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SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
Skowhegan, Maine

Lecture by PETER CAMPUS
August 3, 2012

Transcriber: Judith Stoodley

(Transcriber's Note: The word "VIDEO," followed by a time designation, is applied to those interludes where the presence of audio clearly indicates that there is video running. For those pauses where no such audio occurs, the word is followed by a question mark. It is possible that these breaks in the lecture were filled with still images or simply just extended pauses.)

Transcript of lecture: Peter Campus

Skowhegan, 2012

Transcriber: Judith Stoodley

Introductory remarks (Craig Drennen, Dean): Now, what we have here tonight is the tenth and last of the Skowhegan 2012 Barbara Lee Lecture Series. And we're finishing in the right way. We have Mr. Peter Campus, who's going to be introduced by our own resident faculty, Virgil Marti. And I'm going to turn it over to Virgil right now.

VM: It's an honor to introduce Peter Campus. In a career now spanning some four decades, Campus's accomplishments in exhibition history are too lengthy to detail, but I will attempt to hit some of the highlights. He has been the recipient of a John Simon

Guggenheim fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. From 1976-79 he held a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT. In addition to many solo exhibitions at the Paula Cooper Gallery, in 2007 the RISD Museum presented *Divide*; in 2009 the British Film Institute in London mounted *Optics*, a major retrospective of his work; and recently, in 2010, {unintelligible}—Boy, if I can get this word out!—*Anamnesis* and *Inflections*, the Power Plant at Toronto. And in October of this year he will have a solo show at Bryce Wolkowitz in New York. Selected group exhibitions include the Venice Biennale in 1978; Documenta 6 in 1977; in 1982 *postMINIMALism* at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art; and the Whitney Biennial, not once but three times: in 1973, '93, and 2002; 1989, *Image World: Art and Media Culture* at the Whitney Museum; *Performing Objects* at the ICA Boston; the 1995 Biennale de Lyon… in 1997 15th Worldwide Video Festival at the Staatliche Museum in Amsterdam; 2006, *First Generation: Art and [the] Moving Image, [1963-1986]* at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid; and in 2010, *The Talent Show* at the Walker Art Center. His work is included in major museum collections around the world, including MOMA, the Met, the Whitney, the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, the Walker Art Center, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, and the Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart in Berlin. Peter Campus attended Ohio State University, where he studied experimental psychology, and The City College Film Institute. In 1970 he purchased his first video equipment. Work such as *Three Transitions* from 1973 continue to have a profound influence over artists working in the medium. In 1979, following this period of work in single channel and closed circuit pieces, Campus's

investigatory spirit led to a shift which continued through the 1980's, when he stopped working with video and took up traditional still photography, followed by digital and computer imaging. But Campus did not stop there. In 1995 he began to work with video once again. He explained this path very succinctly—and I quote: "The most important thing for me is to find myself in my work, in the context of the present," which he continues to do. So here we are, in the present, at Skowhegan 2012, and here is Peter Campus.

PC: So… thank you very much, and… I'm tempted to say, "Are there any questions?" 'Cause I can't do much after that introduction. I want to say something, because this is a little bit different, what I'm doing today. I'm used to, in these situations, showing my work and talking about it; but when I was asked, I felt that there was something that I wanted to say to this group of people that comes from my experience not just as an artist, but as [an] art teacher, and for the past few years as a gallerist [at a] small gallery at NYU. And I've thought a lot about the art world and our participation in the art world, and I just wanted to—I wrote something over a month or two, and I wanted to read it at the same time that I show you my work. So there are two threads to this presentation that are intertwining. The bad thing is I'm not a good reader; and even if they're my own words, I stumble over them and feel insecure about them. So… please forgive me for being a poor reader. But the words are heartfelt and [I] hope you—I convey their meaning. So I'm going to start. (Begins reading) "The most obvious benefit of art-making is in the activity. In good times and bad it's what's there at the roots. It's why we do it, why we suffer through it all. Whatever we tell ourselves, the outside approval

means very little. We have the sense of accomplishment and the evolution of our thoughts, feeling, and understanding.

VIDEO (S) (6:29-9:58)

I realize that the art school mythology is that if our students study well, pay attention to our teachings, and ponder them for years after, they will begin to evolve, and as they age as artists continue to evolve until some grand moment of art-making perfection. I've never been able to buy into this. Some student work I see in school is better than the work I see in museums.

VIDEO (10:30-10:56)

In science it's not unusual for young people to have the profound ideas. I don't think it's their capacity for hard work; I think it might be the rapidity of their thought processes, and they are not weighed down by rhetorical teaching.

VIDEO? (no audio)

(Speaking over video?) I want to note that the organization of this talk is not one of logical progression. There is no timeline here. I am making no references to dates or places specifically. Obviously some of the works of art have longer reaches in time than others, but in the present they are all equidistant. I am in the here and now, and all history is in front of me like the enormous keyboard of a church organ, or the controls surrounding a jet pilot. When I was young, and the moment for me to choose between art and science was before me, I chose art because it gave me the opportunity to use more of my brain power than the didactic logic of science would allow. I found science limiting and art exciting, particularly as a place to explore and present ideas. I found it discouraging that in science it would take some years to make research, take data, and

come to some conclusion. Predictably and ironically, I found myself using the same model in art-making, proposing a course of study for myself, and pursuing it over a finite period of time. I have come to believe that there are periods of good work in an artist's life, and periods of searching and exploring. An artist must feel free to have periods of trying new things, looking for new ideas. It's important to keep one's work interesting to oneself, even if it means work that is not good, even if it means making work that's hard to sell. After an artist completes the work, she starts the uncomfortable phase of export, the displacement and presentation of the work. Our deepest wish is that someone will get it, understand our intentions. I am most emphatically, not now, or have ever been, a postmodernist. I am not seeking a communication of ideas. No, art is better than that. It offers more. It gives forth a matrix, a combination of things. Ananda Coomaraswamy, in The Transformation of Nature in Art talks about the balance of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual in a work of art. We hope to admit that matrix {unintelligible} gestalt.

VIDEO (14:47-16:36)

The main facing artists, as I see it, has been the chore we face in negotiating the increasing amount of commercial interests that permeate our professional lives. Unfortunately our society understands art mostly through its monetary worth. It is not just in the secondary market, where a Van Gogh sold for forty million dollars, but on a personal level, where one has to think, "How much is my work worth in today's art market?" Never mind that the same Van Gogh painting was worthless in his lifetime. These days the merit of a work of art is judged for its current value in dollars.

Conversely, it's conceivable that a work which sells for six million dollars now could be worthless in future markets.

VIDEO?

The art world presented to artists is one of competition, so many people competing for their fame and their fortune. This suits commercial interests very well. An art dealer can say that the artist she represents is a star, and so is worth the price she is asking. But the question is: Does this system benefit the community of artists? I like to overstate that it takes one hundred artists to make a great work: the most idea-advanced artists to find new areas of interest; the ones who digest the ideas and perfect them; and the ones who make it all palatable and familiar to society. They are the ones who get famous. My friend Michael Tetherow used to say that we need the famous guys so that we can work in peace. At the end of his life he painted out in the open at the east end of Long Island, making paintings that related to nature in the most direct way. I doubt that many people ever get to see his paintings, sad to say; but I and others feel the weight of his work, their intensity, and their beauty. And his work influences us, affects us, changes what we do in some inexplicable way. Happily there are many art galleries for a wide range of artists to show in. There are more available places to show than there would be if there was [sic] no commercial spaces. However, the art gallery has a financial need. They need to show work that they can sell, at least some of the time. I wonder if this balance of artists who sell and artists who don't in [an] art gallery is changing, as times get more dire. That would be too bad, because the most interesting art isn't always easy to sell, and might get eliminated for that reason.

VIDEO (20:25-22:02)

Artists tend to look at a lot of art, and not just in the major art centers. It's our way of seeing and learning from each other's work. It might even be easier to see a work in a small East-side gallery than a large museum. This other space might seem like one's own studio, with cement floors and funky walls. I might be able to see what he's getting at with his art more easily, get what he's thinking about.

VIDEO (22:33-23:07)

In the Sidney Janis Gallery I saw a group of Mondrians. It was the first time I had seen the actual paintings, not their likenesses reproduced in art books. I saw the way the paintings were painted. Seeing changed them from being static abstract works to living things filled with movement.

VIDEO (23:27-31:37)

I saw a Morandi watercolor in our friend's home; and that experience led me to a lifelong appreciation of his work. At first I didn't like it, but then looking at it over and over again I began to understand what this work was about, and believing it in the deepest possible way.

VIDEO?

On a different scale, a similar thing happened to me at the cathedral at Chartres. I was there working on a film crew for a month, making a movie about the cathedral for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

VIDEO?

I walked through the west portal twenty times a day for two weeks. Then one day I walked in, looked up, and got it, got what Abbot Suger was after, what he wanted to offer the people who walked in over the centuries. It was a confirmation of their faith, of the

majesty of the spiritual world. The experience was enormous and frightening, to be in this enclosed place, a vehicle of human design and construction that sent you skyward.

VIDEO (33:16-41:22)

Art is a community activity much the way science is. It is only in the accumulation of all of our actions—artists and audience—that one can find the worth. Think of it as a visit to a museum. You see hundreds of works that add up to our culture. Now think of contemporary artwork in the same way, only more relevant to our current life. We artists sit at the edges of our culture, better able to see the mass. I saw Mark Ruffalo on television say that his acting teacher, Stella Adler, told her students that the job of the artist is to reflect the culture, and then to give back to the culture. I took this to mean to give back through our art, our music, our plays. Luckily some artists are in it for the art, even if their work is not seen outside of a Lower East Side gallery, its influences will reach a much grander audience.

VIDEO?

This force of art can be used by our culture for its benefit. The visual language of the work, expressed in physical, emotional, mental and spiritual terms, taken together forms a commentary, a critique, a map for changes in our society. We just have to hope that it gets what we are giving. Artists and art historians need to spend more of our time teaching others in the community our way of thinking that includes intuition and visual language. This can be done through exhibitions that emphasize dialogue and exposition rather than the work of a single artist. And by exploring possible uses of the Internet, the same end. For example, on MOMA's website one can find *What is a Print*, by Sarah

Suzuki, a curator of prints. It covers the topic of printmaking easily and well, using examples that delve into art history.

VIDEO?

We need the people who make decision about the education of our youth to see the worth of teaching art. Aesthetics is a missing dimension in the life of our community, and we need to show the need and purpose of art to correct the slack. Steve Jobs thought of himself as an artist. The decisions he made through intuition and aesthetics have now come to influence hundreds of millions of people in the way they see and negotiate the world. My conclusion is that artists must work together through our individual explorations, our own discoveries, and how they relate to the work of other artists. One can see this happen in the intimacy of an art school, where artists are looking at each other's work constantly and commenting on it constantly. When this is done right, when the discussions are helpful and point to directions that clarify the artist's intent, then they can be extremely useful.

VIDEO?

In the Seventies one didn't have to go to an art school to have this dialogue. It happened in the bars: Max's, St. Adrian's, the Spring Street Bar, and many others. It seemed that every Saturday at the Spring Street Bar Restaurant in Soho, Bob Smithson stood at the bar talking to anyone willing to enter into a discussion with him. The talk could just as easily be about Sergio Leone or Jean-Luc Godard as site and non-site art. By the 1980s the dialogues disappeared, and it seemed that no one could bring them back.

VIDEO?

When I've had a particularly effective class, one in which I was not needed to keep the discussion going, I suggested that the students meet on their own, outside of school. Some have tried. Within six months the meetings ceased to exist. These meetings need to be less organized and more available, even accidental. Bars were perfect. After a hard day in the studio, go for a drink and some talk in the evening.

VIDEO?

The real key is to focus on the artwork and the ideas that go into the artwork. Things begin to fall apart when the discussions between artists are expressions of competition. Why not discuss the merits of a particular work, even an historic work? Why waste time talking about who's in what show or how much their work sells for? We need to be more like scientists, working individually but towards a common purpose. We need to see ourselves as part of a community of artists serving our society as a whole. Okay, thank you. Okay. Basta. So any questions now? Wonderful, intelligent questions…. Yes. No one in the audience. Yes.

Question: Why did the dialogue disappear in the 1980s?

PC: What?

Question: In the—One of the last things you read, you said the dialogue disappeared. Bob Smithson at the bar, never to return.

PC: I have no idea. I mean, a lot of things stopped happening in the Eighties that…. It's a good question, but I really don't know the answer. It's a shame. I mean, it's always—I mention it because there's always hope that you guys can bring it back. You're not averse to drinking, I don't think, and….

Question: How do you know it stopped?

PC: Okay. Tell me. Is it still going on?

Question: Yeah.

PC: Really?

Question: I think so.

PC: Where?

Question: I don't know. I just know that it's happening.

PC: Great. No, it's… really happy. You can't tell us where? What city are you talking about?

Question: Right now I'm in New York, but—

PC: You're not going to share. You don't want to—

Question: No.

PC: I mean, hundreds of people used to go to Max's and St. Adrian's, so….

Question: Yeah.

Unidentified voice shouts from audience: {unintelligible}

Response from another audience member: No. {unintelligible}

PC: What did you say? {unintelligible murmurs} It's interesting that this is what we're talking about, but okay.

Question: You propose a kind of pedagogy that involves socializing in a certain sense, and I wonder if you think…. How do you restructure art school in your vision? Or don't you?

PC: Well, definitely I'm guilty about the socialization part. I just think things are much too commercial at this point. I don't know that art schools need to be restructured. I don't think art schools are the problem. Except obviously in Germany they're free… which is

far superior. But other than that I don't know. I guess it depends on the art school. It's probably up to you to pick a good one, one in which the dialogues do occur. At [the] school where I have taught there was always a good dialogue.

Question: You kind of referenced the individual versus the collective….

PC: References {unintelligible}--?

Question: The individual versus the collective. And I wonder whether there's a different way of structuring it that isn't to do with collaboration so much as the… collective.

PC: I don't think I was talking—I believe I said over and over again I think it's up to individuals. Relating to each other's work as individuals. I'm not so personally interested in collaborations, or even working as groups. But I think—I keep using the model of science, where people go off and work on their own, going some direction that keeps going back to the larger issues.

Question: Sure, but is not—I mean, I said it in the UK, but I don't think the system is particularly different in the sense that there is still this belief in the individual voice. And I think you're arguing partly for that, but partly for a kind of re—constantly reconfiguring conjoinment [sic] of voices, which the current system doesn't play for.

PC: So to begin to say things that I'll feel sorry for saying later…. I mean, after the YBA phenomena, I think everything went to hell in the UK. No?

Question: No, I think quite the reverse, in the sense that you talk about the filtering down process of artists, a bit like a kind of catwalk show versus a prêt-à-porter thing in fashion; and I would say that Damien Hirst is the watered down version of high thought.

PC: Of what?

Question: High thought. In your conjugation. No?

PC: In my opinion?

Question: Let's talk about that later.

Question: Hi. I have a question. Oh, over here. In the back.

PC: Oh. Hello.

Question: Hi.

PC: Hellooo….

Question: Helloooo…. I was wondering if you could speak a little [bit] about the shift in what it seems like from your earlier works to your more recent works, with your interest in like the landscape of the face and the body, sort of portraiture, into the landscape and the ocean, which seems like a huge part of your work; and I'm just wondering about that shift.

PC: I'm not hearing everything you're saying. Sorry.

Question: Oh, I'm sorry. I was wondering—

PC: {unintelligible} turning off my fan, which is….

Question: Oh, no. I'll just put my mouth really close to the microphone, and then you can put the fan back on. I'm just wondering if you can talk about the shift from the portraits to the ocean-scapes and…. Yeah, that's it.

PC: … Same person, obviously, but… a lot of the work—most of the work—I did in the Seventies were about psychological explorations, and my studies were often about cognition and… (unintelligible, possibly "line") fields, and…. If you look at some of the terminology you'll notice that there's a lot of Jungian thought in that work. And I don't

feel that I ever really abandoned it; I just got really fed up with it. I remember exactly when it happened. I had a studio in Berlin, and I was just absolutely sick of it. And I couldn't—I had a show in the Neue Berlin Kunsterein, and I saw my picture in the paper with these very severe portraits that I was doing, and my face looked gaunt and severe. So felt, "Oh, my God, " you know, "I've got to stop doing this." So I started wandering around Berlin, and… taking—thinking (57:12) photographs, and I just—I mean really, honestly, instantaneously shifted from looking inside to looking outside. And at some point, sort of mid-Eighties, I really got interested in the things that nature had to offer us as people. So in the Seventies I think I was really interested in not—obviously not psychosis, but sort of neurosis and roots of neuroses, and the human psyche and our cri de coeur. And I got to a point where I wanted to heal myself and use my art to do it. So I started using nature and landscape as a way of healing, and looking out to…. I still felt it was me looking out. I still felt—I was aware of myself looking out. When I talk about landscape and teaching I say, "If I don't see the artist in the photograph, then it's not a good photograph." So looking at a landscape photograph, I should be able to see the artist's hand in it. So it's in that sense participation. I would go hiking, or wherever I was going to take pictures, and with a totally open mind. I wasn't saying, "I'm determined to do this, that or the other thing." I would want to… respond…. [It's] hard to exactly put this into words, but [I] wanted to take pictures that felt like something that was inside of me that was projected outside of me. So yes, but it was a major, major change. I mean, it puts you in a different category. Different rooms in the museum, and…. Also, I found myself really interested in landscape at that time; so I hung out at the Metropolitan Museum a lot and… [there's] amazing landscape work out there that most people don't

see. Dutch landscape painting of the 17th century, and 16th/17th century. French, obviously, in the 19th century. Some English in the 19th century. Don't want to not talk about Constable…. Constable. I hope that answers—Best I can answer it.

Question: I have a question.

PC: Yes. Will you laugh?

Question: It's…. We were…. I just want to pick up the geeky, techy--

PC: But can you laugh for us?

Question: Ha. Yeah.

PC: Okay.

Question: I just want to pick up the geeky, techy question that we—like a conversation we were having before dinner, and I noticed, now that your PowerPoint is down, that I have eighty-one slides. And that's about the number in a slide carousel. And so my question is about the--

PC: Without the click, click, click, click, click….

Question: Without the click. So my question is about materials, I guess….

PC: Yeah.

Question: And…

PC: You're not going to convert me, you know.

Question: I'm not trying—

PC: {unintelligible}

Question: I don't actually have a stake in any of that. I'm just—

PC: {unintelligible} turn this off {unintelligible}

Question: --actually really curious, though, about the way in which the materials can structure work. Or the way in which, like-- the way… our relationship to one material, like the chroma key in video, and all of these like… sort of like actually like trying to put your hand into the video through effects then translates to celluloid or even slides, and the structure of all of these materials, and then…. And then you come back to digital in the end to make almost things that look like brush strokes almost. And… But then I—I mean, I was just so {unintelligible}—I was thinking about that {unintelligible}

PC: I thought you were going to comment on my great editing ability.

Question: Well, Chris {unintelligible} just died—

PC: And my cinematography.

Question: -- so I've been thinking about that, and I've already talked that to death, but—

PC: I mean I am one with the camera. I am [a] really good cameraperson.

Question: I don't know what to say about that.

PC:

Question: I was supposed to be asking you the questions.

PC: Oh, okay.

Question: Why am I on the spot? It's so weird. But…

PC: Try doing those moves with a five hundred foot magazine, you know—

Question: I have, actually.

PC: Really? Okay.

Question: Yes. But… so my question is really about that relationship of like moving back and forth through different technologies [and] materials, and how does its structure… like maybe more than sort of your interest in where your gaze lies, but in terms of how you

structure things, or how it relates to time or all of these things, or like where the work ends up. Can you talk a little bit about that? Is that possible?

PC: Yeah. I feel like Odysseus tied to the mast, here. Like, you know, I will not go back to film, no matter what happens. But obviously film really influences what I did. I stopped making video for a while; it was too difficult to edit. And then all of a sudden, when there was non-linear editing, and I found that I could do, you know, really cheaply what I was able to do with a Steenbeck. You know, I mean—and more. I mean I used to have to go into timing sessions, days and days of timing sessions-- I'm sure you do that too—working with a lab, punching in what filter you want to put here and there and going through the whole routine with them. And then it gets your first answer print and it doesn't look so great. I mean there has to be a reason that so many people are going digital, {unintelligible} I just—I don't love film the way you do; and obviously…. And I know people who do, you know, and will stick to it too. I just feel that video is getting closer and closer to film, which I like, you know. I know, you couldn't work with a Red/Cam, and I'm… looking forward to it. It's like…. I still think the main topic here is the history of moving image, and we're cousins (1:04:01) here. Okay? Do you—I mean we can talk—You and I can talk about movies to—When I was at the BFI, you know, it's like we talked about The Red Shoes, and I'm a movie person down to my shoes. But I love digital video. And now…. Yes.

Question: Is this on? Oh—Sorry. To go back a little bit, it sounded like you were… said something that you were aligning… the approach of science with something that sounded like individualism-- the idea of, maybe an individual analyst or observer—and equating that with science. And I was curious if you've thought about science as a collaborative

process; or the notion that scientific knowledge is acquired through, you know, the amalgamation of a lot of people's ideas. And now, like a lot of scientific publications are collaborative and have multiple authors, and if that's come into consideration for you, with that model.

PC: Do you think science can ever incorporate right-brain thinking into their models?

Question: I do. I think that there's a structure that pushes against that… in the way that science works. But… so… (microphone noise)—My microphone's blowing up, but… My right brain just blew up the microphone.

PC: {unintelligible}

Question:

PC: It's science.

Question: No. I mean, if you talk about…. If you talk about intuitive leaps, or… or those kinds of things, they can happen in science, and they can happen through dialogue. I guess that's kind of my question… about the fact that those kinds of….

PC: There were times I regret leaving science for sure. I mean I don't think they're so far apart. I don't… I think when it comes to my train of thought, you know, I don't want to… be limited by any —I don't play well with others. My father told me that when I was five. You know, he said I just don't play well with others. So I don't—I'm not going to be great with a scientist. But I really…. There are many things I feel I lost by not continuing studies in science. Again, I mean I think what I'm trying to say is we're all working towards some—the same end, as best we can.

Question: I wouldn't disagree with that, so… that'll do.

Question: {unintelligible} Do I just start? Oh. Can I just ask the question?

PC: Yeah.

Question: Oh. As someone who's been making videos for—Hi.

PC: Where are you?

Question: In the back. Hello.

PC: Hello.

Question: Hi. As someone who's been making videos for, you know, four decades—

PC: Oh my God! Don't say that.

Question: Sorry… You know, it's clearly changed, right? And it's become a big part of lots of different artists' practice. So I was just curious to hear—

PC: Yes. Why did that happen?

Question: When did that happen?

PC: Why?

Question: Well I'm curious to hear—You're not going to twist—You're not going to twist it around on me.

PC: Okay, sorry.

Question: So I'm curious to hear how you—how you feel about kind of contemporary video art; but also how artists are using video now, and how the internets are… are a big part—You know, how YouTube or the way—Why are we laughing? I'm curious why we're laughing.

PC: Are we {unintelligible}

Question: {unintelligible} But I don't even want to—I don't want to gear—I'm not even

going—I don't want to direct the conversation, actually. I'm just curious about how you… how you feel about the way people are using video today.

PC: Okay. I know I don't know everything. So let me say that to begin with. So this is just my point of view. But…. Do you want to answer this with me? 'Cause we were discussing {unintelligible}

Question: I'm asking you the question. You're the speaker.

PC: I think people [have] got to learn a lot more about video as a medium. I don't even think that—Video's kind of in its—you know—childhood—infancy. There's so—I think most people need to learn that it's a real medium and not just one you can pick up and press the red button. So…. Yet obviously you can pick up a camera and press the red button, and you get something. But there's so much—so many possibilities in terms of video as a physical medium. When I talked about Coomaraswamy, and talking about mental, physical, emotional and spiritual, like learning how to pay proper respect to the medium—the video medium—is part of that. You know, it's one of those qualities, in video. And yet I cannot—could not—I stopped teaching. I could not get any student to want to hang around and learn how to do things properly. Even how to make a DVD properly. So, you know, I'd give… spend a lot of my time and effort, and… you know, no one was interested. Right?

Question: Beyond the technology of making video… Like sort of the {unintelligible}—You know, because a big part of your conversation was about… the exciting dialogue that you had, pre-1980. And I'm just curious [about] how you feel about the way…. I mean, or are there certain people that are making videos today that are interesting to you, or—

PC: Yes.

Question: Or the way the medium has actually sort of transformed throughout the years.

PC: But—I mean my bias is that if someone makes a really good-looking video, technically, then I'm happy to look at it, you know, and sometimes like it. Sorry. But, you know, I'm just also very egocentric, so…. I do…. There are videos that I like instantly. You know, what Paul Pfeiffer had in the Guggenheim Biennial was just amazing—I mean to just name one person. One of my colleagues…. Anyway, yes, there are people whose work I like. But…. Yeah.

Question: I have a question. I'm next… to the (unintelligible, possibly Kate) I was interested in how you were talking about, you know, exiting a commercial kind of mentality in artists today. But all your videos noted which collections they were, whether they were private or museum collections….

PC: {unintelligible}

Question: It's kind of problematic.

PC: I know…. I couldn't resist.

Question: I mean—

PC: But {unintelligible} introduction, if I had known that that introduction was happening I wouldn't have put those on. So….

Question: But… it kind of like negates everything you're saying, almost—

PC: No, no, it doesn't, really—

Question: --because a lot of the galleries….

PC: It really doesn't. I believe in the commercial world, I mean the art world. I mean I made that decision. There are, you know, people I studied with in school who didn't—

didn't want to have any part of it. But I did. I wanted to see my work in galleries and museums. And I'm not really trying to say that I'm some pure, non-fiscal person, but just that that can't determine the art we make. So if you're showing at some gallery and they say, "Oh, God, I hate what you're doing now. I want you to do what you were doing, you know, two years ago," you can't do it. That's…. I'm really trying to address how to work within the gallery system; and how to resist it; and how to stand up for yourself, and…. I'm sorry if I gave you that impression. I'm really happy that my work is in all those collections.

Question: Thank you.

Question: … I…. I think that my question relates to what Cauleen and Kate were saying; but I don't know enough about technology to really know for sure. So I'll just say it anyway. That what I saw in your work, just the way you showed your work now, it seemed to me that like beauty or--I think Duchamp used to call it "retinal decisions," or something like that seemed to play a greater role as the work developed. And I don't know if that is real or it's just the technology catching up with you, or if you changed; and…. Do you know—Do you have any idea what I'm talking about?

PC: Oh, sure.

Question: Okay. Can you talk about that a little bit?

PC: So isn't it amazing that I survived decades of the art world, where it's all about… you know, idea before image? I mean, how did I survive? I feel so happy about myself that I could be making beautiful works when no one could utter the word *beauty*.

Question: Did you—Well, did you feel that you were—that in the {unintelligible}—

PC: And retinal, by the way, is really bullshit.

Question: Okay. So… I don't think—Either I didn't understand your question or I don't think you answered it. In the 1970s it seemed like—

PC: I did answer it. You know—

Question: Okay. Well then let me—let me have a follow-up. In the 1970s it seemed like your work was—

PC: Do I have a choice? Or…

Question: Yeah, you don't—No, you don't have a choice.

PC: Okay.

Question: Unless somebody wants to take the microphone away. It seemed in the 1970s your work was much more concerned with ideas rather than—

PC: Not really. I mean people who wrote about it said—talked about the imagery. I think it's just—You know, it's postmodern bullshit that happened onto us. And how did we [survive]—

Question: {unintelligible} what do you mean by that?

PC: How did we survive?

Question: Well what do you--? You said that before in your talk. I don't know what you mean by that, "the postmodern bullshit."

PC: Okay.

Question: Could you try and explain that a little bit?

PC: Not at all.

Question: Okay. (laughter, applause, cheers)

Question: I think I have a related question. I'm right here. Sorry.

PC: Okay.

Question: So I'm wondering if there's an alignment between when the dialogue stopped for you in the Eighties, and the Eighties like art market boom, and then your turn to nature. And like if you saw that as a kind of mending of like a disenchantment you were seeing. And… And so like how much do you see…. So if work can't be determined by the market—you don't want to see that—do you think your work's gone in a reactionary direction, and is determined by a reaction to the market?

PC: (sighs) That wouldn't be such a good thing. I try to be independent of it. I think that there are times that the market smiles at me and times that it doesn't. Last year it did; it made me very happy. This year it didn't. So I just—They have to be two different things. I mean it's hard to do that, but they have to be two different things. It's particularly hard if you're not a teacher and, you know, your month's rent is determined whether or not you sell something or not. That's [a] really hard road to go down. So… a lot of people—I mean we have a lot of teachers around, a lot of teaching positions around. That helps. I always think it's a good idea to have some kind of secondary job if you have to, just to keep yourself as honest as you can. And whatever that job is…. I think—Someone asked in the very beginning if there's something that I would suggest in art schools; and I would suggest talking about —you know, having some kind of job that can help you through bad times. You know, whether it's teaching or… it could be almost anything. I mean some…. I mean I've heard so many different kinds of occupations. But I think it's just really important to go the route that your gut is telling you to go, and go that direction, and don't let anything else influence you. And if you—If there are good years, it's great; if there are bad years, not so great; but just keep going that way.

Question: Hi. Sorry, I'm not over. Okay, I have a question with like the postmodern like stuff… and like—

PC: No. Come on.

Question: Come on, please? Please….

PC: Postmodern?

Question: No, no, I just want—Please, can I ask a question?

PC: Okay, okay.

Question: [It's the] first time I've asked any question. Okay, so then, and in relationship to like how like you think like kind of like the dialogue—the good dialogue—ended in the Eighties; and I was wondering if it's because like we're still {unintelligible}—like maybe like we're still working in that postmodern like discourse; and it's kind of like exhausted itself, and if you…. A) if you think that's true, and B) if also like should we just like pretend like it didn't happen and just like do our thing? Okay. That's all.

PC: I don't ever think that you should pretend that something didn't happen. But… I think it's time to move on. And I agree; I think that that particular postmodern dialogue was really enervating to art, in my opinion. And schools just loved it--particularly universities just loved postmodern. I mean I think universities kept postmodern alive decades after it should have been dead; 'cause it's—You know, we can be really intellectual and talk about this, that or the other thing, and forget about what really art is about. So… {unintelligible} I think—I think I'm getting weary here. I'm going to keep going as long as you want to keep going, but eventually I'm going to get a chair. So I don't think I answered your question, right, Krit?

Question: {unintelligible}

PC: Okay, good.

Question: Hi.

PC: Okay, hi.

Question: I just wanted to say I'm a portrait painter, and I saw your work when I was very, very young in graduate school at MIT. And it changed my life, even though it was a completely different medium, completely different ideas.

PC: When was that?

Question: It was at the List in Nineteen ninety… No, in—Yeah, 1999. And—

PC: Oh, I remember that show.

Question: Yeah, it was a fantastic show.

PC: Thank you.

Question: And I just wanted to say one thing about the Eighties, that a lot of people may not remember, is that there was a plague, and a lot of people died; and that sort of disrupted the relationship between the art world and the sort of world of science, or who was desirable to pay attention to and who wasn't desirable to pay attention to.

PC: Yeah.

Question: And the other part, I think, is the—What you said about the competition between artists is really one of the most difficult things to bear; 'cause it's very hard to have a dialogue with someone when you're competing for prizes or competing for shows. And that sort of—I think that that's the thing that has really made it difficult for me, as a teacher, to try to encourage my students, because they—Instead of being in dialogue with each other, they're afraid that people are going to steal their ideas, or someone's going to get noticed before they do. And that there's a spirit of generosity in the art world that's—

that disappeared in the Eighties. And I just want to thank you for the generosity of your lecture. It was really, really great.

PC: Thank you. You know, my ego is going to get so bad my wife isn't going to let me come home {unintelligible}. Wow. Is that it?

END OF RECORDING