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SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE

Skowhegan, Maine

Transcript of lecture: RELAX (Marie Antoinette Chiarenza and Daniel Hauser)
June 19, 2013

Transcriber: Judith Stoodley

Introductory remarks begin at 3:10 (Michael Berryhill, Dean): Hello, everybody. And welcome to the fifth talk in the Barbara Lee Lecture Series, Skowhegan 2013. Please take this moment to silence your cellphones, and if you need to use the restroom, please use the back door and head down the dirt road to the library; the bathrooms are on the left.

Tonight's lecture will be by RELAX, who are members of the faculty in residence. And introducing them will be, also a member of the faculty in residence, Sheila Pepe. (applause, cheers)

Introduction of Speaker (Sheila Pepe): Good evening. Hello. Two of the greatest art historical legacies of the 20th century are the ideas that work can be pointedly, poetically political, while refraining from finger wagging of indoctrinating dogma; and that an art practice can be consciously ethical. In America we tend to be guided by holding tight to or in contempt of our rather humorless, often regional, systems of Judeo-Christian-inspired law-making and sales-making. These behaviors distract us from recognizing complex political work when it's made or that an ethical stance is being taken. Under- or

misrecognition tends to shut down the production of otherwise ambitious works. Left and right, high and low, we build our hierarchies in art and life with the American dream of civic and economic “yes.” Within the cloaked dialectics of neither/nor, yes/but, and a lot of times just plain old “never mind,” well... relax. Relax. RELAX. Marie Antoinette (struggles with pronunciation of last name) (laughs)--I’ve done this all day long. (laughter)—

Chiarenza and Daniel Hauser are here. Tonight we have the pleasure of hearing from RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), known for statements such as, “Thinking alone is criminal;” “Artists are no flags;” “I am a woman, why are you not?” “You pay but you don’t agree with the price;” and “Getting paid for doing nothing.” They met in 1983 in a large squat in the north of Paris. They’re first collaborative work was to save their—to take collaborative action to save their homes and studios from destruction. They failed at that but kept going. (long pause) (laughter) From 1997 to 2001 they worked with the urban planner Daniel Croptier; perhaps he’s the “& co.” Well, yes, and (untranscribable sound) notice the omission of the period at the end of that “co,” taking the commerce out of “and company,” morphing whatever busy factory you might envision by “company” into a bunch of people sitting at your kitchen table for a visit. Company. Playing word games, mapping alternative paths in art and life, in the menu, conceptualizing a party, inspiring a revolution. Co-llaboration. Cohort. Commons. Bending the path that leads to incorporation back on itself to invite cooperation. So tonight, as every night and day, we are the company, invited and implicated, as the astute or distracted viewer, maker, interpreters of their amazingly precise generosity, a vision of Boolean potentialities. Follow all indicators to find where Chiarenza and Hauser demark that slippery path in each different site where professed values contradict those that are practiced, where the very idea of value has been stuffed

into little tiny shoes, several sizes too small, unable to walk, never mind dance around with all of her beloved participants, and where sadly she has been forgotten completely, tossed about as if a forgotten card, impressed only by and with many numbers. Marie Antoinette Chiarenza was born in 1957 in Tunis, Tunisia, and has lived in France since 1960. She studied art and philosophy at the Sorbonne, Paris; Massachusetts College of Art, Boston; The Pasadena City College, California. In 1983 she interrupted her studies to return to Paris. Chiarenza served as a member of the Swiss Federal Arts Council from 2008 to 2011, and she is head of the Geneva University of Art and Design, a post she has held since 2007. Daniel Hauser was born in 1959 in Bern, Switzerland. He studied history, German and French language and literature in the Education Department of the University of Bern; and after [an] additional semester at the Sorbonne, he interrupted his studies; however, [he] remained in Paris. Hauser is a member of the faculty as well as a driving force in the development of the current curriculum at the F & F School of Art and Media Design there 2000. As a team RELAX has had numerous exhibitions since 1988, including at the Kunsthalle Basel; Capp Street Project San Francisco; Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken Germany; the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire; and the Cornerhouse in Manchester, England. In 2000 RELAX participated in the Venice Biennale as part of the International Architecture Show in the Swiss Pavilion. In 2002 they were awarded the Meret Oppenheim Prize by the Swiss Federal Office for Culture. Numerous group exhibitions, projects, grants and residencies have brought them to cities and towns around the world since the 1990s—early Nineties—including Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Warsaw, New York City, Helsingborg (Sweden), Michelangelo Pistoletto “City of Art” in Biella, Tbilisi, Georgia, and now Skowhegan, Maine. Please join me in welcoming our Marie

Antoinette and Daniel: RELAX. (applause)

MAC: Hello.

DH: Good evening, everybody. Many thanks to Sheila for this beautiful introduction, which is very touching and full of humor. So... beautiful. Thank you. What we will talk about tonight is—It was hard to somehow put together what we wanted. It was.... The idea is that we would like to talk tonight about on one hand what is, um, this group work we are doing, so that we are more than one, um... that almost everything turns around conditions and framework, no work. Then another group will be a little bit on public spheres; and at the end we will also talk about projects which are connected to questions on values and valorizations (12:28).

MAC: Okay, my turn. (laughter) Um.... Now.... (pause) Almost everything, art and beyond. What kind of conditions do we meet in art sites and other places? How does the framework look like when we intend to realize something? Is it possible to co-create the condition? Is it possible to co-define the framework, and what for, and with whom? (pause) Uh... In brief, when we get a project or we initiate a project, we think about its conditions framework. And sometimes these reflections become visible in the work.

IMAGES

Here on the left the image is an image of a demonstration in a commercial street in a town in Switzerland called Aarau; and on the right a photo we made in a project space in Eindhoven, in Netherlands. Both images are a part of installations we made 1992.

IMAGES

The wrong work at the wrong time for the right place. In learning from Eindhoven for this exhibition, the curators at the time didn't work as agreed with us. We got only twenty

percent of the agreed budget. So we reduced the exhibition surface to twenty percent and made only a one-day exhibition (laughter). So this is the twenty percent, and behind this twenty percent... (laughter, applause) (laughs) we have the eighty percent. This space was accessible through a small door, and we left all the elements found on-site as they were. Bizarrely, the people coming to the exhibition—this one exhibition in one night—all loved this empty space, and talked—and were talking and drinking in this part of the show.

(pause)

IMAGES

DH: Yes, in the group show, “The Swiss Paradigm,” (unintelligible) some images from this—from a video at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in Canada in 1993. In this group show the frame set came first. We didn’t like the title of the show, “Swiss Paradigm,” because it sets clear identities. So we slowed down the process of identification. On site we discovered the Winnipeg Art Gallery collection, it’s famous “Mythical Bird,” which is from the Inuit collection, and the “Bluebird,” from the painter, Marc Chagall, in the European collection. What you see here are three video stills, actually, showing us stealing the two famous birds, the gallery guards catching us. So you see on the left side the robbery of the mythical bird, on the left side; on the top, there, the stealing of the Chagall; and then a guard who is catching us. The fourth image shows a photo where we are delivered to the city police of Winnipeg. The installation was an assemblage of elements in which the audience didn’t really know where art starts. We designed the entrance of the gallery with lamps, plants, fake walls; and we blurred the limits between the museum lounge and the exhibition space. To “Swiss Paradigm” we responded with the title “Goldfinger,” actually the title of a James Bond movie which plays partly in Switzerland. We developed in this project the idea on

site, working with everybody. It was a lucky situation where finally the people were involved not only in the work itself, but of course, since they were there, they were also physically present in the space. Everybody reenacted what they did every day; so the guards, the police, the mayor of Winnipeg, one politician of Manitoba, curators and the artists, of course; but somehow slightly shifting from one reality to another.

MAC: Now I'm going to rephrase what Sheila said about the name. We are obviously more than one. We tend to be more than two. Two are already a group, but it's not a group in philosophical concept; they don't accept two people as a group in structural philosophy. In our name "& co" stands for constellation, cooperation, complicity. "Co" never means family, "co" never means company, "co" never means nation. The "& co" stands for various partnerships in different contexts. And the "& co" avoids a clear signature. All people involved in the realization become visible. It is about stories in plural, collaborative, cooperative, associative work. So group work, it is a method of self-organization, where every step of the process is of equal importance. Group work is not based on rules, and if we have rules they are never predefined.

IMAGE

The title of this picture is "The Artists Briefly Before the Culminating Moment of Their Career." (laughter) (laughs)

IMAGE

DH: So this image was first published in a magazine called *Du* in Zurich in 1991. And it shows, actually the appropriation and transformation of another image you might know, which has been painted by an unknown painter that nobody knows, but one knows that he was a member of the École de Fontainebleau, and the painting has been painted more or

less around 1594. Always this number appears, so it's very funny that this number seems to be very precise but nobody knows the painter. So, um, what you can also see here is that actually it's a very traditional image. I mean, um, in the sense that the image involves the viewer as a cooperator and accomplice; this is something-- what you know from painting, traditional painting history since a long time, and then also through the direct eye contact of the figure in the left side in the image. And there's also something like the... direct connection to the audience. IMAGE

So this work is called "You Are What You See, We Are What You Want." (pause) (laughter) Done as a triptych. Actually this first image I've seen [sic] is part of a triptych which we have realized some years for a public museum collection.

IMAGE

(pause) This is the portrait of the members of the Kunstverein Arnsberg. Arnsberg is in Germany, close to Münster, if somebody was there sometime. The photo was placed at the entrance of the exhibition, and was actually greeting the public coming in. The same white chairs, like you see here in the photo, were placed in front of the photo, for the audience to sit and to meditate with the members, if needed. Um...

IMAGES?

Here you can see some portraits of the same members—not all of the portraits—with their partners, so that the shorter ones are for once taller, (laughter) and everybody brought their own objects for the photo with them.

IMAGE?

Finally [we] blocked the exhibition space with a wall and presented the photos. Behind the wall we had a bunch of electronic materials—disco lamps, radios—making noises and

projection colors on the ceiling. Actually the wall was blocking a splendid view on the representative place of this town; so we wanted to block that (unintelligible) of that [and] put these portraits on these walls. What is not visible but important to mention here is how we dealt with the installing the exhibition. Since actually the only artwork are the photos, and since such things are impossible to sell, we contracted a fee with the curators, gave the photos to the people involved, and agreed that the wood would be recycled or reused, a practice we still do today when the installation has a temporary character.

Stop—Don't switch. The title of this image was "Combinazione Spirituale."

MAC: Can I switch?

DH: Yes.

IMAGE

(laughter)

MAC: C'est a toi.

DH: Here is the (unintelligible). It was a work called "For Sale," that was a work we realized for the Dartmouth College; and the video stills are of persons we involved in videos we did while asking them what if the Dartmouth College would sell the Dartmouth College Green, and the Green would be transformed in something or to do (23:20) something else. Um, the Dartmouth College Green is something almost saint; so we tried to somehow get closer to these greens (23:30). The persons answered this question on their way from home to work and in front of the Green. So this work was called "For Sale," and it was an installation in the Hood Museum of Art and also on the Dartmouth College Green in Hanover, New Hampshire.

IMAGE

MAC: This is the portraits of all the—of thirteen people, “Reservoir (phonetic) News.” (23:55) (unintelligible) video? For the video “Reservoir (phonetic) News,” that we made in Warsaw during the festival called “Money for Nothing” in 2010, we had the idea to save the financial district of the city, since 2008 because of the financial crash, right? It hits the East pretty quickly. Thirteen people involved in the festival wanted to help too. So we worked together. The video is.... We edited the video back in Zurich, but we are using it—all of us, these thirteen people—in educational context and in art installations. We brought the video here, but it’s thirty minutes and it’s in five chapters. It’s pretty long, so maybe we won’t show it tonight but another afternoon or another time. Uh... I think we are finished with this section of “the co.” Ah, no. Ah, no, no, no, no, no.

IMAGES

Three photographs. The person represented in the middle is the product designer Andre Luti. (phonetic) We needed somebody to pose with—We know him. He works—He has his studio in the house building where we have our studio too. We needed somebody to pose with us for this photo, and somebody with no hair on his head. (laughter) So that’s why we (unintelligible). The titles of the three different photos are: “The Big One: Creative Industry,” tallest format; “Research,” middle-sized format; and “Art,” smallest format. The titles are directly linked to the importance of what we name in the world of creation. It’s also photos that are installed in bigger work. Now... “P.” P for public space.

DH: So now we come to P, like public spheres. The public spheres are never neutral, so the question is: Where does something take place? To whom do we address something? To an informed audience or to a not-informed audience? Do we announce something or not? Are

we commissioned to a public project? If yes, by whom? Or do we just commission ourselves? Is the entire process based on a competition, and if yes, initiated, organized and financed by whom?

IMAGE

So the first project you see in this section, "The Big Sellout," which was actually a one-hour performance on the Paradeplatz in Zurich. Um... These images here you see, they show this sales action. Somebody you see here on the left side is the four-year-long RELAX partner (unintelligible 2&:04), who offers a suitcase full of ten-Swiss-franc notes to be sold for nine francs each. (laughter) This one-hour performance was not announced. It took place on the Paradeplatz, as I said, in Zurich, where the headquarters of banks like UBS and Credit Suisse are located. So the people who got in contact with us didn't know if we were an insurance company or a sect, (laughter) or people who try to sell false money. Also, from the outside it was not clear, watching the images and also people told to us, if suddenly we are also selling drugs somewhere on this place, because they didn't know what we are actually offering or doing and why all these people are there. So... uh... But what we did like actually was very regulated. The sales were very regulated. The clients couldn't buy more than one bank note, and the sale was quite successful for one hour. We sold forty-three notes, which means we lost forty-three francs. We planned this performance knowing that we were invited for an exhibition of contemporary art from Switzerland in the Netherlands. The show was financed by the Chamber of Commerce of the two countries.

MAC: Actually in the box we had the whole budget of production that we went to the bank and we went to the bank and we made some small ten-francs with it and made the suitcase.

Uh... the next project....

IMAGE

The title of this work “Three Points.” It is a commissioned work after competition; it’s about consciousness of space and (unintelligible) and dreams. What we see here is a woman[‘s] prison in Switzerland; the main building is a small Baroque castle. There is very few Baroque building in Switzerland, and this [is] one of them. They asked for art in public space while renovating the entire land of the prison, which was known to have no fence... uh... this prison. The first element that we made... is the garden, the renovated Baroque garden: four shapes--I think in English it’s tree hedges. I don’t know how you call those tree hedges. (laughter) We looked today in the (unintelligible)—representing floor plans (unintelligible), plans of a cell with one bed, two beds, the control room, and the entire fence and length of the prison, but this one is a smaller scale, of course. And uh... it was placed—This garden is semi-public. That means it’s the women living there, and the prisoners, the staff and the visitors—the families—can meet on this land; so it’s semi-public space.

IMAGE

The second element is a fake garden--We added this long space there—only with the floor plans of the cells, bordering a playground of a game called *petanque*. (30:42) You know what it is? You play with balls, metal balls. Like in south of France everybody plays petanque, right? Um... It’s a professional size place, which is two by thirteen meters, which is about seven by fifty-six feet. Got that one. (laughter) (unintelligible) So about twenty-

one sets of professional metal balls are at disposition on site to play. And the last part of the project in three parts, a CD, an audio CD recording of sounds on site of all kinds of voices in different languages, the women and the staff are riveting (31:29) their dreams. This city is an object that goes beyond the prison walls, because it's on sale in different shops too, after the project—in the shop of the prison itself, and also in the (unintelligible) and in Zurich. (pause) I have some more? Okay.

IMAGE

When we got invited to participate at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2000 we were a bit disoriented. But the curator insisted on infiltrating artists in the Architectural Biennale. So we did not work with architects, though, and not in the Swiss Pavilion, but in a zone in between the pavilions where the people pass by. A duty free zone. A zone free of duty. (laughter) (laughs) And we [already] mentioned the title of the—It's this big international exhibition to a more human scale. Their title is pretty heavy; it's "Less Aesthetics, More Ethics Migration." So we concentrated better on a mix between immigration, urban commuters and touristic migration. What we see... and the foreground is a thing there. It's called "The Pigeonscape;" it's a form of a kidney. It's to attract the pigeons to make the competition with Sant Marco Place. (probably intends San Marcos Plaza 33:03) It was always—They came after fifteen days. Also the—Some orange wooden elements are called "The Market Space;" and in the trees we have some speakers: "The Soundscape," with sounds from airports and railway station mixing in with the ambient sound of the Biennale. (pause) We gave the surfaces of the marketplace to the vendors and the salesmen, which are actually—are in Venice all the time, and uh, working; but not allowing to come and sell their goods in the space of the Biennale. They all come from Africa—different [countries],

and they are all migrants—immigrants. We gave them our Biennale entry passes so they could move freely. We also organized a locker—the principe (phonetic) of a baggage room—the locker? That’s a locker, right? Uh... the visitors used it constantly without even noticing that it was an element of the installation. (laughter) But okay. (laughs) It was also functional, so....

IMAGE?

These elements, it’s a reference in the.... In 2000, when we made the show in Italy, no lockers were allowed to be placed in public spaces because of the terrorist attentat (phonetic 34:28) in 1980 in the railway station of Bologna. Today there are lockers, but so that was kind of a (unintelligible). So it was the zone, but when you enter the Biennale, what you saw first is this table built around a tree, with nine hundred objects, all orange, right?

IMAGE

They’re called “The Use-Me’s,” (phonetic) like you have one image here. So four forms, a sort of an object to put between the body and the surroundings. Four forms which are to be used as you wish. You can take one and bring it back after the visit of the Biennale. But the visitors could not buy it. It was amazing how the people came, went to this table, and took it, because in all those big events today you have some stuff for free. They thought it was for free; we said, “No, it’s not for free. You have to bring it back when you’re finished.” And when they wanted to buy it, we said, “No, you cannot buy it.” It was so very, uh, bizarre, this kind of.... But actually they stole it. We lost about three hundred pieces. (laughter) (pause)

DH: Okay, I will talk a little bit now on a project where the title is “Inlay.” “Inlay.” Um... it

was another commissioned work; we have won a competition together with two architectural offices from Switzerland, with whom we formed a team. The commissioner was Switzerland; and Switzerland, as some may know, is not only a country which is not part of the European Union, but became very late a member of the UN in 2002. So Switzerland decided to make a gift to the UN, knowing that this organization had always a big lack of money. Switzerland proposed to renovate a space inside the UN [Headquarters] in New York, a very symbolic space, actually; it's the back stage, called GA 200, which is the back stage of the General Assembly. That's why it's called GA—GA and 200, I don't know really why. Um... so it's a symbolic space where state's women and men prepare their speeches in front of the assembly. The GA contains also staff and offices, a desk for the control guard, a photo opportunities corner, and two offices for the Secretary General and the President of the Assembly.

IMAGE

What you can see here is just the new built-in back stage, where normally through the protocol the statesperson who will address to the audience in the General Assembly will come out accompanied by this protocol person, get up the steps and take the seat—No, it does not get up (off?) the steps, but will take the podium there in front of the seats.

IMAGE

So this is an older view. I mean you can see this bright blue part; this is like the external skin of this back stage, which is (unintelligible) like this. And then through the glass you can see—you can have a sight on the General Assembly. And there you can see also this green carpet inside of this assembly back stage space you have a sight (38:35) on the old part as—how it was before it has been transformed. For example, it has been

reconstructed for this film/movie (unintelligible) because the interior doesn't exist anymore like this. So they had to reconstruct it for this movie but it was already differently.

[sic] Now, next image.

IMAGE

Um... closer to our approach. Our approach was that most people know the UN through the media for its role as a peace keeper in education, in nutrition and in health. The second approach was-- we received the commission just before the UN Security Council decided for the war against Iraq. Our first visit of the UN building was in 2003, when we met a blue fabric which covered a tapestry of Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" painting just next to this GA 200. To cover the tapestry has been ordered by members of the Security Council and also by General Colin Powell. Um... (pause) Our propositions for the gift was based on three questions. Can we arrange a space horizontally which breaks the hierarchies? So what we have new (40:10) is like a space which is horizontally arranged between all the offices from the staff: the General Secretary [sic] and also all the other people being in this back stage.

Next image.

IMAGE

Can we insist on official decisions like the millennium goals written by the UN member states themselves in 2000? Um... next.

IMAGE

The first proposition for a wall text using the millennium goals has later been censored. You can see here the yellow part with all the millennium goals; actually they have been formulated by the member states of the UN and have been accepted. So we tried to put them again on this green wall you see here, like a huge post-it. But it has been refused after

it had been accepted, so we had to rethink about this wall. Then a second proposition, the preamble of the founding charter from 1945, saying, “We the people of the United Nations” and so on, has been made by the UN itself. So this proposition, we accepted it, but we painted it then green on green on the wall, because everybody knows it anyway. (laughter)
Comment: (inaudible) almost invisible)

DH: Yes, it's almost invisible; you see only through a small relief that actually there is a writing on the wall. And when it was finished the UN Ambassador of Switzerland, he called us and tried to find out where the wall text is now. (laughter) And we told him, “Just take a little step beside and try to see the relief.” Um...

IMAGES

Then... what you see here are several signs. You see a finger in the left image— on top left—which shows more or less the scale of the signs. These are all peace signs, so you have these peace signs in six different official languages. So you have “Peace,” “Al-Salam,” “Mir,” “Pace,” “Hépíng,” I think, in Chinese. I don't know if I pronounce it well. And “Pé.” So... But what is the price for what is named peace? And it is financed by whom? Brought by whom to whom? One of our major intervention[s] was to place not more than twelve of those little inlays as peace signs in the official UN languages on a very small scale in the floors, the walls and the furnitures [sic] of this back stage. The materials used for these small inlays are gold, white gold, tantalum, tropical wood, and diamonds, actually all materials which are reasons for wars around the world.

MAC: (unintelligible)

DH: Yeah, so this is one side and (unintelligible) actually when you visited the space, the reaction of the most of the people when they visited the first time the space was like a

question like, “What is this bizarre spot up there?” (laughter) because all the walls were like very homogeneous, and then suddenly you had like a little spot which was irritating the surface.

MAC: So this is the last chapter, right? “V,” values and valorization. Questions on values and the process of valorization are part of our discussions. It’s about the fabrication of quality. Quality is not something good or something bad. It is about intensity, density, hard versus soft, etcetera. Quality means refusal of amnesia. The problem with quantification is that only the visible gets measured. To do and to produce are not the same thing; and I think that every research should not end up being an art project. Anyway, we define our roles as artists in a context that we have to draw each time for each place from scratch, asking, “What do we share?” or “What do we not share?” and questioning, for example, wealth distribution, fabrication, agreement, non-agreement and contracts, devalorization and revalorization.

IMAGE?

DH: Yes, so the sign, “Who Pays?” is a neon sign which has been bought by the Consortium (45:27) Liechtenstein in Vaduz. So Liechtenstein is a principality; it’s a neighbor country to Switzerland and Austria. Vaduz is a heavy financial place; and so this sign is actually in the restaurant (45:41) room, which is also the big entrance hall of this museum. And so it can see it day and night. Um... one doesn’t know if this question, “Who Pays?” is related to the café bill, to the restaurant bill, or to the cost of the art that has been paid by the museum somehow; or if it has to do with the financial place of Vaduz. I mean in this restaurant there are a lot of people working in the financial place of Vaduz [who] are eating lunch. Um.... When—Why was there an interest in this neon sign? Actually because there was a tax war

between Germany and Liechtenstein which was very intense; it was about hidden money of German citizens who placed the money in banks of the principality of Liechtenstein. And in 2007/8 the conflict between Germany and Lichtenstein about this hidden money became very dense or intense. It was at that time that the museum was interested suddenly in this neon sign. They knew we made it.

IMAGE?

MAC: Okay, on values. It all started in 1994 in Capp Street in San Francisco—Capp Street Project—when we produced thousands of these paper cups, and we tried to motivate some coffee shops to use them during the time of our residency. Over there. One coffee shop refused, because just rose their prices [sic] and they will think maybe it will be cynical with their people. (laughter) But it functioned, though; it functioned. Uh... when you came in Capp Street in the space you were (unintelligible) welcomed by this table with free coffee for everybody, already fresh, like here (laughter)-- like in Skowhegan—and when you go around, the table brings you automatically to a wall, a built wall, a wooden wall. And this project—I meant the portrait that we see here are all the members of the boards, at the time, involved in Capp Street. And there is [sic] two speakers with two hours sound, floating in the room, of all the people—the voices of the people that we see, answering the question: “How rich are you?” And we didn’t explain what means rich, so some people talked (laughs) effectively about money, when we didn’t really expect it; and others about the culture, the richness of the culture. It was.... So it’s a sound track on—going back and forth on those notions of rich, being rich, what is wealth. And they choose also the size of their portrait. (laughter) And there is two (laughs)—but (48:56) they didn’t know; because if they gave us something—That’s something we didn’t mention before in some projects;

but when we worked with people in that way, they receive also something after the show if you—Yeah, kind of—And... they received their portraits of the show. And two of them didn't want their portraits; that's why there is [sic] two empty spaces. At the same time they gave us their jars with coins... that—like a portrait with an object underneath. And behind this wall we had a video, a piggybank, (unintelligible) where you see and hear money going in the piggybank. We started to put some cups on the floor, and the people automatically extended this installation, and as soon as—when they finished their coffee they put it also (laughs) on the floor. (laughter) So it was growing all the time, and with the time they used it like the Fontana in-home (unintelligible—asks in French how to say a word or phrase followed by unintelligible English word, possibly a “fountain”) in home. And they sent even the coins in it, with like... pennies, at the end of the show. By the way, we made also the cup. The European version of this coffee cup we made in 2002 in some shows, produced it in Switzerland; and it's also now used in installation context and—but also—in shops... uh, in coffee shops and bars. (pause) Ah, intermezzo? Intermezzo, right?

DH: Yes, so here you have a very administrative piece; it's called “The Receipts.” It goes from 1984 until 2005; and this work contains all the receipts we collected during our professional career as artists since '84 till 2005. Um... Why that? The first time because the profession of artist was not accepted in Switzerland until the end of the 1990s, so we had to prove from what we make a living off, and we had also to prove that through the receipts of spending, of course, money for stuff we needed for our studios but also for our living. So the IRS of Switzerland was strict about that so we began to collect everything. This was reason one.

IMAGE?

Here you see some like material of that.

IMAGE?

Then you see all the way how we put these receipts together.

IMAGE?

And here it's like (unintelligible) of twenty meters long, and we didn't open all these papers to show the receipts. So the second reason of the receipts is also that we got invited for a personal show in a museum, and then when we made a first proposition the curator said, "Well, that's—that will be way too expensive." So we made a second proposition for a show which was finally then filling the whole—the entire museum with all kind of receipts, and that was one of the works we showed there. Others were like video installations and other pieces, always linked and related to receipts and to the way of proving the existence as an artist, economically. (pause)

MAC: It is not the retrospective, right?

DH: No, it was not the retrospective. Um....

MAC: Now the [next]—

DH: The other work you can see here—

MAC: Which one?

DH: That's next.

MAC: Oh.

IMAGE?

DH: ... is called "What is Wealth?" And actually that's not a question of ours; that's a question from Buckminster Fuller, I think the 28th/the 29th of forty questions he formulated in 1966, of—the were called "strategic questions" he formulated. And Gavin Wade, a

curator from Eastside Projects, Birmingham... we were in contact with him. He was like inviting regularly artists and confronted them with these questions of Fuller. So we told him, "When you're up to Question 29 we will be ready to try to answer that." And so we made an installation at the Cornerhouse, which had several spaces, like elements of the installation.

IMAGE?

One was the Cage (54:05) Room you can see here.

IMAGE?

Another one was the Waste Room. Then you see on the right side the Storage Room, and on the left side you can see the Wheel of Fortune. (pause) So the Cage Room is defined by building site wire fencing. The fence also encloses a small windowed house. It consists of a stairwell that leads up to the Exhibition Room on the third floor. The Cage Room contains the entire production up to now of the strategic questions that Gavin Wade has accumulated since 2002, whereby these are mainly publications, posters, video pieces on laptops, and various objects. The Cage Room operates like an exchange cage. The exhibition attendants have received exact instructions from us how treat the visitors. All are greeted and given information such as an invitation to sit down, to take your time, do nothing, engage in discussions, or daydream. The directive that all publications and objects are at their disposal; people can choose to spread out in the room and consult the selections. To obtain publications and objects, a deposit must be paid. The deposit pledged—Next.

IMAGE

The deposit pledged is valuable best of all, a wallet, for example; a credit card; a watch; a

mobile phone, etcetera. These objects are then presented on a plinth, painted in blue with a mirror surface. The cage is closed and locked. This allows the attendant to remain in the room but outside of the cage. (pause)

IMAGE?

What you can see through the Cage Room here is the Waste Room. This one is defined by a wall on which the inscription “What is Wealth?” has the word “Waste” superimposed over it. A group of chairs and armchairs are in the room--

MAC: (unintelligible)

DH: --placed near the wall. This furniture was leant to the Cornerhouse staff—or by the Cornerhouse staff for the duration of the exhibition. The concept of the exhibition specifies that the staff can also ask their friends and family for furniture and should in a worst case scenario not enough furniture be available, then others can be brought from the Broken House Thrift Shop. It was crucial to us that “What is Wealth?” does not rely on bought furniture or on a sponsor. Um... (pause)

MAC: (unintelligible)

DH: Perhaps the Storage Room.

MAC: Okay, this one.

DH: Yes. The Storage Room is one that used by the teams mounting the exhibitions. We asked Cornerhouse not to close this room, which is normally hidden by a wall, but again to block it just with a fencing bridge. Um... the opening was important to us because we could see in all these wrapped paintings all the stuff from the last show which hasn't been thrown away yet. Then we could also see this toolbox with all the names of the people of the mounting staff standing there; and finally we also equipped this room with posters we

hanged, like the poster on the left side of Maggie Thatcher, holding the Conservative Manifesto from 1979; in the middle ex-US President Ronald Reagan as a stamp; and on the right side Deng Xiaoping as a wax figure... a former Chinese Premier. All these three were friends and were part of a sort of [an] idea about liberalism. Finally we have also... still....

MAC: The Wheel of Fortune, maybe?

DH: No, no. Back—

MAC: Where?

DH: The last image (unintelligible)

MAC: This one?

DH: Yes. Finally we have also a mockup on a pedestal on the right side of the whole installation, just how we wanted to do it, and then also a poster of the first of May, 2010, when police was blocking people in the street of Zurich who were like... they thought people of the “bad black block.” So this is what was about the Storage Room. Then we have the Wheel of Fortune, which is a picture or an object that visitors can touch.

MAC: Sorry. I (unintelligible)

DH: The values are drawn on the wall, so you have like “I have,” “I am.” That’s the video projection. Actually it’s a video projection like you can see it on the left, and—

MAC: Maybe I can (unintelligible) video?

DH: Now it should work, but it doesn’t. But anyway, it was like a drawing which is always changing.

MAC: Oops! Why doesn’t (unintelligible)

DH: (unintelligible)

Comment: (unintelligible)

DH: Okay. It works. It works.

MAC: Ah! I don't see it here. Okay. (laughter)

DH: So actually the Wheel of Fortune had like, um... "I have"/"I am" values; so for example on the left side you had like "I am for (unintelligible)"; "I am naïve"; "I'm neutral"; "I'm plaintive"; "I'm militant"; "I'm calculative"; "I'm partial"; "I'm generous." And on the other side you had like "I have time"; "I have friends"; "I have enemies"; "I have money"; etcetera. So.... And all these values on this Wheel of Fortune, they were not in [an] opposition connection, but they were just arranged around in a relational way. So you could play this Wheel of Fortune; and three arrows on the wheel actually indicated when you have won. But there was no ruler [sic] for this game, so you didn't know about the rules. But you had to decide that the three arrows on the wheel were stopping in the right point, and then you could tell it to the attendant that you have won. And when he (unintelligible) that you decided that you have won, you were awarded with this print, which was called—or which is called "The Wealth Manifesto."

MAC: (unintelligible)

DH: ... which Marie Antoinette shows you here as a print. It was—In the same time it was... afterwards, also, the cover of a little booklet we printed for this show, where you had again also these drawings with the wheel of fortune. Inside you could fill out how rich you are, how much time you have, if you're for abundance, etcetera; and you could fill in like your own drawings in this booklet. So... yes. Then for the end there were like some....

IMAGE

Also in this show you had some other posters, like for example a photo of this drawing "Not Tax Deductible." You had also a collection of photos of, um.... just we made (1:02:24) in all

[kinds] of museums in the world about donation pots, and also in churches. Finally also the forty questions of Buckminster Fuller's strategy questions, and again photos from "Hits the Ground," this performance we made in Warsaw where we saved the banks.

MAC: Well... So... Now we come to the last project that we present tonight. And for this one I will try to explain the pictures, but not too much; so maybe we can talk on it through the discussion. So what we see here is "Chile (unintelligible)"—"Chile, Invest Now." It's an ad to invest in Chile that was printed in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a German newspaper, in 1973. We found it by chance, quasi, (1:03:25) researching on some other stuff, at the same time that the artist and curator Ingrid Wildi invited us for a show to make in Chile, (laughs) effectively—in Santiago de (1:03:41) Chile; so it was like, "Wow, what is happening? We found this ad from 1973, and Ingrid comes and invites us for this show." She was invited (unintelligible) Her project is named "Dislocacion"—Dislocation—"Cultural Location and Identity in Times of Globalization." We brought one book with that beautiful project in there, uh... by colleagues and stuff. But, yeah, we can lend it. We have one (unintelligible). So after—We had the chance to make one trip to do the research one year before the project. So we came up with—

IMAGE

What we see here is a silkscreen on a panel. This panel blocks the entrance of the exhibition room, and it's on a mobile carriage; it's placed on a mobile carriage. Behind the panel you have a table, a chair and a video. Uh... the—On the table you can read the papers. We organized two papers from 1973; and the.... On the left, uh--on the right you see the panel in the Museo de la Solidaridad in Chile, where it was first shown; and on the right [sic] the reconstruction in the Kunstmuseum Bern one year later. The two [installations]

have the—It's the same dimensions; it's the same element; but they have other materiality, because of the place and because of the people we worked with also. The two installations stayed also in the referred places and [museums]. The one video is called the "(unintelligible 1:05:45);" it's about four minutes; and it's a person counting the four rules, the four Golden rules of neoliberalism: privatize, deregulate, free the market and—What is the fourth? Privatize everything? Shit! I learned it by heart. Privatize.... We'll get to it. We'll come to it later. We'll get to it later.

DH?: Free flow of goods.

MAC: Free flow of goods. Yeah, exactly. Free flow of goods. And we can see also (unintelligible). I mean we're not finished with this image. I think we didn't understand it yet, so we put it (1:06:28) all the time. It's the last series of this work on wealth. We started in Warsaw with this video, then in Manchester, then this one, "Invest and Drawwipe" is the last series of this work on wealth over three years.

IMAGE?

Then you come in the room and you have another wall with video object. It's drawing maps on maps, geographical maps, and erasing the borders and drawing new maps. And when you go behind you have a bed, a blueprint rack, a blueprint table, and a wheel of fortune, this time in solid, not with video.

IMAGE?

So turning around you see here how it looked like. We come back to the blueprint rack, which is an object we saw on architectural sites, where the architects put their plans when they construct a building.

IMAGE

This is the bed, and IKEA bed for Bayon, (phonetic 1:07:37) the European poet. And in Santiago de Chile we went and we bought a bed—This is the only element that we did not construct; the bed is bought in a market in Chile where everybody goes [to] buy their bed for a good price. The video under the bed is called the “Psi Syndrome,” (“Sigh Syndrome”?) and on the blueprint rack it’s about “Paradise (1:08:05) You Can Trust;” it’s about buying in a small apartment. We went and we tried to buy a small apartment, but—No, to visit it, actually. And all the elements on the blueprint rack, you can take them out and look at them, take notes, write on it if you want; and it’s eighteen prints from all our discussions. Sometimes when we discuss we draw small; and we put those drawings with photos that we take when we visit sites.

IMAGE

About searching for a title on the right. Or, uh, prints that goes from shows to shows that we recontextualize with other images. The thing that you see up there is the basement of the museum where we show. The Museo the la Solidaridad in Chile has the Fondation underneath the museum, in the basement, which was a place taken over in 1973 by the dictator of Pinochet, and it was the telephone central of the police. (laughs) That was very bizarre to see that. They have the art collection purposely—the public art collection purposely in this building, which is renovated until—It should be done next week. Uh, next year—Allons! (laughs) And the building underneath the photo is the Museum of—de la Memoria. I think we.... I don’t know if you know that, but every land which went through a dictator has a Museum de la Memoria to retrace the people’s history of the times, the terrible times. Sometimes the way we research, it’s not that we go somewhere and assume

that we are going to drop an installation in a culture that maybe three weeks research is going to be—we're going to do something great or like real scientist or—so the artists we met over there are totally fantastic, (unintelligible); they made good work; they know exactly what they do; and we did our research from Europe. And we started to research what is this thing of global connections with finance, and with 1973. And we found by researching that the popular Swiss functional—Through popular Swiss functional design we found 1-2-3-4-5 [enterprises] who are dealing with uh... mm... Chile-- and not necessarily dealing nice stuff. Anyway.

IMAGE?

And to finish.... I'm sorry. It's not well explained. Maybe I can do it better later. And to finish we add also old pictures; we have an archive of pictures that we always show like this, as archive plates. Those are the greets (phonetic) that we meet in different cities. We have Chile, with the Disco Amnesia over there—that we found. We have, uh... Not Chile—in Santiago de Chile, a disco. We have also London. We have also Zurich, the blue house there. And, uh, Manchester. All greets. (phonetic) Greets (phonetic) from houses or... well.... And this plate is the "Ponopolikiss;" (phonetic) it's an Internet research—We do Internet research sometimes, and—but we don't show them all the time because of the rules and laws. It's not always on text on contracts, but we found this very bizarre, this attitude of politicians all over the globe to kiss kids, (laughter) (laughs) in every manifestation they can do. They all have. And we really tried to find most of it, but some countries can have a hand on the media. It was impossible, for example to find Sarkozy kissing a kid, (laughter) which was the ex-President of France. But we found it. We found it, you know, 'cause they buy—They have people—They pay people to get their photos

back. They control their image, even in the Internet. Well, thank you very much.

(applause, cheers) I hope it was not too long. (long pause)

MAC and DH: (unintelligible private exchange)

Question: Hi.

DH: So....

MAC: Yes?

DH: It would be great to-- now to be in discussion together. I have just a question to [ask], or a request to ask for. Um, please when you talk or ask a question or when you say something, try to be slow. (laughter) And... I—somehow I understand English, but not every particular English; and so if you're speaking too fast, then I won't get it. Thanks.

(pause)

Question: Yes, thank you. Hi. I have a [question]. I first [became] familiar with your work for the project you guys did in Chile, and I really liked what you guys did there. The previous work, I.... The question is how you negotiate to... how you negotiate to not—When institutions—You are (unintelligible) institutions constantly with a lot of the work that you do, you basically.... People ask you to do something, and then you sublimate or you kind of like respond to that particular institution. How you have done it through the years to basically don't get locked in self? You know, I was thinking like about writings, for example Heidegger's **The Broken Tool** [sic]. Like, you know, just when you notice that the thing is broken, then you can aestheticize it, basically. So how do you—And a lot of things that you do with [institutions] is addressing the flaws, and (unintelligible) that flaw. How you have done it to not be parody (1:16:05)... parody the institution itself? How you have

find [sic] a way to get out, once you have done work? I don't know if it makes sense.

(laughter)

MAC (to DH): Did you understand? Did you understand?

DH: I'm not so sure if I understood what you said. (laughter)

Question: All right, so.... Really, really.... Really simple is... people, you know, they.... At this point they invite you to be a part of the show; but they have known the previous history, how much you like can sublimate institutions before. So now how do you do it to like negotiate between like what they're expecting from you, and like—Because the people are basically ready to let you like do these gestures that like kind of make fun—or I don't know—like make fun is a weird way to put it, but like yes, you know, responding to that. How you are negotiating now what the expectations that given institutions have to the respond [sic] that you will give?

MAC to DH: Do you want to answer? I think I'll let you answer.

Comment: (unintelligible)

DH: No, no. I think we got it.

MAC: If we answer wrong, (unintelligible) (laughter) Okay.

DH: But what you're saying, actually, is how do we negotiate, um... with all these expectations that a curator or a museum or an institution brings to with us when they want to make a project with us. So first of all I have to say that the interest is not so big that we are always asked for these kind of projects. (laughter)

MAC: No.

DH: Then the second thing is that actually many curators tell us that we have problems to work with you because we never know what we get from you. So actually this is probably

one image many of the curators have from us, because perhaps—I don't know if they formulate expectations. I rather think they—Sometimes you are in contact with curators or friends or we commission ourselves to create projects; so the one dislocation has been initiated by an artist, who then found another museum to participate. So actually it's not like an institution contacts us and wants just to work with us, but it's rather that it's always in a specific context where an interest somehow exists. And then still we have to find out again, always from zero, what we want to do. So it's....

MAC: (unintelligible) okay?

Question: Yeah.

Question: I have a question about—not too similar to that. But I was wondering, because of the type of critique that you engage in, if you, um, think about other forms, other than the institution. Like I guess I'm thinking of like The Yes Men—Do you aware of them?

MAC: Yeah.

Question: Or like Naomi Klein's [**The Rise of**] **Disaster Capitalism** book. Like if there's like an art version of that? Or if you think of joining forces with those type of people to do a different type of work, ever?

MAC: Actually all the pictures we saw when we do actions, we plan before—We know exactly how much photos we're going to make. Uh... the one when—"The Big Sellout," for example, we had our friend Guy Pernou (phonetic) with [whom] we work all the time; he's a photographer. When we cannot do the photos ourselves because we are in action or stuff, we work with him. And we don't wait for the action of activism in the street; we do it for the photo that we replace it in a context of space, indoors, art context. We didn't show, for example, how we displayed these photos in the Pushli (phonetic 1:20:32) Museum in

Netherlands, but it's classic. It's a photo-series [sic] on the wall. It has a table with all the receipts, and, of course, an explanation: "One hour performance in (unintelligible)" and stuff. So after that we.... We are not into the activism. A lot more to slow down the time and to understand what's going on, actually. (pause) Huh? No? (unintelligible)

Question: Hi.

MAC: Hi.

Question: Hi. I'm curious about your relationship to selling work. You talked a lot about value and you talked a lot about, um, who's funding the work.

MAC: (affirmative sound)

Question: And I'm curious if some of your works are specifically not for sale, if that's part of the work. Particularly the receipts work, I imagine maybe you don't want to get rid of those.

MAC: Uh... Uh... wait a minute.

DH to MAC: Shall I (unintelligible)

MAC to DH (in French): (unintelligible)

DH and MAC converse sotto voce in French: (unintelligible) (laughter) (pause)

MAC: We love to sell the work. Don't worry. (laughter)

DH: So there was one art lover. He and his wife, they produce editions; they're called Edition 5. So they wanted to have.... They asked us if they could have a work of ours or produce a work with us, which means an edition of five; so five pieces, and they don't have to be all the same, but almost. It's like the idea of this edition. So we said, "Okay, this would be maybe interesting, but we don't know each other," so we proposed [to] them that they produce a work where we define five times in which restaurant we go out for eating in

Zurich. They pay always the round of the whole dinner. And at the end we have like—we will have had like five different dinners in five different restaurants in Zurich; they pay for it and they will get five receipts. (laughter)

MAC: We designed them nicely in a box.

DH: Yes. (laughter) So at the end they had like five boxes with five receipts. And they—So they keep always the first work. They pay as well. And they sold others of this—There's still one left of this [series].

Question; (unintelligible) available?

MAC: Jimmy, it is your friends. (1:23:35) That's... He just talked about those people. IMAGE They also.... Regularly they ask for a multiple or five editions, and that's two others that we made for them. The one on the right is called "I Want." It's five pieces, and every time— This one is called "I Want White" And... because the white is missing. And if you get the five [others]—It's every time a color is missing; and every time the title is "I Want (the color which is missing)," for example.

Question: Oh, hello. I was interested in knowing what your ideas are about the Internet as a sphere or a space, because you talked about kind of these different spaces and spheres; and you publish books. And what are your ideas on the Internet as one of these potential spaces or spheres.

MAC: Yeah, the Internet has a potential of what?

Question: A space or one of these public spheres that you've talked about. A public space, yeah.

MAC: It is a public sphere, definitely.

Question: No, like what are your ideas on you utilizing that....

MAC: We use it like everybody else. And uh... (laughter) (laughs)

Question: For... For... But for very specific projects.

MAC: Yes. Well, no, we use—no. (laughter) Not really. We start—In '94—I mean we come from the analogue time. All -- That's why (unintelligible) We don't want to show these works, but they are on the DVD and the book, **We Say What You Give**. This book. There's some [examples]. In '94, uh, at that—It was easy to work with, uh.... What?

Comment/Question: (unintelligible)

MAC: Ah, okay. And... in... Until '94 we could still—It was easy with the technology that we had to steal images from the TV. We worked a lot with ads from the TV, with the news; we integrated (unintelligible) in our stories. And after that came the Internet, and we were with a group of people interested to do some specific stories and to use the Internet as a tool to create artworks. And the thing—And we did, kind of, stories. But there you're with text and pictures. What—And at one point we had the discussion, "If we want to go further, like the real Internet people, we have to learn more on creating the tools to program." And that I think it should be in all media [labs] in all art schools, the hardcore learning of the tools like we learn how to gesso a canvas, how to prepare a stone for a print, or how to handle the camera in the light. All the people working with the Internet should know how to program, because it's all in the programation [sic] if you don't want to deal with games and stuff, and.... Or—(unintelligible) We prefer—We've come to that; we have our (1:27:02) know-hows; we know exactly where we're good at and where we work with the know-how of others. So—And it took—It would have taken so much time for us to catch up on this knowledge that we said, "No." If we need it we will work with somebody—an artist—doing this kind of stuff. And we came back to more—The ten first years we were

always with—in the studio working with media. And after that we decided to go back more in the physical space. I mean the last installation you saw, like the “Dislocation” piece, the “Invest and Drawwipe,” it’s massive physical. Everything is drawn and things. But actually it’s for to create a space with a body the people can stay in (unintelligible) But it can be [interesting]. I don’t know if we are going to go back to this kind of stuff. I don’t know. I think you do it better than we do, no? No? (laughs) (laughter) With this tool. I don’t know.

Question: My turn? Okay. I have many questions. Two quick ones. One, can you tell us all what your relationship is to a dialectic way of thinking? And Two is: How much time do you--? When you’re working on a piece, when you’re working on a big project, do you spend a lot of time like making jokes and [stuff]?

MAC: (laughs)

Question: I mean like I get the sense, like the woman’s shoe in the shit, and—

MAC: Yeah, (unintelligible)

Question:-- like that there’s always this kind of.... Like I don’t—I think maybe I’m projecting the humor, but I see the humor in the work.

(DH and MAC converse sotto voce)

MAC: The first question was? The [dialectic]

Question: Dialectic. Explain.

MAC: The dialectic thinking?

Question: Yes, what’s your relationship to dialectic thinking?

MAC: It’s inevitable. But it’s not to be used as a form of... not necessary. There’s other way of—You said it, I think, in your introduction and we talked about it: Booling (phonetic)?

Question: Boolean.

MAC: Boolean. This kind of....um ... breaks, and it [opens up] to unexpected other ways. I mean this juxtaposition of things, I think is for the moment we're more interested as a linear explanation where an apotheosis (1:29:37), a development, and even the synthesis. (1:29:43) We're not interested in the (unintelligible, sounds like "synthese") in the dialectic, right? But more on the deconstruction of things. And we stopped trying to agree on every element. I mean if we are a group and if what we say, finally, that the other people involved are also part of work, you have let go; you have to not control. That's why eventually some installation seems dense, you know? And we add and complexity. And I think we feel goo in this complexification. (1:30:24) And to add things is not that means that you have more elements in a room, but it's just the tension between the dispositive (unintelligible). Is this...? Yeah? Okay.

DH: Perhaps—

MAC: (unintelligible) right?

DH: --asked a question about making jokes.

MAC: Ah, making jokes.

Question: (unintelligible)

DH: We want.... Of course we want to have fun. But also... They're also very conflictual.

(1:31:05) And the ideas we meet and people we meet at the context in which we are interested, they are frictional; and all these frictions they are the best resources or material, or also ground for all kind of jokes. I mean that's how it happens. But also when you have a drawing like the one with this shoe—woman's shoe upon the shit—where it's written also... um....

MAC: (unintelligible)

DH: "Independence doesn't know any price." (unintelligible) this drawing—I mean this drawing we made the first time like the end of the Eighties, and then it came up again in 2003. So it's also—again what Marie Antoinette said—once already we are working on wide span of time, and many things are just lying, rotting in front of them; so until they suddenly become something interesting to us or until we discover them also. (pause)

Question: I have many questions also. But where does the name RELAX come from?

MAC: (laughs) From the t-shirt outside. (laughs) (laughter)

Question: And the other question—

MAC: Okay, that's it.

Question: --I have. Well, you can—

MAC: Yes? What is it?

Question: Is...um... I was in a collaborative project for sixteen years. And it was two people and we each had like very particular jobs. So what are your jobs?

MAC: I do everything, of course—(laughter)

Question: And how long—? And--(laughs) Ah, okay.

MAC: (laughs)

Question: And why has it worked so long? Why is it--?

MAC: What?

Question: Why have you—How have you kept it together for so long? It's very difficult.

MAC: It is. (laughs) (unintelligible), the RELAX question. You can answer the (unintelligible) Um... well, which actually you should never do like with it. We changed names three times; and that's not good for an art career. Really, don't do that. That's (unintelligible) First we were named (unintelligible): and years later CH2, which is an

explosive chemical: “C” for Chiarenza, “H” for Hauser, 2. But we found out it’s an explosive mixture, as we told you. And when we worked with a city planner, Daniel Coptier (phonetic 1:3:51), for four years, we had—The people saw that then we had beautiful work—we made beautiful work, a competition for a public space, where they treat wood, right? Where they treat wood in Switzerland. And we were so pissed off that we lose the project—lost the project—we took the name of the project as our name. It’s so banal as that. (laughter) And because—And the project (laughing) whose name was “Relax.” And it was kind of an emotional takeover. (laughter) “You don’t like me, I’m going to—You’re going to hear it.” (laughs) (laughter) So it’s something like that, you know? So...

DH: Then the other question, I mean—

MAC: (unintelligible) And also—Sorry. (laughter) And also it’s a no-name. It’s a no-name. It’s not a name. It’s not an identity. It’s not a name, you know? It’s RELAX. It’s not—It’s an adjective; it’s something like that. Voila (unintelligible)

DH: Also, when you Google RELAX, you won’t actually find it. Or you find many RELAXes. So about... um... what—how do we share our work, or how did it work?

Question: (unintelligible)

DH: Actually it’s very easy. It’s very easy. (laughter) I think the extraordinary thing—We always think the extraordinary thing is that, in arts—in the arts cooperation is something special, or specific, or complicated, or difficult, or perhaps amazing also; but for me it’s rather that I have the impression that when I look at the filmmakers or at architects or at all [kinds] of people working together that actually they do it every day. It’s only in the art where it seems to be something very extraordinary; and it has probably to do very much with economic reasons that somehow—and also the—yeah, also the education of how—

how one thinks art has to be made, in which conditions and frameworks it should take place and so on. And also that actually the education is very traditional around that, that we have always—still—we are still insisting on this signature of the individual who is, um... who—

MAC: (unintelligible) we are all egomaniacs; this is also important. (laughter) But I think it's over- (laughs) overestimated. I think, uh, the... Well, that's all I wanted to say. (laughter)

DH: Yes, so... I'd rather consider it as—on the one hand as no big deal; and on the other hand I'm very proud to work with Marie Antoinette since such a long time.

MAC: Thank you. (laughter)

Question: (unintelligible) Do you know what I mean?

MAC: That's why we don't do films. (laughter)

Question: I'm wondering about the number of questions that you posed in the lecture, and, I think, in your practice. And when I make art I start with an idea, which is in some way like starting with a certainty. And it's like a sense of something that's certain. And when you pose a question, that's starting with an uncertainty. So I wonder if you do start with an uncertainty, if you do start with a question as opposed to starting with an idea, and what the difference is.

MAC: It's a back and forth. Here we kind of—you know—put it compact for tonight. But actually, sometimes in the atelier—We share an atelier with five other people. We each have our spaces, but we share also the kitchen and the coffeepot and stuff. And in the atelier you come in; you have drawings, you have models; you have—Maybe Daniel is on the computer, and he's certain that he has the best idea for the next show. And...uh... and I

doubt. And I start to ask questions. Another time he's going to do that. If we are three or four—Like lately we were seven for an experiment in the audience—Tbilisi, where you were. And it's all a matter of—Why we lasted so long. I think at one point you decide to accept that we don't have the same rhythm, the same way of approaching things. And you accept that. We have—We are slow, per se. We are slow. We need a lot of time to realize our projects. Not an idea, not an object like we see like this, you know. And sometimes the certainty is—which we both have that, but we try to push it to not have an idea right away. And that's why maybe the curators—Today it's difficult, since digital time, because before '94/'95 you could be invited for a show without a concept. The people—the artists and artist curators and curators and other cultural actors, they... uh.... “We have a budget, not much, but let's do something.” Today the system is so hard that before to get the funding, any kind of—in institutions, out of institutions—you have to have a concept. So, you know, this is a part of.... So how do we go now, if we don't want to have an idea? So we cheat sometimes. We put our certainty in a first concept; we send them to the curators; but we're going to realize something else when they have the funding. For example, you know? So (laughs). But I—It was not really the question, right?

Question: Yeah (unintelligible) anything. Yeah, I thought that was a great answer. I think the question-asking is a kind of anti-certainty. You know, like you say, kind of pushing that away, kind of refusing any certain sense of ideology or space or institutionality. Um... so that was the thing that rang the loudest for me.

DH: Yes. What we also observe very often in the art world is suddenly that everybody has to be so sure about her or his ideas. Also something what we think is the result of the professionalization of the art schools, which brings out that very often we meet people

where you have most of the time the impression that they are all afraid of making... um... false stuff or mistakes, or stuff like this. I think that's—that's.... To us at least that's very problematic. So it's very important to be not certain on a lot of things. (pause)

Question: I had a question. It seems, um, a lot of your projects deal with revealing the power structure or how agency is negotiated within certain institutions. And I was curious, based on the questions you come—that you come up with—how do you, um, determine whether a project was successful or if it was a failure? (long pause)

MAC: (unintelligible) successful? I mean if we quantify—

Question: Or do you think that—do you assess your projects that way?

MAC: No, it can't fail. But if it fails we don't show; I mean there is no show. We made once a picture, knowing that we were going to not win the competition. But the picture was too important. It was a public piece for the new migration office based in Bern, the political capitol of Switzerland, Bern. And the building looked a shopping mall and stuff, but they were putting [on] this competition; and we put up a sign, like a sign like maybe the size of a-- not so big, but the size of a—Uh? Pardon? (unintelligible) IKEA. IKEA, you know?

(speaks in French, not transcribed) And we wrote in big neon letters, "Welcome Home."

(laughter) So we knew that we are not going to win this project, but we needed this picture somehow. And it's okay.... We don't do institutional critique. We (unintelligible) Even in the Nineties what we did is trying to reconsider some questions on how we function in the system; because we love the—I think the art places are terribly important. This is our memory. This is the place of... what we share with the people, all our stories. And any kind of art places are very important. We are not there to—it's not the art places itself [sic] that bothers; it's something else. Is it—that—does it answer?

Question: Yes.

Question: Hi again. I'm sensing with some of the questions a kind of generational drift in terms of what's a priority for making things. So, because I got to talk to you about this stuff before, I wonder if you would share some of your thoughts about... just a baseline of conflict day to day. Like how.... I just have to say, I want (laughs) you to say that thing to me about breathing to these guys. And I want you to explain what it's like to just have that as a norm. You know what I'm talking about? Conflict.

MAC: The conflict must be breathed out. Yeah.

Question: No, you said conflict is like breathing.

MAC: It's like breathing. Yeah. Conflict is like breathing. But I don't know how to.... Yes. Yeah, with a fire inside, yeah? Huh?

Question: (unintelligible) Your capacity for dealing with conflict is a normal thing.

MAC: Yeah.

Question: It's not necessarily critique, it's just life.

MAC: Yes, exactly. Exactly right. (unintelligible)

DH: Yes. Yes, you already answered, actually the question. Uh.... (laughs) (unintelligible other voices)

MAC: And it doesn't come.... But the conflict really should be in the pieces, in the element, (1:48:23) and not directed to the people; that's very important, because that's very—And that's why, maybe, we are in the arts and not activists, you know, or something like that. But I'm not sure. Maybe it's some stupid answer that I just made [up]. (unintelligible)

DH: Traditional—The traditional idea is that conflicts have to be pushed to the periphery, to somewhere else.

MAC?: Yes. (unintelligible) (laughter)

DH: (laughs) And, uh, yes. Or historians have this kind of approach also, and politicians, of course. They push it towards the frontier somewhere. And the conflict is in the middle of everything and has its place there also.

MAC: (speaks in French, not transcribed) Maybe the last question? It was the last question. (unintelligible)

Question: How many pieces (unintelligible)?

MAC: Oh. (laughs)

Question: I know you've done much more work than what you showed us.

MAC: Yeah.

Question: (unintelligible)

MAC: Well.... Hm... Uh.... (pause) Forget it. No, there's no way that we wanted to.... We could have talked two [hours]. I mean we were generously invited to say, "You can talk as long as you want." But—And.... But no, it's not because worked so long, that we made so much, that we are going to talk three hours. No. It's a lot. I don't know. Maybe.... We said... about....

Question: (unintelligible)

MAC: About. About, yeah.

DH: No, it's less.

Question: (unintelligible)

DH: No, ten.

Unidentified voices: (unintelligible)

DH: No, it's ten. But anyway(laughter) (laughs)... What I wanted to [say] We also--and you know, it's also.... I mean we're talking too long.

MAC: Yes.

DH: So we also thought that we would like to show you this video, *Reservoir News*, but not tonight, because we were already talking a lot, and [exchanging] a lot.

MAC: (unintelligible)

DH: And this video is thirty minutes; so but perhaps there are other formats and moments and possibilities where we could share together--

MAC: Yes.

DH: --like screenings and other stuff where we can also bring this in. (applause, cheers)

END OF RECORDING