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**SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL
OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
Skowhegan, Maine**

**Lecture by Inigo Manglano-Ovalle
Summer, 2002**

Linda Earle: [Clapping] I want to thank you both for being so generous with us. We've really enjoyed you and it seems like it just went like that, so thank you very much, and we'll miss you the rest of the summer. Safe home. Take us with you! I give you Geoff Hendricks, who is going to introduce Inigo. [Clapping.]

So, welcome to the, I guess it's the first visiting artist, but it's the 6th lecture, Barbara Lee, artist lecture series...lecture. [laughter.] And it's my pleasure to introduce Inigo Manglano-Ovalle, and excuse me if I am mispronouncing your name. Life has a wonderful way of circling around and we discover that there are lots of associations. Inigo is from Chicago, born in Spain, came to Chicago, and his roots are very much there. He studied there and he is currently an associate professor of the University of Chicago...University of Illinois, Chicago campus. And has focused a lot of his work on Mies van der Rohe. And the first work of yours that I was perhaps familiar with was at the Whitney Biennial two years ago, and probably a number of you have seen that particular work, called *The Kiss*. And its this screen, two-sided, and there's a window washer washing the Farnsworth House outside of Chicago in Illinois, and a person inside. And there's this constant shift of movement between the obscurity of the soap in the windows to it becoming coming clean. The sense of art as revelation, the kind of transformation, the whole metaphor of sight there. And with it being a Mies building, it

was especially interesting, fascinating, I was really captivated by it and spent a lot of time there, had no idea who had done it. It was just this wonderful work. Mies had special connections for me. I grew up in Chicago, my father taught in IIT, Illinois Institute of Technology, engineering, and Mies came from Germany during the war. My father was head of the English department. And Mies' English was not good. And my father, being in the English department, was the person who was there, and helping out, helping him improve his English. Friendship developed there so there were occasions when he was in the living room of the home so I actually met him, a very special memory. So Inigo's worked a lot with Mies. When there was "Mies in America" at the Whitney, your work was very much integrated with that. There's an exhibition that the Cranbrook Art Museum organized that's currently at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, if I read my dates and facts correctly. He's shown in, well, throughout the country from El Paso, uh, yeah, San Antonio, sorry, yes. Also San Diego, Tijuana, dealing with another, in another exhibition there, dealing with the question of borders. The question of two sides, of borders, of genetic makeup, male/female, two sides of the window, are themes that find their work through your work in a very fascinating way. And in looking through the material on you, I discovered that you were the recent recipient of the MacArthur Genius Award... [Clapping]...which we're delighted about. There's actually another recipient of the genius award here in Fred. Skowhegan is absolutely swarming with geni, I'd guess you'd say. So without getting further into all of this, genius needs no introduction, right? [Laughter.] It's a great pleasure to have you here and we look forward to your talk and your visit. Thanks. [Clapping.]

Inigo Manglano-Ovalle: Well, thank you Jeff. Technically its called MacArthur fellows award. And all of us who have it know we're just fellows, both men and women, but fellows. So this is really great being here, for a number of reasons. My good friends, Byron Kim and Glenn Ligon, who are on the Board of Governors, have been trying to get me up here for awhile. And I have always been afraid to come out to places stuck in the middle of nowhere with a whole bunch of artists stuck in the middle of nowhere. [Laughter.] So finally Linda coaxed me into it and we worked a schedule, and it was great. And then we arrived here, my wife Barbara, as soon as we hit the beach, or see

where we're staying right by the kitchen, she goes, what do you mean we're only here for four days? So here we are. Anyway, so...Well, I should be prepared but this is the first lecture I have given after cocktails and a round of soccer. [Laughter.] Anyway. So you know, what I would like to do this evening is just take you through some recent work, but to sort of preface that work by where perhaps some of it started. What one does as a younger artist that all of the sudden for some odd reason gets noticed, and gets people to ask you to do more of it. And why that's good, and also why that also might be bad, and what you do about it. I have been doing both—sort of capitalizing on a good thing that happened many years ago, and also trying to recuperate from it, always. In 1991, 92, I had recently graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago with an MFA in sculpture. My undergraduate degree is in comparative literature and linguistics but I had always been making objects in these little studios in Williams College, and also making performance, and also delving in animation and film at that time. So I had decided to go to the Art Institute of Chicago, and I went there in 85 and was a total zombie for the first year, walked around not understanding what this huge institution, this big art factory, as I call it, was all about and what our purpose was. I felt like we were all on a conveyor belt, pumping out these artists. So I decided to leave the Art Institute and found out I had to get six signatures to leave the Art Institute. But if I took a leave of absence, I had to get only one signature, which was my own. And if I didn't come back in two years, it would be null and void, so I left under a leave of absence and I went to teach at St. Augustine Bilingual College in Chicago. And it's an Episcopalian college, deeply rooted in the politics of bilingual education rather than English as a second language. And I taught their art history, but what I really taught was critical thinking, teaching adults and young people from Chicago and from all over the world who had come to Chicago, to think critically, and to think in their own language, Spanish. And I used the vehicle of art to teach it. And I had a little Mitsubishi pick-up truck and we had three sort of places that we'd go—on the north side of Chicago, where the main base was, down south in Pilsen, a Mexican-American neighborhood,...the north side, which is a Central-American neighborhood, and the west side, where I currently live, which is a Puerto-Rican neighborhood. And I would teach there and I would carry two screens and two slide-projectors and go and teach. And I had a great time doing this, which kind of compelled

me to think that maybe I'd sort of like to teach, and to do that, I should get my terminal degree, which thank god for artists is an MFA. You need not go any further. So I got the...went back and I decided to sort of continue with sculpture, but only take classes in theory, and art history, and literature, and get my degree that way. And at that time I was investigating a lot of things that had to...that were part of that moment, in the late 80s. This was like 88, 89, which were issues of identity, institutional critique, and politics of difference. Because I had been at St. Augustine, very much a community activist, would do a lot of my projects in collaboration with many different agencies and many different people, and mix my activism and politics with my work. Which is something that I think I still do, although now, I separate it. For me, as a political activist my community, its more advantageous for the work that we have to do on the west side of Chicago, to actually do it as a political activist. And now, at this point in my career, it's more advantageous to talk about the politics or ideas as an artist. So I continue to juggle those two things, but at this moment, separate, and every once in awhile they come together and come out again, and so there is no set recipe. But I was, because of things I was doing, invited as an artist for a project in Chicago called "Culture in Action," curated by Mary Jane Jacobs, back in '91, '92. And I think I was invited because they had brought in all these artists who were doing interesting projects, like Suzanne Lacey and Daniel Martinez, and so forth. But they had to have some local homegrown artists there. And they also had to have artists who lived and worked in their community. So this was really the first time that someone selected me for the demographics I kind of fit. And at that time, as a young artist, I was only too happy. It was an opportunity to do a big project and to connect two things. And I decided to work in my neighborhood and developed a very complicated, large ongoing project that took about a year and a half to produce, and subsequently has in a sense spun off on its own, we called it Street-Level Video, and it was kind of an interventionist group of ad hoc young men and women gorilla video makers and installation artists. And it's now spun off into a very large non-for-profit, called street level youth media. My role was to be, first the artist, then to move and help them to obtain grants as an artist director for about a year, and then move on to the board and then from the board to the advisory board, and from the advisory board to advisory committee, and then to eternal friend, with a pager for every reason. And every once in

awhile I go back and I work mostly now what I call the originals, young men and women who started with me and now are in many different fields, whether they are in art or studying math in Michigan and so forth. But this was a project that really in a sense addressed issues not only community, of difference, and the issues of that community, in terms of identity, and how media represented that community, especially young people, especially Latino men and women, but other issues that were very close to them, such as gentrification, health, gender issues, and much at that time was figured into also issues of violence, either real or mediated violence, and what I mean by that is either real violence in the neighborhood or the violence multiplied by media in the neighborhood. So this was about 91, 92. I am coming from a graduate school, heavily involved in theory, heavily involved in a lot of political theory at that time. It did talk about difference, it did talk about the other...that had its roots in feminism that had its practitioners, with the border-arched workshops, many community-based groups. And it was a moment in which in a sense a multi-cultural discourse was developing and becoming accepted and ultimately that got in a sense appropriated into central institutions and almost became a moment, cut off by what the art world does with almost any form of art, which is to sort of subsume it, to take it and to digest it to make it very palpable, but at the same moment to make it yet another trend. It was also the moment while this work being pulled into the center. The Biennial then was about this. Shows in Chicago were about this. Voices from the margin got opportunities to come into center, and present their voices. And many were angry, many were incisive. All were intelligent, and were completely articulate and astute and knew what they were talking about, and perhaps were too, in a sense, sharp. At that moment also, what happened, occurred were two pivotal things in terms of culture. And how it affected art and how it affected my work. One was the beating of Rodney King in LA, and then the subsequent insurrection in LA that followed. And also how the media covered that. And also how the media and culture responded to that subsequently. What we in a sense did in Culture-in-Action artists, we believed was part of a trajectory of art history and contemporary work that had its roots as far back as one would want to go, if one wanted to go to the situation of 1960s, or Dadaist work, or back to constructivist work or back to site-specific work, one wanted to go to the border-arch workshops. But we saw that in order for our work to be meaningful outside of a

marginalized community, that the work had to address and make its social change within the discourse of art. So we always saw ourselves, as wanting to be in that discourse, and affecting change within that landscape. And so we always saw ourselves as wanting to be in that discourse, and affecting change within that landscape. That is, that you could change a term, change word, change a way in which things were written and spoken about. Was the landscape, was the social and activist component of all artists, whether you worked in the community or whether you are painting in your studio, we felt that was our alliance. Yet we also felt, as we were developing our work, that new rhetoric was popping up in terms of this work. And I think it had to do in part with curators and writers, and also other artists who developed terms like new genre art and so forth. In other words, terms or ways to write about our work that sort of in a sense, ripped it from history and wanted to proclaim it as something new. In fact, almost wanted to sort of present it as an avant-garde, which for some of us was extremely dangerous, because it uprooted our place in history, and uprooted then where real change can occur, which was in the discourse of art. And subsequently what you did find, and still continue to find, but it happened then, was that this was also the moment when the NEA stopped funding individual artists, and started to fund community-based programs, and mostly community based programs in the barrio, or the hood, whether its East LA, or Watts, or the Bronx, or the South Side of Chicago, or in my neighborhood, West Side Chicago. Two things were happening: one, the individual artists who in a sense had made the groundwork for this activist work, was losing their funding. And then funding was coming to programs, and artists were coming in to do it. But artists were now coming in as kind of a recipe. They looked at Culture-In-Action, and other really good programs, in which artists were really the makers of it, and sort of took our projects and sort of said, this is the way to do it. These are successful. And as an artist, I always know, you know that almost everything you do, you recognize its importance to you because it fails, not because it succeeds. And that's why you go on and make the next one. And if you're smart, you are always recognizing your failures. In a sense, all of the sudden having a group of works, sort of clout, not clout, embrace this success, and create a paradigm, which was kind of disturbing, at the same time that work and support was being taken away from it. So we have these things happening at this time. This was 92,

93, 94. Rockefeller was also doing the same thing—moving away from individual artists to this, and so forth. And, so at that time, I was still working with street-level video, and I'll show some work that I was doing subsequent to that. I am not going to show any of the street-level video work. But I was still trying to see how my work still fit within, and still have a dialogue, even with other practitioners, that is practitioners who are studio-based, who understand that their work is also socially important. It's something that I used to say a lot to people who would come and sort of applaud you for doing what you're doing, and then would also say to young artists who were working hard in their studio, and were now under some sort of ethical dilemma about why they shouldn't be out at the front lines doing some work... which is to say that in my neighborhood, if you come in as a plumber or as a doctor, you don't all of the sudden change your language and become a social engineer. You are expected to be the best plumber, the best doctor, and that community expects the best from you. And then likewise, artists in the community were really contributing to the community, they were contributing not as necessarily on-the-street activists, but were perhaps the poet on the street, or the *salcedo* on the third floor, or the painter, and maybe nobody in the community knew what they were painting or writing or doing, but they knew, they said, "that's our painter," down the block, "that's our artist." So its really important at that time to realize that at that time studio-based practice was something that should run parallel to external based projects. And that there should always be an ability to go in and out of these things. So that kind of just sets up the first slides that I did. You'll see that some of the work that I am doing is kind of responding to having done street-level video, being continually asked to come back and replicate this project, and replicate this process. And my responses to that.

So, I am going to start with the first two slides. Oh, I have the slides. Okay. Thank. Oh, I have them upside down. Okay. Thank you.

Let's see. Okay. So, what I am going to do is start off with a failed project and failed project because once I did it, I didn't like it and then I never did anything with it. But it's been in my slide case. And it's a series of work that I did in my neighborhood at the same time that I was doing street-level video, which was to in a sense document the street

at the moment just, you know, a minute, two minutes after there had been a gunshot, or a drive-by, or some particular violence—that moment in which the public space emptied itself out of the body and became in a sense, disembodied and quiet and still. And it was a moment that you had to catch fairly soon because three minutes later, everybody would be back on the street, asking where their brother was or finding out what it is...was occurring. But it's at this moment that I was really interested in. It was also a project that I didn't know what to do with because there were like very sort of plain, like, kind of photographs. They were almost like journalistic. And I had really no place to place it. But a number of years back, I looked at these slides, and I said, you know, something was happening here that would continue throughout the work. And one of those elements would be this notion of public space, but of public space in which the body was hidden from display. Right. That identity or otherness wasn't there for you to visualize and to see and to incorporate and yet it was present. Or it was present by the very fact that it had emptied itself out. And the other thing that it had to do was that moment of nothing happening, which is going to happen I am sorry, a lot in my work throughout this lecture. This whole return to nothing happening. And also to do with the notion of climate. But a notion of climate that talks about weather and time, and also addresses a social condition, a social moment. So what I am going to do...at the same time, not because of my work and not because of ethical dilemmas with the art world, but just because I have been and continue to be, thank god, for different reasons, a chronic insomniac, was trying to figure out a way that I could go to sleep, whether it was AM radio, talk shows, bad television, or drinking, sedatives, and so forth. My wife Barbara threatened me with getting a set of New Age CDs, of bubbling brooks and birds and stuff that you could record here, like loons and waves, to lull and relax me to sleep. It was the kind of thing that was probably completely appropriate but just as a political being, felt completely inappropriate. That is, that I would escape or would enter into a culture of New Age that was about marketing a social denial, creating an artificial environment in which politics could be erased from your self and your body and you could go to another site and thereby relax in an artificial nature. I decided, I am going to do my own New Age CD. And so I decided to do a New Age CD, but I said, it has to have sounds like from my neighborhood. Well, my neighborhood is car alarms, boomboxes, gunfire, people screaming and fire, my 8-month

son goes to sleep with this at night. It doesn't bother him at all that you are all drinking out in front of our house last night and that fireworks were going off because that's where he lives. [Laughter/clapping.] And actually, we slept very well too because it felt like home. But what I decided to do was to do a piece, an 11-minute summer rainstorm that comes suddenly and then takes about 11 minutes to retreat. But it was all in a sense based on one real sound and this real sound was recorded when I was asked to help out a couple of students, a couple of artists from Street-Level Artists do another project, and while we were interviewing somebody on the issue of gentrification in another neighborhood, and there happened to be a drive-by, and there happened to be one of these accidental shootings on target, and very tragically, whatever, somebody went down that shouldn't have gone down. But I realized that I had this one sort of millisecond of sound which is out, somewhere half the way block down, this sudden burst of a gunshot. And I took that gunshot and used that gunshot together with very fancy sound engineering, and with the help of somebody from UIC who does fractal equations and chaos theory type math, converted it into a summer rainstorm. And we had to use these equations so that the rain wouldn't become rhythmic, it would become arbitrary, like rain is. And so I am going to play that. So the first sound you hear, right, is that gunshot, and its going to be loud and then every subsequent sound that you hear is that sound multiplied and more: free-sampled, morphed into either lightning or thunder, other rain, rain far away, rain close, crickets chirping, whatever, okay? So we'll go ahead with that.

[Loud gunshot...other sounds.]

So this goes on for 11 minutes. You know, and needless to say, as a CD for relaxation, it failed because I would wake up every 11 minutes. And so what you do with things that fail in the real world is...what do you do with it? You make it into art. Things that don't function in the real world are great things for becoming art. So I took that piece and I made a piece called *Sonambulo*. And this is one version of *Sonambulo* at the Art Institute. It's called *Sonambulo II Blue*. [You can turn that down slightly. I can talk over it.] It's an installation commission by them, and part of their collection. And the installation is on the other side of these doors and behind this beautiful painting by Glenn

Ligon. So behind these glass doors is a 75-foot loggia or long gallery that is usually housing a Dan Flavin, and a Martin Puryear, they never know what to do with it, so I asked for this space and converted it into a listening site for this piece. [You can turn it up a little higher.] So when you come into this piece, what you see is this room and you don't see it quite this blue. It shows up in the slides. But it's a room with, you know, two...about four sculptures in it. All the sculptures in it are either media elements or speakers. At one end of the room are these speakers with the aluminum cones, mirrored and stereo'd by the ones at the other end of the room. And then at the middle of the room is a large woofer and then a big black box that contains all the equipment. And when you come into the room, you might come in at this moment. You might not even hear it. Or if you hear it, it's kind of a white noise. Or you might come in with the crickets and it might relax you and then it goes into ten seconds of silence and then suddenly you might be in the room where the gunshot, in this case, in this installation, ricochets right through you and back to the other room. And what you start to notice, the other thing about this installation, its just a simple sort of blue film that covers the windows, that's very pronounced in this slide, but when you go in, you don't notice that until you're in there for quite awhile, until you start to look at your own body and start to notice that something is different about the *tes* (?), the tone of your skin. And you might be exiting the room and approach a label and the label tells you what the recording is, and it tells you that in a sense, we repeated these gunshots in different formations, for eleven minutes, sort of multiplied the one gunshot 385 thousand times to get this site. So in a sense I started to do what I couldn't do for myself. I did it for the art-going public, which is to create a site of escape for you, and then possibly, possibly create a moment of recognition, when you read the label and recognize the source of it, in which case, then you re-read the work and the experience, or you re-read the emptiness and the nothingness of the space with a whole set of different sort of information. [We can keep that going. You can keep that going.]

Then I was asked to go to San Antonio, ArtPace, but I was the only artist I know that was asked at that time to actually come down, and please can you do a public service project? You know, do something in the community and so I said, okay, I will. I'll do something.

And so what I did was created this work, which is called *The El Niño Effect*, which is a free public-service, sensory deprivation spa that was free to the community of Santa Fe (sic.) And what you see when you come in. This is actually a photograph at Christopher Grimes, but it's very similar to what we did at ArtPace. You see these two tanks, in the middle of the space, kind of these dumb sort of dead kind of modernist, seventies shapes, implements in space. It's the white cube and two monitors. And there's a similar sound to this, another kind of white noise. And then you start to find out information about this piece. You find out that these are sensory-deprivation tanks, ones that exist, it's the same style that's been recreated by dolphin works since the 70s. And it's somebody who subsequently worked with Dr. John Lilly, who subsequently worked with Timothy Leary and so forth to create the sensory deprivation tank as an inquiry into the workings of phenomenological and psychological investigation. Dr. John Lilly proposed that if you extracted all sensory stimulation from a person, you would flat line them. They would go flat. They would go in a sense into nothingness. And so in order to test this, he created an environment in which all of your senses would go. It would be lightproof, soundproof, and you would be allowed to float; hence, the water had to be salinated, hence the water had to be your own body temperature. So after two minutes of meditating in there, you couldn't even tell where the water started and ended on your skin. And then he went in and tried it and found out that it was the complete opposite. That the body is not some sort of psychological or physiological sack. It is also a historical and political entity and therefore you carried all of your history in there and by carrying all your history in there, what you did when all your sense were deprived of you, you created your own senses. You began to hear things, see things, feel things, float, travel, move, while you were still, which sort of in a sense contradicted his thesis but then became a great tool during that time, for investigations with acid. So this was the place where they investigated a lot of that work. So in the site, I have these tanks and I also used these tanks because they were part of the 70s style but they were also very similar to works I really liked that were done by Robert Morris, called *Notes on Sculpture*, which were these white, sort of polygonal, fiberglass sort of pieces that he had done also in the 70s, around the same time. And all I did was take one of the tanks and have them duplicate, make another one so everything was flipped or mirrored. That's basically it. On the wall are two small monitors, which

again, you get another New Age element, this time a video, a very beautiful, meditative video of clouds moving back and forth in a digital loop so that they never stop, never reconvert, they just kind of move, move back, in a kind of endless digital chip. So there's no disc that has to return to start. And what they are is a time-lapse loop that we did in Nogales, Mexico and Nogales, Arizona, right on the border, pointing up, catching clouds going north and south between the border. And we were lucky to catch a windshear, which meant that clouds were travelling at distinct, different elevations in different directions. Some were going north across the border and others were going south. So there was this moment, idyllic moment of a windshear occurring, which is the portense of some political calamity or climatological calamity, or an airplane crashing or something, that never actually comes to fruition, stays in this kind of idyllic sort of state. And then the second gallery, in the back, both in San Antonio and in Santa Monica, was converted into twin showers, exact sort of copies of each other. In this case, one single shower that had two working shower heads and stuff, and were equipped with towels and lotion and shampoos, and slippers and so forth. And you were invited to participate in *The El Niño Effect* and the only demand that I placed was that you would do it with someone else. Someone had to sign up along with you so you were asked to shower beforehand, and get your body oils off, and then we provided towels for you and lotions afterward, so that you could get the salt off your body. And usually we had somebody who in a sense volunteered. We coached (?) everybody at the opening. Subsequent to that, throughout the duration, there was a waiting line, so the thing would be operating continuously during its exhibit, with people waiting to find out if there were any sort of drops. I also did a series of four photographs that were part of this work. This one over there is called Niño and Nina and this one is called Niño and Nina and this one is called Nina Nina and this one, obviously is called Niño and Niño. These are photographs of participants in the project. Many times you would come in here and you would find that there would be towels on the top of the thing and if you attempted to come up and open, an attendant would stop you and say there is somebody floating. On one level, what I was addressing were like three things. One was to do a public service project in which I could reduce communities into things into sort of definitions that were made on the most intimate terms. That is, a community could first start by two people who chose to be with each

other, right? And then three, how could I work and collaborate or give something to a community and not put their body on display, hence, I could use their body but then also hide it at the same time. And then the other thing that I did, in *The El Niño Effect*, which was occurring at the same time that we were having our last really big El Niño, was to address the whole notion of the El Niño effect in the United States, as a weather and cultural metaphor. The El Niño effect is called that because during colonial periods, when Spanish conquistadors and priests came to America around the end of the year, there would be a sudden onslaught and havoc in weather and they called it El Niño, which means the child. And they meant by that the Christ child. But this El Niño was one that was colicky, one that came out wailing and screaming, and made devastation. So that's the root of it. But then in the United States, around this time, which was the 90s, which was also the time of immigration across the border from San Diego to Tijuana, which was the time the wall was beginning to be built between those two towns, the El Niño effect as a climatological effect became a cultural effect. That is, the El Niño effect became an American term. Describe a climatological event, not this Christ child coming across the Pacific, hitting South America, but was in a sense in an unspoken sense, the brown child coming from south to north, the unwanted brown child, the immigrant, the alien crossing that border. And so those were reasons why I named it that and worked with that as a kind of metaphor.

Okay, so then I liked doing this. I liked doing these projects, where I could kind of address issues of escapism, and issues of politics, and also issues of displaying the body and issues of a pseudo-therapy, right? And so I created the subsequent piece, but very much like this in the sense that you always had to participate with two people, but instead of limited to an hour and a half, you could stay as long as you want, or not stay. I did a piece called *Sad Light* and *Sad Light*...this is actually pre-Farnsworth house, where I am beginning to use the Barcelona couches, or Barcelona couches done in clinical white. But anyway, *Sad Light* is simply put, another twin sculpture with two daybeds, a bank of fluorescent lights, speakers, and little goggles. And the lights are high-intensity, but 7200 Calvin spectrum of color, which is daylight, and the type of light that is used in sad light therapy, or seasonal affected disorder, which is that disorder of depression that one gets

from lack of light. So *Sad Light* is an installation in which you are invited to come in and take light in for as long as you want. And then coming from the speakers is another kind of New Age invention, which is white noise used for office spaces, to sort of like cut down the sound of xerox machines, people talking, and phones ringing. [You can turn it down a little bit.] So then you had this white noise coming down on you. But now when you read the label, you find out that the white noise, at least in San Francisco, which is close to Berkeley, is actually a live broadcast. It's connected through Berkeley to Puerto Rico to a satellite dish in Puerto Rico and (Aracebo?) used by (?) to look for extraterrestrial aliens. So you might read the label before that and know what you're hearing or you might read the label afterwards and know that what you were doing was listening to somebody searching, you know, at that time.

This is another Sad Light piece, called *Fez*, which is the I guess, what do you call it, the chemical number or letter for iron, but in Spanish means faith. And now it's in Helsinki and instead of Mies van der Rohe couches, there are Alvar Aalto daybeds, but it's the same principle, this time without any sound. And this is yet again another free public service sort of salon done in Madrid, during a huge art fair called ARCO. And this is an untitled identical, synchronized excuse me, untitled synchronized deep facial massage. And I went to Madrid, and thinking about this project wanted to sort of hire two identical twins and train them in a deep-facial shiatsu massage that would occur during this fair, for the free going public. Again you had to come with another person. I found these two great identical brothers, Raoul and Jorge, who were great because they were really interesting, but they weren't buffy Swedes or something like that. And I had a friend of mine, a physical therapist of mine, train them. They were also great because they were performers in their own right. They had a band called Turbo Lovers and they were guitar players, which meant that they had extra sensitive hands, but strong hands. And so, I forget how many sessions, but for 50 minutes they would start a massage on a viewer, and give them a deep facial massage and it would be completely, almost synchronized, better than I ever expected, with your partner at the other end of the table. And again, here the body comes and it lays itself down and you're the viewer but then that body immediately, because of the process, is hidden from the view by the faces or by the hands

of the two brothers, who are now looking down but there's a monitor behind them that stares back at you and again, these kind of chips that never stop looping. They go forward, reverse, and what it is is one of the brothers, staring at the camera, and then that same brother, now flipped, left to right, also staring at the same camera continuously, non-stop, blinking at a different rate, a different speed, but digitally altered so you can't notice the muscles of a reverse blink, which are very distinct. So they stare back at you continuously during the massage.

Another project I was asked to do as a collaborative, community-based project was for the Henry Art Center for New Media, which was a project that was meant to be in terms of video, or computers, or what not. But there I decided to create an installation that worked with the genetics department and the endocrine fertility clinic and created a work called *Banks in Pink and Blue*. And *Banks in Pink and Blue* is on the one hand, a very deadpan and dumb sculpture that sits in the middle of the room. And on the other hand, it's a fully functioning corporate body, it is functioning, still functioning cryogenic sperm bank that houses sperm of about a hundred different artists, writers, and curators and so forth that have undergone a process of gender selection—a controversial process, because, one, the process is controversial in that it supposedly separates y-chromosomal and x-chromosomal sperm into separate samples, and controversial for that reason. And controversial also because 95th percent..., 95 percent of the time, it doesn't actually work. So people pay a lot of money for that and it doesn't work. And so the participants, there were quite a few of them, and were not limited to just men. There were many women who had legally been gifted sperm by their partners or other friends and who, now legally the owners, would lend it to this bank. I am going to keep going, so that I don't take up the whole evening talking. But here you see *Banks of Pinks and Blue*. In the previous one, you saw all the contracts on the wall, the legal contracts. And here you see that cryogenic liquid nitrogen in the corner, that every week fills the top of the containers with liquid nitrogen to keep them at a very low temperature. There's another kind of New Age corporate video, that plays in the room and basically reads you in a seductive voice, all the legal terms of you lending your sperm, to you. And then there is a DNA triptych which is not part of this work, called *Garden of Delights*, but made afterwards, which is

called....it's three DNA fingerprints, which is called *Untitled Self-Portrait of the Artist with his Parents*. It's my DNA, and my mom's DNA, and my dad's DNA. So it's a paternity test in a sense. I could look at that and analyze that to see if dad is who mom says he is. And I won't go into this other project, because I could spend forty minutes just on one slide, but it was the first...another community-based project, which I was asked in South Carolina to come and work with the community. And there what I chose was to work with a bunch of ...a community of medical doctors and ethicists who were working on the notions of genetic engineering and use a framework that was an 18th century framework in the New World, commissioned by the Spanish government to depict the different hybrid peoples in the New World, from the races of Caucasian whites from Spain, blacks from Africa who were brought in as slaves and the indigenous peoples of the Americas at that time. And they created sixteen paintings in which there was always a male, a female, and a supposed offspring. And these things in a sense very complicatedly went from pure race, right, to *mexitos* down to very strange terms. And here again, I worked with artists, I selected 16 of them, and they selected their other two. Some of them were biological relationships, some of them were professional or political relationships, and you ended up with a suite of sixteen triptychs or 48 individuals. That's all I am going to say about that piece. So I am not even going to attempt to make a transition to Mies, and to this work, except to say that when I started to work on this project, it was basically a performance. A way to intervene in this space, in this kind of gem of modernism, and what I had decided to do was to try to figure out how I might try to intervene in this space but it was a very difficult space, because when you go visit this site, you have to walk in with surgical booties covering your feet, and you're not allowed to touch anything, including the door. Someone opens the door for you. And only about 6 people are allowed to go into the space and you are given a well-timed tour. So there was nothing I could actually do to the building to intervene until I met the window washer and decided that I would actually trade with him and agree with the director I could do his job. I could wash the windows for him. So what you get here is like a video still of *Le Baiser*, as Jeff said, or called *The Kiss*, of me outside washing the windows as the camera points and me from the inside. [You can turn that off.] And then the camera moves inside and then you have me washing the windows from the inside. And inside is

Leina Damon, from the band Ulele, who is mixing some music, and never in a sense paying attention to me and I am never paying in a sense, attention to her. And it's also again an infinite loop. Because of editing, I never stop washing the windows. I go from right to left and then I am back again, and I drop the bucket again, and I start all over again. So I am just going to give you just a little bit of it so that you get the sound of it and you see just some of the video, alright? And that's also an opportunity for me to stop talking.

[Plays excerpt of *Le Baiser*.]

So, that's like, three minutes of a twelve-minute loop. And I apologize. That's actually what I call a 69 video, so it's actually kind of horizontal wide screen, so I never look as thin and as svelte as I do there. And we're having problems with the sound here. But the sound is important. There's this kind of nature sound, when the camera's inside, I mean outside, and you hear the sound of the squeegee, which is also another kiss. It is the caress of this building but it is also the obnoxious [makes sound] kiss, kissing of this building. Because on the one hand, it is sort of romantic about rendering clarification to modernism. On the other hand, it is like looking at that and saying ugh, you know, there is nothing that I can critique. The moment that I intervene, the very act of intervening in this is erasing my own intervention. I am only rendering transparent what is already transparent. I am making clear what is already clear, so it's a failed sort of intervention that continues. And it's my sort of relationship with modernism, kind of a love/hate relationship, one of embracing it, and the other, of sort of pushing it aside but never sort of succeeding it doing it in such a way that I can render it functional critique of it. Now you never see it the way you see it. You always see it hovering inside a steel frame that mimics the floor plan of this building, and with a plane that is also suspended floor to ceiling from that and creates the floor plan of that space, a kind of room that you are able to walk in and out of, see from the outside, see from the inside, see from any sort of particular angle. So, since you are not sitting and watching a narrative but sort of entering and moving with a piece that also moves in time, my hope was to also create a situation in which the time space that the piece occupies is the same time/space you

occupy. And that you don't occupy it optically or intellectually—that you first occupy it physically. And that there is a way to approach in a sense, video and installation on the phenomenological way in which, renders you the viewer as someone who is housed within the body, which is a strange, and very subtle and obtuse way going back to this idea that we are first and foremost political bodies, not intellectual or optical beings. So then I went on to do another piece, in what has become the Mies trilogy. I might speak later if you ask me about the piece in which I hope to kill Mies and never do work about him. This piece is called *Climate* and was taped in 868 Lake North Shore Drive in Chicago, which are these two beautiful, twin pristine towers built in the late 60s and filled with various sort of apartments filled with very strange characters who belong to a character sketch I wrote but whose character sketch never comes out to you in terms of the work. So there is always this and one other weather man with headphones and earplugs and throughout the video, there is this ever-present weather station that is in the lobby, outside, inside this place and so forth. There's the weatherman again. And there's one other site where the artist now, instead of washing windows, is taking the semi-automatic apart, cleaning it, reloading it, putting it back together, doing it again, opening it. And there are shots of weather and so forth and there's Korean and other sort of ambient music and so forth. I can talk about the sources for the ambient music later. So, I am going to show you a clip of this one, *Climate*. Now, what you'll do is get one channel because *Climate* is a multi-channel, or now a three-screen projection, with three architectural rooms that are attached to it.

So again, this should be a wide-format screen.

So again, that's just a little clip which is basically unbearable for me to watch because they are, the shots are sustained, but when you have three of these going together, then there's an editing change, a kind of movement that occurs in each screen, everything is passive, and things always return to a kind of non-beginning, or return to a status quo, but together, the piece, with the three screens sort of moves and edits the piece into a twenty minute long loop instead of an eight minute, sort of just heavy piece, the last voice you

hear is a Korean voice reading a text I had written, which was sort of a futuristic or maybe not futuristic, maybe kind of like a strange Kurt Vonnegut type text, which is a weather report mixed with future analyst predictions on stocks and futures and ultimately it's a piece called *Climate* about our current state of globalization. And it was made in 2000, showed at the same time as *Le Baiser* showed at the Whitney. And we just opened it at the Guggenheim last week. I'm not going to go much more into that. So this is the last of the Mies trilogies that I did for the Mies in America exhibit at the Whitney. It's a piece called *Alltagszeit*. It was supposed to be very much like *Le Baiser*, where I would perform, and stand and inside the new National Gallery for a whole day while I choreographed a bunch of people to walk into the camera frame and so forth, except that we realized at the last moment that I would never be able to direct and time everyone if I was standing. So we worked with a young man from Berlin and he in a sense, took my place. But this is Mies' last building, which is the new National Gallery in Berlin, which is this sort of heavy, heavy temple for art in which it is extremely difficult to display any art. And so we took it when it was emptied of art and sort of created these long, long moments of people standing perfectly still, which for the viewing public that could come in while we were filming became a performance of almost like human sculptures within the space. It's called *Alltagszeit*. It was the closest translation I could find, in German, for "in ordinary time." And in ordinary time reduces itself to in mundane time. It reduces itself to a kind of a strange, ordinary choreography or dance movement. And it also speaks to that portion of the catholic mass calendar, which is the non-spectacular time, not holy days, the normal time when nothing spectacular is happening. And so the piece again is about nothing happening. But this piece is linear--it's not a loop. It does start at the beginning of the day. It ends when the sun sets. But it lasts only for 16 minutes, because we have one camera that records from one position in time lapse, and then a second camera that moves around outside of the vision of that camera and records portraits of people who are moving in the space. I think we'll give you just a little bit of that.

[Plays excerpt.]

Also, that shot is actually not the video, but just showing you the video in space, in the black box.

[Stops excerpt.]

I am doing that because I just kind of realized that what I am showing you was not an excerpt but an assistant of mine who reedited the piece and compressed it to four minutes, so its getting really confusing for me. But in any case, unlike the other pieces, *Alltagszeit* presents itself in a conventional sort of black box, with a projection and just a dark grid that is similar to Mies' ceiling, where the sound comes down from, that kind of hovers above you. [You know what I would like to ask? I am almost finished but could someone like open that door and let air come in...because it's actually really nice outside.] So I am going to go right through this. These are just stills, right. And going to the last sort of projects...the photograph on your left is a piece called *White Noise*. And it's a performance going back to these apartment buildings that Mies had, on a day where it is completely clouded so the whiteness is kind of a thick opaque, so you can sort of penetrate. So it was sort of my chance to actually create a sensory deprivation sort of space out of a room in Mies' space. It's just me looking out the window, with noise reducers to block out the sound and looking into this kind of total whiteness. And then a kind of similar gesture occurs here, in a piece called *Search*, or In Busquida (?) That was done in Tijuana. This is the Plaza Monumental del Toros in Las Playas, Tijuana. It's a bullfight ring...the northernmost bullfight ring in Mexico, fifty feet from the US/Mexico border and a hundred feet from the Pacific Ocean. And this is a very sort of limited intervention in the space formally that lasted for about three months. What it did was create a low-tech radio telescope that searched above the skies for the real aliens, the extra-terrestrial ones, not the ones who supposedly cross the border from north to south, but the real aliens that hover above. And its made with kind of parabolic sail cloths, which cover the bullring itself, the sand pit. white flags, a little bit of paint to take out all the advertisements, although it kept in backwards here names of famous bullfighters, and then a suspended antenna that points down from the sky to the disk. And you can turn on that last CD. So here you get a close-up of the antenna, and here you get another view of

the bullring. And you can turn down that a little bit. And what happened in this piece for three months is that we took that signal of the satellite searching for aliens and broadcast it through a pirate radio station that oscillated across the FM band, which means it always moved back and forth across the full spectrum of the band, in other words, always moving and chasing itself away and broadcast that out into Tijuana but when you came into the piece, what you heard was an amplified version of a feedback loop that is occurring between the dish and the antenna so you got a sign [ends abruptly here.]

CD 2 (65:38)

Inigo Manglano Ovalle: Okay. Great. I'm just going to move on quickly. This is another picture of it, during the day, and at sunset. And so, and then, you know, the piece in a sense was this kind of open, vacant like sort of like almost seventies site-specific piece, except when *Nortec*, which is a big, sort of electronic technical festival in Tijuana would occupy it and would use the satellite dish, sample from the drone and DJ and have huge parties inside the bowl. Okay. Thanks. I'm almost done. [Laughs.]

This is a very simple piece but it's the companion to *Search*. And it's on the other side of the border, in...its on the other side of the border, California, in Los Angeles at the same time. And it's called *Yuri at Schindler House*. Schindler House is where the MAK Center for LA has a museum for Rudolph Schindler House, one of the first communal houses, one of the first sort of art colonies here. It predated Skowhegan, because I think it came about in the 1920s. It's a house that he built for himself, his wife, who's also an artist, and then a partner, an artist and his wife, who was also an artist. And it is now like the Farnsworth House, been converted into a museum. But this museum is open to the public and everything is in pristine condition and everything is viewable to you, except for one spot, which is the guest room. And the guest room is occupied by the groundskeeper, the caretaker, his wife, and his daughter. And they're in this little one bedroom apartment and they take care of the grounds, which are beautiful and surrounded by bamboo plants. And the 9 year old daughter's name is Yuri, and hence the title, *Yuri*

at Schindler House. So what I did was I photographed her, and then took that photograph and created a Cibachrome and then placed it with a back-lit frame exactly where we had photographed her. So that when you would come in, she would be in a sense looking back at you. And at dusk, she would be in a sense, floating as a kind of ghost appearance, in the bamboo. Here, different from the previous projects, here now rendering what is usually hidden and invisible to you, the politics of an economic class that works the grounds in Southern California, is now revealed to you and becomes very present. And is actually placed in such a way that when you are in Schindler's own studio, she is staring back into his studio.

These are slides I kind of use just to talk about the next piece. This is a slide of uh, US troops on a carrier in the Persian Gulf. It's shot with a film camera they use that uses night vision. This is a night vision photograph I did from these tulips from Afghanistan, from the northeastern section of Afghanistan, which were meant to go into an installation but they died before we were able to cast them and make fakes. So subsequently I switched flowers and did an installation that just opened at MOMA, which is not a video loop but a live video. What it is is a dark space that you walk in and there is a projection of these flowers at large scale and then you realize that in the same room are these small flowers and in that room, in the corner, is this military night vision camera that is focused tight on these flowers, in the darkness, and then projects their presence back onto the same screen that you're in. And it's a very kind of transparent sort of installation. Its these kind of black metal arms that hold these flowers, and these other black metal arms that hold these Radio Shack fans, that gives the flowers movement. The sound that you hear is both live and recorded. One is a rainstorm in my garden in Chicago, mixed with a short wave radio receiver, that is searching for global short wave radio signals, and doesn't find them, because usually when you go to the museum its during daylight hours, and that's the worst time to actually tune in short wave from Germany or Afghanistan or Havana so there's undertones of that. So what I did was, for that sort of live installation, what I did was just connect between the projector and the camera for a little bit a deck. So what you'll see is, what you would see there but obviously something that occurred two weeks ago so obviously no longer live. And then we'll just play that and then I'll end

it. [So can we play that video?] And I'm just going to show you a little bit of it so that you can get a taste of it.

[Plays video excerpt.]

So these are white poppies or *Papaver somniferum*, or sleeping poppy, or opium poppy from a particular white poppy that grows both in Persia, or rather Iran, and Afghanistan. And so what you are seeing is the camera looking at this at the same time you are looking at it. And if you find the flowers, you can actually put your hand up to the camera or walk into the camera itself and find yourself in the projection. Why don't we turn on the lights. Can we do that? And we'll stop there. And I'm not even going to look at my watch. I'm kind of embarrassed so. [Clapping.]

Jeff Hendricks: *Don't go because I think there will be questions. This group is proverbially great at asking questions and I am sure your work generates many. I turn the floor to...*

Audience member: *I have a couple of questions. In your piece, Kiss, you speak about how the intervention of the artist is failed and I guess my question is on that one, what is the role of the artist. It is like you are doing these constructed realities. Is that correct? Like the video installations?*

IMO: Some of them, I think they are constructed realities. That's your question, right? It's kind of a two-part question: the role of the artist and whether I am doing constructed realities, right?

And so, how is the intervention failed. I don't understand that. And I don't understand..I mean, like...

IMO: Well, there is always a desire on the part of the artist. Why don't you finish your question. I interrupted you.

When you speak about the sense...It's like you are directing us to the sense of the body within these constructed realities. I guess I am asking what is the role of the artist and how is the intervention of the artist failed because of those realities?

IMO: I don't think it's failed because of those constructed realities. I think one might attempt to do something with art, right, where one fails. That is, in a sense, to make social change, make something really change in the world. Make an impact on the world. So there's a desire with that. So that sort of way art sort of becomes a kind of continual sort of failure. But it is because of that...but in that failure, what art does is it generates not a constructed reality but sort of a real condition, a real human condition, which is always strive to achieve or to change something, right? So if it actually worked, right, then I think you would actually stop, right? If you made that work that did it, you would stop. Maybe for me but I think art is sort of a sadistic sort of thing, that we gain pleasure always out of this pain. That we desire something and we never actually meet that. It is that pain, that longing, that recognition, is something that perversely, we thrive in.

What I said, is that we basically create a continuum by trying to get to that next place and never quite....

Maybe perhaps unconsciously. Because I don't think that should be the intention either, to kind of create this continuum of kind of a lag, but we do. We do, but we don't do it intentionally...Or I don't. I should start speaking about myself. But I don't. But it is in that that a lot of culture is sort of mired in that strive. And it isn't relegated to art making. It's relegated to a lot of politics, it's relegated to science, its relegated to sort of to religion. But unlike science and politics and maybe religion, an artist realizes that they in a sense don't fail because they haven't found the truth or certainty—they kind of always thrive in asking a particular sort of question that remains unanswered. And that's kind of the thrill of it, right? Whereas science succeeds and has its moments when it arrives at certainty only to be knocked down by something else. But in an artist, Unless you are talking about another kind of truth, which is beauty, you know, we always know that it is

in the sense the question that we pose and not a kind of resolution. That to me also goes back in a sense to the failure of the pre-packaged community program which in a sense attempted to create situations in which artists who were asking tough questions, but important ones, were pushed aside for artists who could provide answers, artists who could keep kids in schools, could heal social ill. So all of the sudden artists became in a sense moot, from openness, from the notion, the interest in contradiction or productive collisions moved to this whole notion of closure, right? Of certainty, of resolution. Throughout history, I don't think artists have been actually interested in that. That's why you had in painting, chiaroscuro--you wanted to see the clash between that light and that darkness. That's you know, why in history you had that sort of radical moments of Dadaism. You wanted, you needed to clash against the certainty of that, or against the supposed certainty of that age with something completely radical. And that's where artists get perhaps their own sort of harmonies, right? But harmonies are always composed of things that are fractured, bent, supposedly don't work but kind of exist. So I don't think [CD skips] Consciously, get involved in continuum of never meeting their expectation But I think we are sadistic. And you know, you are, you're here for 9 weeks, right? So, you know, you put yourself through this stuff in the name of something. You will achieve something after you leave here but one thing you will achieve is to know how much farther you've got to go, and how much more work you have to do, how much you didn't do, how much that piece didn't really...you know. And so you stop of you go back to Williamsburg [Laughter] or wherever you guys are from and you make that other piece to remedy this thing, other thing.

How does the body operate in your piece, in your pieces?

Well, they operate differently, right? They operate differently. I'm really interested currently in the body as a phenomenological—I mean, your experience in my work, first and foremost phenomenologically. That is, you hear a sound, you see a color, you sense something in your body, you walk in space, you locate yourself in space, you aren't in a black cube where each space, while you watch a video, is in a sense the neutral Renaissance site, or the optic center. You can move around so you become conscious of

where you're located. Little, subtle things. And then underneath that, then the information that you arrive after a phenomenological experience of the piece, right? An experiential sort of relationship with the piece at first level. You may begin to enter into the politics of a piece or the history of a piece or so forth. The fact that you are in a room, you walk into a room, and you're green, and then there are these flowers, then you see these other flowers and you are starting to figure out how this is happening and that you exist with the flowers, and so forth, and then you find out when you read the label that those flowers are the specific, historical flowers but that specific historical horticulture now resides in the zone that you're looking at, through CNN, with the same video. So you go from being, right, a perceptual body, into being a historical body. Is my hope.

But basically what you were taking about, you talked about slowing down, creating a situation? Slowing the viewer's experience down?

Yeah, I guess I wouldn't have put it that way but it's good. I like the way you put it. Because one thing I want you to do is to become conscious of is your time, and not go into some other time, like story time or filmic time that is outside of you, but your time. So many times when you come to see my videos, these things are slow, nothing happens... And sometimes you come to see the work and nothing is happening for a whole bunch of people except you're getting a really great massage, right? But everybody else in a sense is sort of outside of this. So much of the time, I also try to sort of camouflage the work. That it is about a form, or that it is strictly formal, and then you get other information and find out that it's something else. The DNA work, when we first exhibited it, the idea was to create 48 panels in a room a little bit larger than this that would go around in a horizontal band. So you would come in and it would be, it would be an abstract expressionist work by an artist and then you would realize it was a photograph. Then ultimately you realize the artist has no hand in the forms. The colors are chosen by somebody else and so the artist camouflages himself as a sort of abstract expressionist and is in fact the opposite of that.

I wonder if you would then describe your work as a sort of reconciliation between the body and the space that it exists in, especially architecture because historically its never really shown with human beings present. And if you could talk a little bit about the irony and the way you introduce the body and its interactions specifically.

IMO: That's interesting because when I did, when I designed the "Mies in America" exhibit, I had one piece that was commissioned as an art work and you saw this clip that I cut short. That's an art piece. And it's the third in this trilogy. But in that show, from designing all the frames, and where everything goes, and the furniture, I did three other sort of videos that I didn't want to treat as art work. And so I set out with a crew and a director to video tape the Federal Plaza, Seagrams, and go back to the Farnsworth House again and...to film them. And I just was gagging because I was all of the sudden I was making the architectural video of form and color, and movement through the space, which I kind of like you know, but I knew that what I had to do in there was what I did in my own work, which was to insert what I call in those cases, or in this last video in Berlin, interlopers, right?, who actually become protagonists within the space for short durations. So for Seagrams, you get the public but specifically you get this woman in a kind of beige sort of dress and beige shoes that looks the same color as the floor in Seagrams, right, and she's continually there doing nothing or sitting or something. And in Seagrams, I mean in Federal Plaza, which is in Chicago, there's two men, a white man and a black man. And they're both dressed in identical suits and they start sort of like appearing in the middle of this architectural sort of video. And at one point we see these sailors who are kind of touring through Chicago and so we get them to line up and they're standing in a perfect row and we shoot them. And in the Farnsworth house, I get again in this case, specifically another woman, now someone who might represent Edith Farnsworth, the person who commissioned that house, to stand all in white, almost as if she were a column within the space. And there are moments when she takes over architecturally. And this is kind of the reason. And I'm not a Miesian scholar, I have again, another love/hate relationship with the man and his work. But I feel that architecture is experiential. Architecture must be physical space. It can't just be intellectual sort of space. It can't be just merely visual space. It has to be a space that

acknowledges us not as a computerized walk through virtual animation. So much occurring in architecture now, some of the stuff that isn't working for me now is built with those engines, which is a great tool, but it's a virtual tool, its not a real kind of an experiential tool.

Question about window washers.

Right. There's various reasons for that. But they aren't. They're very sort of specific sort of spaces, right?

I wanted to ask you about your use of sound and it seems like its incredibly integral and maybe even in some cases, primary. So I wanted to specifically ask you about sound in the third Trilogy piece, what your sources were, but also in general your intentions with sound in your work.

For me, video is 95% sound. It's always sound. Because I don't come from video. I come from sculpture and sound is sculptural first and foremost to me. It's physical and then it becomes time. It's first physical and then it's about time. It's different from... That's why we dance to it. It's physical and then we create these kind of rhythms with it. For me, it was a way to address, to me, a handle on sculpture, so I always recognize it that way. So I give it a lot of attention. Even silence becomes really sort of important, and long periods of silence. I was trying to pack too much into here and I am glad you asked this question. After I did *Somnambular*, right, which is this all about this kind of conceptual implosion, explosion of one gunshot to last 11 minutes, one of my sound engineers is a young artist by the name of Jeremy Boyle who is showing there. And a few months later said, I want you to listen to this stuff that I'm working on. And so he started to create these music pieces. And he finally pulled out. The first one that he created was also called *Kiss*. And he finally compiled this into something called *Songs from the Guitar Solos* but the first one he did he kind of worked with me kind of conceptually and I liked it so much, not because it was called *Kiss*, but for other reasons that I used in this piece, although it's kind of broken up. But it uses a very similar sort of

model that I use with *Somnambular*, which is his *Kiss* is one millisecond of a note from a guitar solo from the band Kiss in the 70s, and the song “Strange Days” that he extends into this ethereal thing. And it worked really well with this piece. I liked it because he was doing this thing, but instead of me sort of addressing late 60s, early 70s minimalism, he was going to heavy metal. So I kind of liked that. But he was approaching it in a very similar sort of way. So then when we did *Climate*, there was only really one real sound, which is the sound of the gun on the glass, that mechanism. Everything else was edited into that. The Korean voice, everything else, lullabies and what not. But then there are bits of two other songs from Jeremy’s thing. One’s called *AC/DC* and the other one is called *Van Halen*. And I think you were listening to Van Halen, cuts from Van Halen. So anyway, I liked it so much but now I decided to, when I did the last piece, I wanted to work with Jeremy but in a completely different sort of way which is not to talk to him and develop *Kiss*, or then sort of appropriate this, but to say, I got this thing called *Alte Site* and I’m doing it, this is how I’m doing it, and we talked conceptually about the piece, about how the time lapse would flitter and this other movement. I want you to do a score that I can’t break up. So he did a score. So my piece starts beginning of the day and ends at the sunset, right? And his piece is taken from the two notes, of a Beethoven sonata on the piano, the first and the last note, and that note is mixed to become the 16 minute long score for that piece. So on a certain level, I like Jeremy’s work because the sound that he makes and the music that he makes and then I also like it conceptually. It’s kind of sympatico, right? And but then the other sound pieces I do always go back to that. What I also like about Jeremy’s pieces is that as beautiful as they are, they are really great ambient tones, right? My really dumb ones, like *White Noise*, are all about that too. It’s just about sound but no sound, listening, hearing this huge satellite in Puerto Rico listen. So that becomes really important. And with this, its taking the sound again of another rainstorm and with some different sounds, of my neighborhood, taking my home garden and transplanting it into this installation about a whole set of other flowers, right? with then a live transmission that I don’t have control over.

I just wanted to go back again to the idea of the piece failing and I think it was about the gunshot piece, you said that you created a moment of recognition for the audience that you couldn't create for yourself. Is that right? Is that the right piece?

There it's a kind of different sort of failure. Its like doing something, just sort of like, something that would function and have use value in the world, take your art or your craft and make something useful, in this case, a tape that I could do to sleep to, right? To create..take art and make a non-art thing that has use value, particularly personal to me. And that piece doesn't work because it actually keeps, continues to wake me up or never lets me sleep. So that's a different sort of failure. It is very similar to the beginnings of a dysfunctional sort of object that artists love, right? They will make the object dysfunctional to make it art. Whether you are Duchamp or what, you will break it so that it becomes art. That in a sense is sort of like another desire to create something useful and it actually failing to bring about a resolution—my sleep, right? and well, hey, since its broken, you know, if its broken, if it ain't broken, don't fix it. If its broken, make it art. If it fails, it's a really good thing for art. But that's a whole different dimension that is not philosophical not a dimension of use value. Of everyday-ness. And then make it work for you. So now it works for you. You don't go to sleep in there because I don't put a bed in there but it works for you on a different level. Hopefully.

Is there a parallel at all or do you think about the failure of, like, I am relating it to working in social services for six years and this kind of like failure to...and I think of it in terms of what you said, in terms of creating something or connection via art or something else via social services and public work. Is there a connection for you? Do you think about...

In the beginning, I think I said that the kind of resolution is I mean, I hope that your work and my work somehow have an impact outside of this studio but I also know that there are very specific moments that you as an artist maybe should work as a political being, right? And for me, this is a personal decision, there are moments when those things come

together but there are moments when it is appropriate that I don't walk into a community meeting as an artist. I walk in as a community member, right? And I can live comfortable with that. And I can make this crazy work, right? You know. But the other thing is that I also learned that if you make like really good work, right, if you don't tone down your level to speak, right, to like the masses, right, if you don't talk down to them and you make really good work like the plumber who has to be equally as good in Humboldt Park as he is on Lake Shore Drive or the doctor equally as good as he is on the South Side of Chicago as he is in Barrington Hills. If you don't do that, talk down to him, people, they will understand your work. They will understand your work. So it's like... And I knew this early on, doing comparative literature, with studying Gabriel Garcia Marquez among many other Latin American writers and was doing a lot of research and came across these kind of like interviews from different magazines, stuff that you don't, they don't give you when you are studying literature, you are researching and you find this interview, and he is being taken by this young guy to the floor because of his politics because GGM is and was very politically active and so forth and would speak about this, people would recognize this. But if you take *100 Years of Solitude*, right, or *El Antonia del Patriarcha*, or whatever, esp. those texts which are incredibly difficult to digest and are crafted. It's formally so so tight, but he was taken to task for being, for making the work inaccessible because it was so much about form, and how could he be a man of the people right? if his work was so inaccessible, because he was so interested in form and his answer, I want my work to be accessible, but I don't make my work accessible by talking down to somebody, I make it successful by ensuring that the book gets to that bookstore or to that library. That's accessibility, right? and so sometimes, so that was really important to me so what it meant was that what we had to do in order to get our work function across communities, making sure that one, that the work got to the community, right? And that the community got to the work. Which was what Gabriel Garcia Marquez was saying, you know, I will speak to writers this way and I will speak to the cab driver this way. No. I will write for the cab driver this way. He doesn't say that. He writes the same then. I am going to make sure that the cab driver gets a copy of my book. Right? So... You had a question.

I'm very interested in your...in the way that you approach your work. It seems to be integrated between science and art. And I realize that you have a lot of knowledge based on a lot of social, political otherness issues and you also use science, art, technology. At the same time, I see the work being presented in a very minimalist approach and I have a bit of concern about it, in terms of what you just spoke about people having the opportunity to participate in your work. I am also thinking in terms of cultural references, you know, how people from different cultures will relate to that type of work. Because when I look at the images, its all very, how do you say, class...in terms of upper class, middle class, cooperate imagery, you know, the furniture, you know, everything, so I have a bit of concern in that respect.

Yeah, I am equally concerned but I think it goes back to what I was saying—works have exhibited themselves in different sites and I have my predilection is, well, in terms at least of the body of work you've seen is to do something that artists of my generation, even artists of other generations are doing, of a particular type of modernism locate in western culture, that is America and Europe. But as like Citiacho knows, That's modernism and those investigations were occurring in Mexico, in Brazil, in other countries, were erased from art history because, because art history coming from the center, wanted to look at art from Brazil and wanted to look at the flavor but artists in Brazil were tackling the same notions. Same in different ways. Were tackling things that were you know really in a sense important at the time, culturally and philosophically and so forth. And then doing something very different with it. So I myself follow that line, right, as a Spaniard, as a Columbian, and as a Latino in the US and as a US citizen now, I in a sense choose to investigate those things, rather than investigate something that somebody tells me is supposedly part of my culture, right? They tell me that. And...But, you know, it by no means that that work, and its particular style, because I actually appropriate things to look that way, right, so I come from a place in art history where at the same time that I was going to the Prado, and looking at these beautiful works of art, my first architectural experiences...the chapel outside, basilica outside Bogota and Cipicarai, built in the salt mines, and my mother and my grandmother doing the signs of the cross in the basilica and my brother and myself, about this big, following them but not

doing the signs of the cross, yet licking the whole building, which is made of salt so you would come out with a tongue this big, and cracked, and you wouldn't be able to talk for days to and knowing that architecture to knowing the architecture in Europe to then coming to the United States around the time that these modernist buildings were occurring, and going like, wow, knowing that this stuff was happening. I also believe like for example, like in Tijuana, my piece, everybody in Tijuana, the Tijuaneese, people that were up there from Guatemala, the intellectuals, the writers, the reporters, they knew what that piece was about just in the title and in the description that we were going to look for the real aliens. They got it and they celebrated it, you know. And I think, but I only had these tools, which are kind of reductive minimalism. And one of the things that I chose to do was to look at, to do something that a group of Brazilians had done in the late 50s, which was to... while Greenberg was talking about modernism being something that was all about art for art sake, and had no extra artistic value, and was given this in art school, along with many people of my generation and subsequent people know that Greenbergian stuff, as historical as it is, is basically a crock of shit because most of these artists were politically involved, were socially involved, and were dealing with issues, even phenomenological issues, what was happening at the same time as Robert Morris was creating his *Notes on Sculpture* and they were talking to each other, thinking, phenomenology then wasn't some sort of esoteric thing, that happens also concurrently at the same time that you're having the first sort of occupations of public space—sit-ins, Civil Rights, and so forth which are other sort of absolute consciousness, based on the body occupying space, right? And so you start to, if you look at modernism in a different way, reductive formalism, you start to see that actually imbued, it has been sold to you in a different way. That doesn't mean that most of this stuff in galleries is also selling as a completely commodified object. It might have been there as well, but it comes from that line of history that is not disconnected from this. And in Brazil in the late 50s they recognized this. Because what they did is say, we are working on the same issues and we are not in a sense the Third World sort of assimilating western culture. They had a movement, created a movement called Anthropofagia manifesto, and Anthrop..and who was I talking with somebody...who was I talking with about it today Wanda? No. Brenda? No. Somebody. Anthropofagia means cultural cannibalism. And basically, the

manifesto says, we have the right to and we will eat your culture, swallow it, digest it, throw it out, and make it our own and when it comes out, either back or forth, right, will be ours and not yours. And so sometimes it's that kind of politics and it's still kind of problematic. And that's why even individually it's still a love/hate relationship. It's kind of like, when I see an Ellsworth Kelly painting, some of them are (off-mike) but at the same time, I go, why do I like this? Why? Why? What does this have to do with anything. And then there is this picture. This beautiful destroyer he did in WPA in camouflage US destroyer in grays and whites and blacks, basically painting (inaudible) of his politics working to make a living as an artist, sort of like beautifying the military-industrial complex, and I think if you are doing a good job in art, right, you will lose sleep. [audience laughs] because when you think you're doing good work, you are having big problems about doing it. Right?

I have a question. When you started speaking this evening, you said that you had kind of come into recognition at some time and had decided to pursue work that would really function within an artistic setting and context but that you had to struggle to find a balance and continue doing work that didn't necessarily fit in that context, right?

Oooh. I don't think I said that. I don't think that it was ever about making work...I don't think that at one moment I decided I gotta make art that fits into a gallery. I always was making work that fit into that gallery, even if that gallery was now a museum called discourse, because what I premised was really the architecture of art is not a white building, but is the discourse around it. And the social landscape, or the architecture that we should be doing as artists is actually tearing down particular terms and bringing in new terms. In other words, it's almost like, it is a discursive kind of architecture, it is a discursive sort of activism. And I believe that so much that I don't believe that your work exists in the world unless you have people talking about it. I just don't. All right? And that's hard and painful for a lot of artists, but that's the most important part about this thing here, and I've spoken to people, is the discourse, right now. This is the most important part because this is where the work is being made, that's where the work is living, and that's where the work will have recognition and have impact. You think the

work is being made in your studio. I think its being made when you guys are having dinner and lunch and drinking beer, and then guess what, some person will go back to Philadelphia and talk to somebody about your work and somebody from Williamsburg who didn't know somebody from Queens all of a sudden will get together and they'll talk and that's how you make art. So art is always made as a partnership. And it's always been in a sense collaborative, right? And so the main figures, and we have to acknowledge it, the main figures, in collaboration, in making art discursive, in making it real and making it happen are writers, curators and artists. Right? And I think we have to recognize that we hold different sort of plans, we have to work in tandem. Many times, you as artists are reading and responding to reading about somebody who was responding to viewing, who viewed it because somebody put it in a space, in a different space from that artist studio so it becomes really complicated to find out who the author is of what you are talking about. We like to think it's the artist all the time right, but I think there are too many hands in the pot, right. So I mean... That's what I mean. I never thought that like the work had to move into an art sort of space, you know, I always thought it existed in that because it always attempted a kind of discursiveness.

Can you talk about disfunction in relation to your love and hate relationship with modernism as in the interventions of your modern architectural spaces that you find or create?

I'm not sure I've been using terms like this, but you know, I will take dysfunction and say that like artists are kind of sadists. Artists belong to this huge family, which includes art history, and everyone before us, and everyone working ahead of us and that family is really dysfunctional [laughs.] I'm not sure that's what I meant then but I know that it is, it's a glorious sort of family. But I'm interested, like, for example, I'm interested in the apparent failure of modernism. And so I use Mies to sort of address that, especially, specifically in *Climate*, I didn't talk a lot about it. But I'm not interested in the simplified notion of the failure of modernism that sort of points to Brazilians as it failed. Because I actually think Brasilia finally worked, right? Its now like, glorious and it has this unbelievable texture, and it actually was the culture claiming very specifically,

this universalism. So it...it actually maybe worked because it failed. But then what's really scary to me, right, is that modernism actually may be succeeding. And it may be succeeding in such a way that for example, in *Climate*, my metaphor is the weather. And it is a time and a moment for me, whether it's in the 50s or in the 80s or in 2000, of a kind of system. The Korean voice is telling this weather report, but telling this weather report at a particular time when national boundaries have sort of like ceased to exist and is broadcasting this simultaneously, supposedly with other people in the 122 different languages and there are weather reports that sort of are completely hybrid or fluid with economic reports. So the weather report starts with a bunch of cows flatulating and creating methane in our hentina (?) and how that affects something in the weather and then that affects a change in some productivity in Ireland and then it kind of goes back. And finally the prediction is that eight months later, you know, this sort of you know, Irish sort of microchip company will resolve this thing that has nothing to do with cows flatulating, but will create something in Australia that then.... And all of the sudden the weather eight months later is fine. It kind of resolves itself. So its kind of strange—so the weather becomes a mantra, and the Korean voice always says another thing, which is the mantra of the society. Everything for everybody and all at the same time. Which is in a sense for me the mantra of globalization. It is the mantra of the internet. It is the idea that you now, faced with this technology can be everywhere and can exchange freely and can communicate and can transact and you can do it within a form and a technology, within a conduit, within an architecture, that is supposedly void of any specific ideology, that is free of ideology, which is interestingly enough, is almost kind of very Miesian, right? That you could create universal spaces that are free of ideologies, that are all about form, in which anyone can negotiate and anyone can fit. So what I am kind of scared about is that maybe modernism failed in the physical engineering of physical space, but modernism has succeeded in the virtual architecture of our non-physical space. And that it purports to be non-ideological, and it isn't. And that's very difficult, because beneath globalization are ideologies, are political underpinnings, are economic class systems, are agendas, and they are just kind of transparent, invisible, fast, coded, cryptic. So they're invisible architecture but it's there. So that's, there's a kind of strange sort of...here's this thing that breaks down and yet works. And the way it works is the way we didn't think it

would work. It works even more scary than the idea that you could create the same building in Thailand and in Brazil, this is scarier.

53:53 *Are those cryptic codes ever included in that dialogue?* [Skipping here.]

No, there's this short story that I wrote called *Weather Watchers* and that's basically the character sketch for these guys and then I went ahead and made this non-narrative piece. And the only thing this non-narrative piece contains is this weather report and contains this mantra and it contains a little lullabye for a little kid, a very strange lullaby, sung by my wife Barbara and it says "I see the moon and the moon sees me. God bless the moon and God bless me." Which is a very innocent sort of lullaby, but for me is this whole sort of notion of embracing a kind of cosmic surveillance on you, you know. So, which, I can't and I don't want to pack all these things. Right now this becomes a privileged sort of space. I can tell you what's behind some of this work but I don't think I want to put all of that in there for everybody to do that. I want to get them sort of a drone. Right. So the shift in sort of this sort of modernism is kind of a different way that I think of surveillance, which I think is very current. Right? I mean we live in a society that now really relishes and wants more and more surveillance. So Big Brother now is not this big bad guy. Big Brother is someone who is going to protect you and we are more becoming that sort of surveillance. But it's different from Foucault or Bentham's Panopticon right, which is a surveillance which is in the center, and looks out, and gazes at you, that is an apparatus like my surveillance camera in that installation. It has a site from which it looks and an image that it captures and takes back in, and creates information out of or categorizes the names that way. This surveillance is more like a really beautiful disco ball except totally seamless, in which the way that it captures you is by just reflecting you back to yourself. In other words, you embrace this new global device. Right that looks at you. Okay.

Hi, I just had a question about desire and agency in the way that you put things together. Because I think, I don't think that that disco ball is benign—that Disco ball that can see everything. It's not benign. It's actually quite malevolent and will kill you if you are not

paying attention. And the second thing you talked about is modernism. Modernism worked for a specific group of people and they were usually male, usually white, usually wealthy. And the thing about the work that I respond to is the way you sort of demarcate that space, that separates people, like the woman inside who is sort of hermetic and the racialized other outside who's at work while someone else is not at work, that's the thing. Could you just talk about the desire?

And first let me say that I'm with you, that disco ball is totally malevolent, that's what I mean. When I'm saying that modernism works, I'm not applauding, I am saying, whoa, get ready, right? Get ready. This is in works you know like the way that maybe perhaps the way that Greenberg wanted to work. He wanted to make you look at it and say "It's beautiful." And that's all you had to think. And so that's one of the reasons why it's so much of my subject. I wanted to look at it, still look at its supposed beauty and its trappings but just kind of put in these things that – so for example, in *Le Baiser*, it's very specific. There is a guy outside who's me. And there's a woman inside as well. And it's very specific who they are what they look like, and so forth. Like Leila Diamond is sort of unlocatable ethnically and many times for many people, unlocatable gender-wise. But she's inside. And you haven't seen the whole clip but inside she's kind of disregarding the laborer, the worker. But the worker also does this strange thing, which is the worker at the moment is doing labor, which is merely a mundane act. But then all of the sudden that mundane act becomes this, which is for me a way from where the act becomes the gesture. And I'm really in a sense very interested there in a specific type of gesture – an art gesture. I'm actually very interested in painting at that moment. Okay? So, then this worker has a kind of complicated relationship. And they never really sort of look at each other. But the worker is male and the person inside is female and that's for a very specific reason. The artist in the case of the building is the architect, who is Mies, who's male, and the patron, who commissions the building is Dr. Edith Farnsworth, is a woman, who wanted a place of complete seclusion, right. And so she wanted an interior sort of space, in which just the foliage was her curtain, her privacy and they got into a big fight and a falling out, lawsuits, battles and what not, because Mies didn't care about her sort of needs. He only cared about the physicality of the building, it had to be the sculptural

component. I'm the artist, I'm the sculptor, this thing has to be there, that piece has to be there...so in the piece the artist or window washer tends to the physicality of the building and the woman tends to not only the interior of the building, but her own interior, but in the piece you haven't seen the clip, but in the piece, there is a very pivotal moment that is out of sync, in which she looks up at you, which the window washer never does. She looks back at you and says, "I see you. I see you. He doesn't. I do." And it's a kind of funny sort of pivotal moment in that. So it's a very basic kind of sculptural piece. In many ways it is so simple but it has to be reduced. Sometimes why I have to make things reductive is to explode them. It starts to be about inside and outside. Its like inside, outside and if I can tend to that almost on a very formal, clockwork level, I can start fitting within that whole set of other things that don't rupture from that supposedly formal strategy. But then start to pull in all these other things. And in *Climate*, there is that as well too because we haven't seen that yet but the whole set of characters that show up right now, who remain passive, who don't say anything, are kind of complete. They aren't like...I am not trying to have a kind of smorgasboard of ethnic types and genders, but they do...are what they are. Sometimes they are the same person, they are in a suit but they just change race or they change gender in *Climate*. But that response to having a mute person, and even in *Altasite*, is different from working with Street Level Video because when I was working with Street Level Video, I was creating places and sites and installations where young men and women could create videos and speak to you. And then what I was realizing was happening to viewers and to curators and to writers, that wasn't happening with the kids because they were too smart. They were too smart. They knew what site-specificity was. Not because it was some term from California art world in the 70s. They knew site-specificity because each corner in the neighborhood is very specific and for very particular reasons. And they knew what demographic meant. And they also knew what context was. They knew what media appropriation was because they knew the appropriation of them by media and they knew their appropriation through commerce—through Nike, through Rockies hats. They knew that this very sophisticated sort of group...But in any case, the one problem I had with that is these viewers who came to see these installations, they are complicated, very large, 100 monitors, and extension cords coming from the rooms and so forth, they were...I felt that too many

people were coming away from them going, “Oh wow, I got an authentic experience.” Because what the art viewer from the center wants when they go to a marginal site is to have an authentic experience. They want to go to the real Mexican restaurant. Like somebody was saying the other day, I think it was Karen, she is no longer going to the Thai place because now it does Japanese as well because she wants the real Thai place. [Laughter.] So when art goers come to the margin, they want that real stuff so they come and they look and then I realized, okay, yeah, we’ve broken the walls of the museum and the art is now among the public, but all we’ve done is taken that museum and colonized the margin because now what happens is that now they are back on display. The body is back on display. So in *Climate* and in *Berlin*, I make sure that they never talk to you. And it is very specific. It’s kind of like going about it the wrong way. I won’t let you know who I am. You are going to have to deal with me the way that you might deal with me on the street or when you see me. I am not going to give you information about me. I am not going to tell you my authentic story. So there is very much of this, of...your question is right on to it. Right on to the sort of difficulty of dealing with those particular sorts of issues in very supposedly formal, and in reality, very formal work.

[Clapping]