint, tape by Kenneth Mroczek  
Dimensions variable  
516A1/2 W. 20th St.

*Sasquatch*, 2005  
Recreation of Sasquatch chainsaw tree sculpture  
by Harrell Fletcher and Kenneth Mroczek  
Cardboard, wood, Styrofoam, paint, tape, marker  
213.4 x 60.96 x 76.2 cm/7 x 2 x 2.5 ft.  
Produced in collaboration with Kenneth Mroczek  
Courtesy the artist and Christine Burgin Gallery,  
New York  
May 20 – July 8, 2005  
520A1/2 W. 20th St.

“YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE”  
Details to be confirmed.  
Man in the Holocene, London  
September 24 - October 10, 2005

“THE SHOW THAT NEVER HAPPENED”  
Delia Gonzalez + Gavin R. Russom  
*Goodness Had Nothing to Do With It*, n.d.  
Site specific installation  
Variable dimensions  
Courtesy Delia Gonzalez + Gavin R. Russom

*ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

The Wrong Gallery, opened in October 2002, was the  
smallest exhibition space in New York. Located at  
516A1/2 W. 20th Street in Chelsea, New York's largest  
gallery district, The Wrong Gallery was nothing but a  
glass door with roughly two-and-a-half square feet of  
exhibition space behind it. The second Wrong Gallery,  
just a few steps west of the original space at 520A1/2 W.  
20th St., opened in January 2003. The Wrong Gallery  
was evicted from both W. 20th St. spaces in July 2005  
when the entire building was sold and will re-locate  
to the Tate Modern in London in January 2006. A no  
profit, no budget initiative, The Wrong Gallery was  
created by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni, and  
Ali Subotnick. The Wrong Gallery is a do-it-yourself  
structure, which reinvents itself for every project. The  
Wrong Gallery doesn't play any role in the market: The  
Wrong Gallery does not buy or sell; The Wrong Gal-  
lery does not represent any artist. Operating like a mini-  
Kunsthalle or a small museum, some say The Wrong  
Gallery is the back door to contemporary art—and it's  
always locked. In 2005, Lisa Ivorian Gray and Flavio  
Del Monte joined the Wrong team and generously  
collaborated on preparing exhibitions and this newspa-  
per—without them we are nothing.  
Thanks again to Jeffrey Deitch who ingeniously named  
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**ROBERTO CUOGHI**

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