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THE SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL
OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
Skowhegan, Maine

Lecture by Sue Coe
Summer, 1991

INTRO: -- and gives the lie to our aesthetes with the hypocritical handcuffs. Here is a quatrain by Robert Herrick, in slight paraphrase, to suit the occasion: "Her art will have all or none; serve her or fall down before mammon; either be hot or be cold. Her art does despise, abhors, and spews out all neutralities."

I am proud and honored to introduce a comrade, Sue Coe. [Applause]

SUE COE: Good evening, and thank you very much for coming. I have a small gun here. Do the slides work?

If you can't hear me, or need me to speak louder, please tell me.

This is a still from the [?] -- of the Red, Hot & Blue album, which is the album of Cole Porter songs done by different artists -- performing artists and visual artists -- for people with AIDS. The video has just come out now. It retails for $10, and all the money goes to people with AIDS. In this video, which was removed from the ABC special, the Cole Porter special, they removed certain videos from the album. They called it the Red, Hot & Blue Special.

The only thing moving in my particular little video is George Bush's lips. That's the only thing left to move.

This is about Washington's genocide against people with AIDS, and their lack of education.

This was a cover, supposedly for *Time Magazine*, where they rang me up and said, "We want you to do something on AIDS, but don't make it depressing." [Laughter] So I mulled over in my tiny brain, and I couldn't think of anything particularly, except the responsibility of the federal government, and, obviously, they didn't print it. What happens when you work for these magazines is they call you -- I thought they had the wrong Sue Coe. I thought there was some

other Sue Coe that could work for *Time Magazine*, but it was me. But I never got published. You do get a kill fee. That's what's good about working in the media arts as opposed to galleries, because galleries want you to do something for nothing. You don't get paid. But in the media, you get a kill fee. So if you in anyway have any content, you'll be living on kill fees all your life. [Laughter]

This is a T-shirt for the album, Red, Hot & Blue, which, of course, they didn't print in this country, so I'm stuck. This was only printed in England, and they don't know what the fuck [?] -- This is another problem. If you're going to work with content, you put it in another country that's the opposite of the country you're criticizing. So I imagine -- I wanted to change the word "AIDS" to "BushAIDS," [?] -- but Sununu, and people like that, who rob people in banks -- like his son just robbed everybody in America -- swindle and loot -- I mean, I have to get it clear right now: George Bush is a scum sucker. [Hoots and applause] It's "back to front." I'm sorry. This is both [?]-- it's "both Thatcher." It's a pun on the two names.

I just saw George Bush two nights ago. He has let up on sanctions to South Africa. This is very serious. I think it needs more organizing and more -- We can't let up these sanctions. You know, I saw [?] -- on television, and he's a Nazi. He was a Nazi. He was red-baiting. All is not well in that country, to say the least. So the struggle continues with that.

This is a series of paintings on all the invasions that have happened in recent memory. This is the invasion of Grenada, where the U.S. military invaded -- bombed a mental hospital (it was one of those test bombings), killing twenty-two people. I heard this was hanging in the Met -- you know, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I heard it was hanging there. They bought it for $5,000, of which I got "$2,000," and I thought it was going to be in the basement my entire lifetime. But then people said, "Oh, it's hanging there." I went to the Met, in the contemporary wing -- which I never go to, ever -- and they had just closed it, so I missed it. I never saw it hanging. It was hanging just like my mum's curtains, just for a few moments, and it was gone. [Laughter]

This one I did during the bombing of Iraq, actually during the bombing. It's for a magazine (*Entertainment Weekly*), so you can do anything you want, but don't make it political. [Chuckling] These are some of the limitations you have to work with, if you're in commercial art. I suppose I felt like that man or woman in the foreground. Well, since I've done this picture, this is the most requested picture ever in my history of doing visual art. It's been used by so many groups -- a group for homeless women in Michigan; WREEQ (Women for Economic & Racial Equality) used it; and it's been requested and requested, because, somehow, it hit. Not that I did it, but I think we hit upon a note of the new world order.

This is a Star Trek convention. I always put this in to show. Now I'm an actual Star Trek fan here. See, when you go to Star Trek conventions, you have to have some remnant of the bourgeois world left in you. This is my remnant, that I came to, which is Star Trek. My sister, who's a revolutionary, doesn't "cling" to Star Trek anymore. She says you don't need those bourgeois fantasies. So we had to go to the convention and confront them about sexism and racism. We had to confront the actors. We had to confront Riker. You know, the man who plays the second in command. And it was terrible. She said, "Go ahead. You can do it. You don't need this anymore. You can't accept this." And I said, "I don't want to do it. I can accept it. [Laughter]

This, my last haven of fantasy. Don't destroy it for me, Mandy, my sister." She says, "You don't need it anymore," and she's wrong. I do need it. [Applause]

Anyway, when you go to the conventions, you can dress in pointed ears. You can get a whole New Generation uniform for $33.00, but you have to sew it yourself. [Laughter] And also, about the New Generation, which I don't like, legitimately -- there's no point for women to make it until you're twenty-three....hundred...You know, those 23,000? Because all you'll be is a nurse, on impact. We want to be the captain of the fucking ship, right? [Laughter and applause] Those of you who don't watch "this shit" don't know what I'm talking about. On Star Trek, all you can be is [?] -- you've got to be the babe for the captain. You've got to be the feeling babe for the captain. This has got to stop.

So I wrote to Gene Roddenberry, you know, who founded Star Trek, a twenty-page letter about how he could change the show. He writes back and he says, "Your ideas will be taken into consideration." Well, that was four ago. [Laughter] So I say, when are my ideas [being taken] into consideration?"

This is the occupation of Panama, of which we've heard no news since, right? This is when they used the stealth bomber. This was the first bombing by the stealth of a civilian population. They picked the working-class areas to bomb. We don't know about the mass graves. We don't know how many deaths there were. Well, there's no deep history about it all -- how we supported General Noriega with money, big money, and when Jimmy Carter got into power, he said, "This man is too corrupt for us to continue to support." Then when Reagan got in, he kept him on the payroll. We had nothing but a trial in Florida.

This is *War is 3,000% Profit*. When I did this, it was "300% Profit." You know, after the bombing of Iraq, the day after, the stock market went up to its second highest peak in its history. That's how much money they made, the trans-national corporations. I think -- I could be wrong about this but -- I think it's a mistake to say it's American doing this or America doing that. It really is beyond nationalism now. Although they'd have us be nationalistic, it's not about that. It's about trans-national corporations. Four trillion dollars goes through the stock markets every day. When the stock market is closed here, it's open somewhere else. So it's not about America doing this, that or the other. They don't care about Americans. They don't care about your flag-waving or anything to do with it. That's being duped. As long as they can make a profit, they'll carry on making it. That's the bottom line. It's Union Carbide. I mean, they just poison people. [?] -- India, Bhopal --

Q: West Virginia.

A: West Virginia. I heard on the news today they've gone off the "Earth First," and the FBI is going after them now, for being terrorists. But the real terrorists are General Electric, Union Carbide, General Motors, General Dynamic -- all those "Generals" in their uniforms -- they are the polluters. The FBI should be going after them. They're going after a few people, "Earth First" people. This is what our money is being spent on?

This is a "pun" on the word "contra" and "contract." [?] -- works on the border. He's a doctor -- psychiatrist -- and also an artist, a great artist. He has to treat the "tortuers" and "tortured." I was telling some friends about this; that in Honduras and El Salvador, they get fifteen-year-old boys to do the torturing for them. They say, "If you don't torture this person, we're going to kill your family." On one side he has to see the torturers, and on the other side the tortured, and he said the torturers never recover.

This is a bombing in Philadelphia, the [?] -- bombing, so-called. It's why they can get away with bombing in this country.

Well, this is obviously the features I [?] -- because I think two elements of patriarchy and capitalism are the most dangerous elements on earth, and we don't have the luxury anymore of waiting for that to be wound down. We have to change things. So I'm trying to figure out this patriarchy and capitalism, how it works together.

This, I imagined a parent, a mother or a father, protecting their child from being accused of being a nuclear factory or something. I mean, like I was saying, when the war was going on, I traveled around America, and I saw so much resistance from people. I'm so fortunate to be able to travel, and I traveled to a lot of different places. This is when they were waving the flag, and said there was no resistance. There was massive resistance to this war. I saw it outside churches. I saw people standing outside government offices, protesting, not waving the flag. None of this was ever shown. So some of my friends who just live in New York, they said there was no resistance. But they start to believe television, and television is owned by General Electric, General Dynamics, General Motors. They want you to believe there's no resistance, but I saw it with my own eyes. I saw it. I'd be talking to people as the war was going on -- I even went to Florida, to this place where most people in the office were in the military. And I asked them, "How many of you are frightened to put a yellow ribbon?" and half the people would be raising their hands. They were frightened. They're frightened of their neighbors. They were terrorized. If they didn't put out a yellow ribbon -- or a flag -- they'd be considered traitors. Someone said in *The Nation* this week that patriotism is never having to say you didn't know. I thought that was a good definition of a patriot.

This is CNN -- that I used to watch. I think what was good about what happened is that a lot of people stopped watching the news completely, because it was so "rile." The [?] -- You never saw any people organizing demonstrations, no other deep analysis. There was nothing.

This is [?] -- *Village Voice*, a giant condom [laughter]. Bush -- This is the only safe sex we can have, if a condom is put over George Bush's head. [Whoops and laughter] Then we'll be safe. [Tittering] That's what happens when you get near the White House. I think people in the White House are so out of touch with reality. If they knew there was resistance they'd be frightened, but they're too stupid to be frightened. It's going to hit them one day.

This is where Reagan takes a hot bath. Do you remember those days? Now I think fondly of him. [Laughter] Isn't it strange what history can do? I mean, I just saw a big photograph of him and Nancy at Disney World, at Epcott Center. I thought, "Perfection," [laughter], with those Mickey Mouse ears, and they're all standing next to cartoons. [Tittering] See, some of those -- the Bushes

-- what we know is Margaret Thatcher. When the trans-national corporations want to get rid of them, they get rid of them like that. See, Margaret Thatcher -- We worked for years to get rid of her, years, and then General Electric goes, "She's no good for us anymore," and she's gone. Overnight. She's gone. I mean, it taught us a lesson. They're nothing but figureheads. Bush, Thatcher, Major, [?] -- they're figureheads, for the corporations. When they want them to go, they're gone. And that's what people say about, you know, "Oh, the [?] -- socialism," and what's happening. And I go, "Well, they can hit the street and get rid of their government. We can't." It couldn't have been that repressive, could it? I mean, they can go out in the street and have a demonstration, and the government [?] -- What about us?

This is obvious. [Tittering] I mean, "Schwartz-Schwein," I mean, [?] -- and "Schwartz-Schwein." Look how much money they're making. This is the real common denominator. $5 million for a book deal. And then Bush, when the guy who was running for prime minister got shot, and then Bush said -- What did he say? He said, "Violence. I can't understand it." What did he say, "Steve?"

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Oh, yeah. "What is this world coming to? Such violence." [Laughter]

This is [?] -- education to go on, because there's nothing like being there and witnessing. This is about the "meat work" I'm going to bring on next. Because when you witness something from a point of being powerless, you learn a lot. But I think most people don't want to go to places or situations because they feel powerless. It's not because they're going to faint in the slaughter house, or be in a losing situation. It's because they feel powerless. But with the "Pittstown miners -- this little bit of knowledge that going somewhere and being powerless, just being there, is the process of healing and change. With the "Pittstown" miners, I thought, "Well, I really learned so much about solidarity with people, and how people behave." Because if you're an artist -- well, I'm very isolated. I can't speak for other artists, but I'm isolated. Then I go to a community with resistance. These miners were resisting, and they had the Steel Workers' Union backing them up, and the Carpenters' Union. And it showed a real collective. There was no individualism at all. And [?] -- they won. There's this story that one of the miners' children told us. Her father was picketing, doing a legal picket, and the private police came and just threw them in a ditch, handcuffed them, pointed a gun at their heads and said, "If you raise your head to look, we'll shoot it off." And this is people legal picketing, and they won this strike, against all the forces of the government, all the forces. The miners said, "We would sooner die than go back to work." There was such solidarity. It was so politicized. It was good to see it.

Because over and over again people say there is no hope in this country, but all that's [?] -- is hope, is resistance, is struggle, of people taking it on and achieving victory.

This I just put in to show you I'm a Communist. Communism really has given me a dialectical analysis, so I don't personalize everything. It's given me a really good tool. So when I went out on the road, and people were talking out against the war, and people would be shouting and spitting at me, saying I was a traitor, and I should go back to Russia where I belong, even though

there's no Russia anymore, I saw it dialectically, and that helped. Because I saw the amount of oppression people were under, and I didn't take it personally. I saw it as a denial of class reality.

So when you're talking about struggle, and you're trying to tell somebody about your struggle, and they're saying, "Well, that doesn't exist because --" you have to see it as a denial of your class reality. They're not denying you as an individual, but denying your class reality. And in this country, unfortunately, there is only a dominant-class reality. You know, on television you never see people eating. You never see them even working. You never see them laboring. It's denied any reality to do with labor.

"Diet Popesie." This is when the Pope went to Africa, and he said, "Spirituality before food." So I thought, "Oh, Diet Popesie." And I found out that his hat "fish hat," but I was thinking it sarcastically, "Here is a shark." That is hat really is a "fishhead" hat. This is one of the marvels of using symbols.

This is the Rosenbergs, about the Rosenbergs, the needs of the state. [?] -- The state has to do -- Well, I can't go into the whole Rosenbergs at this time, but they murdered them for being Communists.

This is South Africa, from the South Africa "book." I like to see books if I can, and put information with it so the book can be an organizing tool.

This is the biggest birthday party in the world, and it was for Nelson Mandela. It went to fifty different countries, by satellite, and only in this country was it censored. In between the rock musician acts, speakers would speak, but South Africa -- and in this country, they put in beer commercials. It was shown in Cuba, and the Soviet Union so they didn't censor it.

I did this a long time ago. I just put it in to show how they print it in the magazine. See? You can't really show men in a derogatory way in a magazine, because it upsets the advertisers. This has just been recently censored again, in England. It was taken down because the Queen was going to come, so they took this one down. That's obvious.

This is the beginning of the "Meat" project, which I'll go through quickly. I was attracted to find out -- I spend a lot of time now on the kill floor. I've been to three slaughterhouses in the last two weeks, and it's a curiosity to me, and it's not morbid curiosity. I'm finding out how we collude with the forces of oppression. What is in us that makes us cooperate? See, what monetarists and capitalism is about, the myth they put forth [?] -- is it's survival of the fittest; it's social Darwinism. That's what their economy reflects. But, in fact, it's quite the opposite. We're cooperative. Human beings have no -- We're born with very few instincts. Most of our behavior is learned behavior, so we have a predisposition for walking on two legs; we have a predisposition for language. But most of the time, our flaw is that we cooperate in a social way. Now we're in a very peculiar, aberrant situation here, where we're cooperating with forces that are destroying us -- and that's the question I'm interested in. I don't have any answers, I'm just curious.

Under capitalism, the system is cut into parts, seeming parts. Our labor is removed. We do alienated labor. Our relationships are removed. Even, for women, our wombs are taken out of us. We don't even have that. So we're all seen in parts. This is from a postcard in Texas, showing parts of meat, and parts of woman's body. I just copied it. Because the earth's resources are running out -- have run out -- the corporations are now having to invent life forms. So we're inventing new animal life forms, which they're patenting. This is big money in the pharmaceutical industry, it's going to be big money in the genotype. "Forces" now want us to work on a complete, human genotype. So, for example, you can make a virus that will attack only blue-eyed people. That's what I mean. It's complicated. [?] -- But now, for the first time in history, they can map out each individual's genotype. In animals (and we're animals also), they want to clone animals, which they're doing. They can clone all animals. They can create new animals, which they own the patents to. So they're inventing life, and owning it. [?] -- They're injecting cows now with bovine growth hormone, which increases the milk supply. There's no reason to do this, absolutely no reason, except to make a profit. It's totally inefficient capitalism. Imagine cows just saying "Moo" to drugs. Cows can't.

This is obvious. A young art student saw this [?] -- The artist that did "America's Meat Roundup" swore blind he never saw this Nazi poster, but, actually, it's a direct copy of the Nazi poster.

This is [?] -- Genetics, which is a real corporation. What's wrong with all these genetic, new life forms, is we have no say in it. We're the human guinea pigs. They don't need animals to experiment on, they're experimenting on us. They're seeing how much radiation we can take, how many new life forms they can make. And some of these organisms have been released into the environment now, especially into so-called Third World countries. New organisms have been released, as tests.

This is a perfect pig. General Electric, General Dynamics, General Motors -- they're all involved in this. It's going to be biological weapons and new weapons. This is a perfect pig that they want to create. And, you know, perfect proteins -- cancer cells -- because they multiply very quickly. And what the animal "intent to be founded was this human cloned."

This will be a book, so I can't explain it more in all its comprehensiveness. This is now human gene, [?] -- cow, sheep, goats and so on. Why? Because the human gene is a fast-growing gene, has less fat. So when you clone an animal gene, you get high protein and less fat, "as opposed to" growing animals. This is a pig's-eye view of the slaughterhouse.

So I'm going to slaughterhouses, and I'm drawing and I'm sitting there drawing. I'll show you my sketchbooks tomorrow. I'll be covered with flies. I'm with the workers on the kill floor, and I'm almost to the point now where I can understand it. This is how you get immunity to the horror of it all. Because it's like a surgeon, when you practice to be a doctor. The first time you see a human body cut into, you faint. The second time you feel queasy. The third time you're almost over it, and the fourth time you can cut into a human body.

My sister went to a slaughterhouse in Detroit. I felt great community feeling in Detroit, a sense of community, which I haven't felt so strongly anywhere in America. But this is the biggest hog

slaughterhouse in America. It's a Fortune 500 company. This is where the hogs are thrown out, in transit. The hogs -- Nowadays the hogs might travel 600-800 miles to a slaughterhouse, and in that travel they will die. Like twelve out of every truck gets thrown on the highway. And when you're there, on the kill floor, you're helpless. You have no power to change anything.

These are the sheeps and goats. This is old cows next. I've just been to a slaughterhouse a couple days ago which is an old-cow slaughterhouse, except now they're not old cows anymore, they're young cows, because the government has cut the subsidy out of milk, so farmers can't afford to keep cows anymore. The kill floor's about this big, so the cows go in, then a buzzer goes off for lunch. So the cows will slip on the blood, intestines and break their leg, and they'll be sitting in the blood during lunch break, before the workers come back. As they fall down, with their legs broken, they skid in the blood. They'll fall on their udders, which are full of milk, because no one bothers to milk them, because they're going to be slaughtered. The milk (I actually took photographs of this) comes out of the udders and mixes with the blood, on the kill floor.

See, they're nothing. They're nothing, just like we're nothing. And if we have any illusions that we're any better than this cow, we're under an illusion. For the workers, their lunch break sounded and they went. It's that type of -- You're brutally treated all the time. I've seen government inspectors talk to the meat packers in a way that I wouldn't be spoken to, because I'm an "artist." I've seen them have just the worst abuse from government inspectors: "You fuck, get that over here and do this." That's the way they talk to them.

I forgot that. I forgot how working people are spoken to. And they can't say anything. Their blood falls on the killing floor the same way as the animals.

This is Swift, butcher to the world.

When you go to a cow slaughterhouse -- these are large animals -- there's a [?] -- bolt pistol or a pressure-gun type pistol, with a five-inch bolt that shoots through the brain. Since Ronald Reagan got into power, there's speed-up, so it means the stunning is missed a lot of times, and the animal is not stunned. The animal is then swung upside down. She's waited on the kill floor for her turn, and she's swung upside down, and she'll be kicking all the time. The worker will be avoiding the kicks. See, when I first started on the kill floor, I thought it had a lot to do with patriarchy and prejudices against men, because it's all men on the kill floor. But then I saw, because of the danger involved with the job, the workers somehow have to fight this animal to survive.

On that last one, I went out with a guy -- This is "Eddie," who's the main kill guy. He pointed the gun at me and he said, "This is to kill artists, women and animals," and he laughed. Right? You go in an elevator to "guard" the animal, and I giggled. I giggled like a girl giggles. I went, "He, he, he, he." [Tittering] I was like a babe. Believe it or not, I became a babe. And that was another realization; that that was to defend myself.

Where I come from, which is Liverpool -- There's a slaughterhouse in Liverpool, where they had almost no stunning. I'd go over the back fence to go through the graveyard. Liverpool's an abandoned industrial town. I walked over to the slaughterhouse, and I was crunching on bones of

100 years. The whole field was made of bones, and I'd go crunch, crunch, crunch. I looked down, and it was bones. I looked around the corner, and I saw these poor kids playing with a hog's head for a football, because they couldn't afford a ball. So they got the hog's heads, and they were playing with them.

This is a wheel of fortune, like the art world. They take you up, cut you out, get the profit, and throw you down. [Tittering] They used to say, "We use everything in the hog except the squeal." This is a modern hog-slaughter plant.

This is where all your hamburgers come. It's all intestines. When you see one of these large animals killed, it's like a balloon filled with fluids, just waiting to be pierced. You see the life go out of that individual, special animal, you've been looking at, in the pen outside. Then you just see it pierced and gone.

This is Wall Street. Wall Street used to be the original "apertoire" in New York City. Like all stock markets, it was the "stock market." That's where capital came from.

This is "Tucson." There's major union busting down South. It's all Mexican workers. If they want a union, then they call up the immigration police to deport them.

This is [?] -- in L.A., where they have a mural all around the slaughter house, like the pigs died of happiness.

How they pick up chickens. [?] -- and sometimes they take the tongues out, because hens in confinement will peck each other to death, in that situation. So they de-beak them.

The last slaughterhouse I went to they were playing "The Doors," the complete "Doors" works, so "The Doors" was blaring out of the kill floor. If you're born a male chick you're disposed of, because males have no use in the poultry industry. So they just put the male chicks in plastic bags to suffocate, or just in the dumpsters with old coke cans and cigarette butts. They can't even be bothered to gas them or anything. [?] -- gassing hogs, because that's the quickest way. They put them all in the gas chamber.

[?] -- That's my poor assistant, Steve, who's never eaten meat, in ten years. I just used him as a model, in case you see him. He's standing right there.

This is sheep in Australia. Now a sheep is worth less than a bullet, so all the sheep farmers, because their market in Eastern Europe has dried up, the bullet is worth more, so they just might as well shoot them. They're building mass burial pits. This is the inefficiency.

Feed lot. This is how the animals are all crammed in together. This is called a picnic, and it's how I used to be. I could ignore things that were so closed to me. I'm interested in that human ability to ignore what's on the other side of the fence. You can be living next door to a concentration camp, and in New York, we certainly are living next door to a concentration camp, and we ignore it. [?] --

This is in the meat district, which I go to a lot to draw. These are called chickens and chicken hawks. These are the children who hang around the meat district. I've watched these men in their Saab cars, and their Mercedes Benz, and they'll pick up a child, a child prostitute -- that's a chicken -- and these are men whose daughters or sons would be the same age, but they don't see that contradiction. There's nothing more heartbreaking than to see these children, whom you know are throwaways, all crammed around rotting carcasses.

Maybe we can talk about art another time. This is "doing drawing, with paint on it." This is the University of Mexico, where they actually cut holes in animals, just to experiment on them. The animals are alive, running around with holes in them, and the students [?] -- on Halloween, the students get drunk and dare themselves to put their hands in the holes, to see what comes out.

This is downtown Chinatown, live chicken acts. This is now entertainment for children, with videos and chickens. You can make them tap dance, you can make them tap out crossword puzzles. This is a dove of peace, but there's nowhere to land.

This is a stockyard in Minnesota we all just went to, to demonstrate, and change the law there, which some sanctuary organized, and it's now succeeded. Now the major stock industry has given rights to "downed" animals. A downed animal would be waiting days to die. They wouldn't even waste a bullet on the animal. So now those animals have the right to die immediately, when they're downed.

This is a veal slaughter house I went to in Montreal. I went with one set of workers who had never been on the kill floor, even though they were handling the carcasses. So they keep the workers very separate. The workers I went with, they didn't like what they saw. "Veals" have to be dragged to the slaughterhouse, they can't walk, because they're kept in crates and their bones are too brittle to walk, so they drag them. Also, the animals always go to New York restaurants. Along with hummingbird tongues you get a little bit of veal, you get hummingbird tongue, you get a little green thing. It's what you eat in a posh restaurant. These animals really struggle for a long time after they've been shot through the brain. It's a most difficult animal to stun properly.

This is a government inspector. They all had safety equipment on, but none of the workers did. This is the same thing. "Just say no to drugs." Veal.

This is low-cholesterol Buffalo meat. We went to this farm that's all buffalo now. The big thing is low cholesterol, so they [?] -- buffalo, which were almost wiped out in this country. Now they're brought back.

Okay. Now the questions. That's all the slides. [Applause]

Q: Looking at all the horrible things in the world, how do you stay happy in it?

A: Star Trek, the last [?] -- visual fantasy. And my rats.

Q: Your rats?

A: Yeah. I've got hairless. They're without fur, and just the ability to look at something with curiosity. Humans can be "a lot of happiness" too, but if you want pure joy, go to rats. They can go down your trousers, and they can wriggle around your body, if you [?] -- Their little pink ears are like tissue paper, long tails. You've got to have something to look at "with binoculars." If you get binoculars, you can go out and look at the moon, and then you think, "Oooh, there's something else." If you can look at something a long time and forget yourself, it'll make you happy, especially if you're me. It'll get me really happy. But rats.

Q: How many [?] --

A: I think there might be one coming up.

Q: The first one?

A: This is going to be the second.

Q: That's it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: What's good about going to slaughterhouses, as an artist, is that they think you're so ineffectual, and ditsy. That's what's great about being an artist: You can get places. I was just in this military installation. I said, "Oh, I want to draw planes." [Laugher] And I got in. I couldn't believe it. You know, it helps. Because they think, "Oh, paintbrush. Oh." But if you go in with a camera, a video camera, they take you seriously. But no one ever takes artists seriously. That's how we get so much power. We get into all these places no one else can get. I loved doing planes. "Let me see that bloody hand on your nuclear warhead. I love drawing that."

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, I've got two feelings about it. (A), when I get published it's a sheer joy, because my phone doesn't ring. I can go from week to week to week, month to month to month, and my phone doesn't ring. Suddenly, it'll ring, they go, "Sue, we've got a job for you," and I go, "Oh, good," then I do the job and they cut it in half. So I'm not sure -- Because I got the job, that was something. Then I got half the job, which is something. I get pissed off. I get really pissed off. But I don't get that many jobs. Which is good. [Chuckling]

[AUDIO BREAK]

COE: I didn't think I was. I'm trying to get away from using -- If you're doing political cartooning you have to be seen very quickly, and, unfortunately, cartooning lends itself to prejudicial images, because it's quickly understood. I thought in that one it wasn't like a dog. I thought I made it sufficiently human to make it not an animal. But I've more or less stopped using animals, because it's lazy. It's just a lazy, prejudicial stereotype. Because to show a [?] --

how do you show a [?] -- different job than "George Gross" or John "Hartfield" or [?] -- or "Otto Dix." We can't draw these fat "schweinhundts" with dollar signs anymore. Because they all look like Donald Trump; they're all low-cholesterol mates. So how do you show that so it's understandable? You have to rely on symbols, and when you use symbols it's a double-edged sword. So there's no answer. There really isn't any answer. I think you have to do both the propaganda work, to propagate ideas, and then be witnessing the other type of work. I don't think there's one solution to it.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, the military base I went to, I went there for a purpose, and that purpose us that it's the biggest primate research center in America. And in that primate research center they are giving the chimps AIDS. I had to sign a document before I went in to draw the "planes," which said that if I contracted AIDS, or I was radiated, or I got some sort of hepatitis, I wouldn't sue them. I signed this document, and I was asking these questions about why they were infecting the chimps with AIDS. What they do is, the workers there they get from the local town, and they get young girls -- and I mean "girls" -- to actually be the surrogate mothers to these chimps. They're tested for AIDS every three months. It's very interesting what's happening. I can't say either way, but I wouldn't put anything past them. I don't put anything past them at all. But it doesn't matter now. I almost doesn't matter. It could or it couldn't -- I know they're doing lots of experimentation, and these experiments are on military bases. And I said, "Why is this primate research center on a military air force base?" This is in New Mexico, and it's near White Sands. They're breeding chimps with AIDS, and they wouldn't answer any question I had.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I know what you're saying, but it's almost -- we can't really --

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I would like to know more about it.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Okay. Write it down after.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I did.

Q: [Inaudible] -- specifics as opposed to racism.

A: Angela Davis, *Race, Sex & Class*, *Race, Gender & Class*. They're all three. They're all three. But I would say at the basis of all of those is economics.

Q: You believe that.

A: Yes, I do. I do.

Q: Or racism.

A: Yes. I do. Unless -- I could be wrong, but this is what I think. This is what I do think. Because, you know, we have such a thing as bourgeois feminism. Margaret Thatcher is a woman. It didn't help me any. You know what I'm saying?

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I don't have anything more in common with her, because she's a woman. She's a wealthy, wealthy female who has a lot of power. See, I think the basis is economics, and what the ruling class wants to do is divide us. They want to divide us all the time. A South African revolutionary once said, "Before we co-exist, we first have to exist." So accept that. Accept that. But what the ruling class wants to do is divide us, based on sex and race. That's what they want to do, so they get the money.

Q: So you feel the issue is [?] --

A: I feel the issue is the ownership of land, which the ANC has said. The ANC has said this is not an issue of race, it's an issue of land. Who controls the land? Now I'm not denying racism. That's not what I'm saying. But I think the only way I can go forward is based on economics. But I think it's all three together. It is all three together. I mean, what do you think?

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I believe that. But how would you handle a Supreme Court nomination then? The Supreme Court nominee now?

Q: I'm not really familiar with the Supreme Court justices, okay? Now I could be wrong, [?] -- don't know their history, and the people themselves don't know their history. [?] -- if you don't know the background --

A: Absolutely.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I will "wait." I do. I mean, I know in the slaughterhouses you have Spanish-speaking workers, black workers, you have white workers. They're all in the same bloodied boat.

Q: Yeah, yeah. I can see that.

A: They're all being killed on the killing floor, all together, and they have a solidarity, because they're all being exploited in the same way. And it seems to me that the only path we can take to

defend ourselves is to have solidarity. But, like I said, before we co-exist, we first have to exist, and that has to be acknowledged.

Q: Yes, yes. [?] --

A: I mean, I understand Farracon. I definitely understand Farracon. But it's weird how Farracon has used this Supreme Court justice. He spoke favorably about Farracon. Right? So did Jesse Jackson. That destroyed Jesse Jackson in New York, amongst a certain group of people. So it's how they divide and conquer, all the time.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: And I know that we, together, are a lot stronger than George Bush. We're a lot stronger than Quayle. We're a lot stronger. If we were to withdraw our labor -- They make profit off our labor. Because we're artists we're not doing alienated labor, but we're still doing work that creates a profit. When you're not students you'll come closer to that. If we withdrew that in an organized way, they wouldn't get any profit, [?] -- I think it's all complicated. I've tried to learn how to listen to people and not gone in there with this Marxist/Leninist judgment, because -- I'm stressing that here, because I don't think that's stressed enough. I might be over-stressing it for the sake of clarity. It's the only way I learn something, from somebody coming on strong. Then I can make my own mind up.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Go ahead.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, every human being is a living newspaper. [?] -- and you're a newspaper, and you're going to give me news and information. So the primary source is asking people questions, because in this culture, people aren't used to being asked questions, especially so-called working-class people. They've never asked a question in their entire life. So if you start asking people questions, as they vocalize, you can hear the thought process, and you learn.

Just back on what you were saying -- When I became a feminist, I wanted to be a radical, lesbian, sexist feminist. And I hated men. I hated men at this period. I mean, I still have the remnants of that hatred, but it's a mere shadow. And what I realized was my own class, being an artisan, I was removed from working-class women, who can't separate themselves from men. See, working-class women, working in a meat-packing plant or a supermarket, can't afford to separate themselves from men. They have to co-exist. And they don't wear short, spiky haircuts either. They're, like, overweight, with bleached, blonde hair, and they're as radical and feminist as you will ever find. But they don't have the luxury to be separate. See, so, I learned something by that [?] -- patriarchy. That's everything. That's everything. It was because I was an artist, and I didn't have to work with other people. I could be separate. I know that's a big part of it.

Now on the information stuff, what's happening now is a duality of information in the media, which is quite interesting. I was just saying before, on the one hand you can have a Patriarch missile break up in outer space and drop down in little bits. In the next breath, you can hear how successful the Patriot missile was. So it's almost -- there's no suppression of information, because now the ruling class, the capitalist class, they can work both sides of the fence. They can work with both information. Like, we won the war in Iraq, but he's still a demon that we have to keep bombing. See what I mean? So that information is just coming out in "tails," and that's why I think the capitalist class is not fully in control of all the information. It's still coming out. You've got *The Nation*, you've got *The Progressive*, you've got *The Guardian*. But it's basically humans. When I talked to miners, I found out more information just by talking and asking questions than I ever did from any magazine. If you want information you have to read the extreme right. You read the *Wall Street Journal*, because then you can figure out -- They've got the money to do real good investigative journalism. So you go for the extreme right-wing papers. You don't read their editorials, because they're silly, but you read all the economic sections, because then you can figure out what they're going to do to us next, and you can plan ahead.

But this is a whole new phenomenon. I don't particularly read a lot of newspapers, just something about the Patriot missile -- too sides of information -- and about Iran Contra, the [?] -- with George Bush. There's that information -- working alongside him saying he has total integrity, and it's a scandalous lie. It's interesting, isn't it? I didn't really answer your question, but there you go.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Yes, yes. I mean, I read his war tribunal, the war-crimes brief that he did, which is brilliant. So I do read. But it's asking people questions that's the main thing.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: [Inaudible]

Q: [Inaudible]

A: It's actually in Africa, right? See, what the right-wing does, it trains all of us to think in a hierarchical way. So some things are better than other things. They train us to think that some art is better than other art. Some humans are better than other humans. And I think it's part of the resistance and struggle. We can't fall into a trap that [?] -- some ways of struggle are better than other ways. I think we have to embrace all the ways of resistance, and use everything we have. So it's your way and all our ways, to use for defense. So there's no one -- But they do that. They lie all the time. When I came to this country I wanted to find out about "Olie Harrington," who's an African-American cartoonist, whom they banished from this country. I knew all about him in Europe, because somehow he was safe in Europe, safe to give the information. In this country -- in this country you can't hear about him, because he was a Communist. That's why. That's why you can't hear about him.

And there are many such artists, who have been wiped out of the history books, because they're so powerful. That's why. That's the answer.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: But why do you think a Marxist analysis would be denying it? Why do you think an economic analysis is denying that?

Q: [Inaudible] -- exploiting the labor in other countries.

A: Mexico.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Yes, but why -- We don't have to deal with the cause anymore, we have to deal with the response. After we'd had the revolution, we'll look at all the causes. When we've had the revolution, we've defended ourselves. Because we don't have the luxury to argue about the causes. I think we have to stop this genocide. We have to organize to stop it, and then it's like -- You could say maybe human nature causes this. Maybe human beings are warlike. But what's the point of going into that? And that's not a denial of the struggle. It's right now we have to act together. Jesse Jackson is saying -- you know, he's going to all different places, because he's acting in the best interest of African-Americans. And the best interest is unity. That has to be the best interest. All right Comrade [?] -- We agree. [Applause]

Anything else?

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, we just did the play with Vanessa Redgrave. When we had the war march in New York we put on a play, which was testimony from Arab women, and [?] -- testimony. And that was good. It was really good that all different culture workers came together, so you wouldn't just be remembered for the war parade. And it was good to work together.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Very small part. I did the advertising poster and the brochure. But then Vanessa Redgrave acted out my woman in that picture, and [?] -- It was great. [?] -- Oh, God, ooh. That's good.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I think I will. Yes. I love collaborating. I love working with other people, because I get really lonely, me and my rats, just knocking off political cartoons. It's good to work with people. Yes.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, I can still remember Bork. We hit him hard and we hit him good, and we got rid of him. Now we've got to start again with this dude.

Q: [Inaudible] [Laughter]

A: Thomas -- he's one of the very few African-Americans George Bush could find who's a conservative. One of the very few. He searched, coast to coast, and he found. But this guy might be a spy, [?] -- As soon as he gets on the Supreme Court he's going to turn. But you can't blame the worm, you've got to blame the person who put the worm in the pie. That's what "some feminists said." So it's George Bush. He's at it again.

Well, what do you think? Do you have any ideas on how to stop this? Any ideas of stopping this march of the new world order?

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Nah. That's why I spent twenty years doing it. See, with the British imperialism, invading islands for the last 500 years, the Irish people have a culture of resistance. They resisted the British. When I say the British people, I mean the upper-class British people, not all of them. They've resisted it through culture -- through language, songs, art work and so on -- and it's people's cultural resistance. When I went to [?] -- cruise missiles, women found culture and they used that as a tool of resistance. Culture is life force, and it can be the most effective tool.

Yes.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Oh, I think a lot of people. The [?] -- is an organizing tool by all different groups of people. Whoever wants to use [?] -- as a progressive, uses that.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I'm well published. [Laughter] Yes. You moved.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I haven't been lucky enough yet to have been chosen by any corporation. You know, after all --

Q: [Inaudible]

A: You see, I didn't know who they were when they "bought," which isn't an excuse, but they bought the work when it was really cheap and sold for $500, downtown. Yeah.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Yeah, I think it was $500. It was like no money at all. But now with this gallery I've got, we've got an agreement that some people can't buy the art. But in New York State, once you offer one for sale, you have to be careful how you do that, because you can't discriminate. So they don't sell the work to anyone they don't think -- I mean, nobody buys my work anymore. You know, it was hot once, in 1972, or whenever. This is something I have to struggle over. "Oh, [?] -- Will General Electric buy my work today?" I mean, it's pathetic. I've got $11,000, which is a lot of money compared to what any of you have got, but this is after twenty years, and I didn't spend it all, either. See, having censorship in this country -- If you're not, say, a white man, you get really censored and it's a big deal, because if you're a white man and important you get censored. But if you're a woman, or, usually, an African-American, they "sense" you economically, they sense you even before you get to the point of being censored. The censorship is economic; you don't get the funding to continue on. So it's no big drama, how they censored your photographs in some museum, because you're never going to get into the museum to be censored. See what I mean? I mean, I've been lucky, and I've been lucky because -- I've been told this by other artists. Because I'm a European, I came to this country and I was [?] -- exotic. That's what I've been told. "Oh, she's safe." But there's artists here whom I know never get their work in print. They never get asked to be in gallery shows, ever. Because the work has so much content, they're not going to be bought by anybody. They're not going to be funded.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, I think you shouldn't read any art magazines or go to any galleries where you go blind. [Chuckling] Don't read any of that stuff. It's poisonous to --

Q: [Inaudible]

A: If it's me, or a couple other artists, you can go. You just get depressed. I walk into the galleries in this building, and I can't believe it. This abstract art is [?] -- I think this abstract painting as pointless. They can't draw and they can't paint, and they get big money. It's best not to go in, you just get depressed. It's all the arts -- graffiti, it's in comic books, all the live art is in comic book stores. Go down to the basement at Forbidden Planet and check out the cartoon books. Or "war" murals in New York. That's where the work is a force, a "live" force. It's usually did by the time it gets to a gallery.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, we once saw, in the garbage on 86th Street, an Andy Warhol original, and it was in this frame. We just took the frame. [Applause] It was a good frame. But I can't say that too -- because I'm in a certain position of actually being accepted in certain worlds, so I can't say that to you. So I'm in a different position of mocking it. I think it would be wonderful if any of you made a living by doing art. It would be a miracle. Even if you did abstract, bless your heart if you get money out of it.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, in that case, only "Harrington" is a favorite, and has always been a favorite artist. He's now in Detroit. He used to live in East Germany, now he's come back. Obviously John "Hartfield," Katie "Couwitz," "Goya," and, above all, Harriman. Crazy cat. When we look at cartoons, we're talking major art. We're not talking any painting shit on canvas, we're talking art. We're looking at that printed page of cartooning of "Crazy Cat." That's beyond --

Q: What about Soutine?

A: Soutine could paint. Rembrandt could dabble, Van Gogh, all those. There's so many in contemporary -- "Adrienne Piper." I just discovered her, and I really like her. She's really a very brilliant woman. Who else? And "Art Spiegelman," with "Mouse." That's back to cartooning again. There's so much work. See, you're so fortunate, because in the '70s there wasn't that much work with content. It was totally oppressed. Now almost every artist is doing it, because the situation is getting such that artists are relating to social conditions, naturally, so there's so much interesting work. It's not like half the galleries are full of abstract work, because it's not. There are so many things going on now.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: Well, I think the buying class people, through the buying of art, don't want to be challenged with any content. The big purchases of the corporate art -- I don't know much about this, but they want their own reality. We're flattered. So the capitalist class don't labor, so they don't want to see any labor. "They were psychologicals." Now when they look at abstract art, they think "psychologicals," and they think "low cholesterol," and that's the sort of art they want to purchase. They don't want to purchase anything that's going to make them think, or remind them of anything that's not their reality. This is a generalization, but I think this is the case. The bourgeois class wants art that reflects their reality, which is not about any struggle, not about any contradiction, just reflects -- You're yawning! [Laughter] Me and you will have a talk tomorrow. We'll have a little talk. You give me all this "book list."

Any other questions?

Q: What is the "connection" between the bourgeois class and the working class? What is the separation, or the connection?

A: It's easy. If you're in the bourgeois class you have trust funds, you don't have to work for a living. If you're working class, you have to work to stay alive. If you don't work, you die. There's no money. So a bourgeois class person is living off capital. Now we all identify with this bourgeois class, all of us, because we're born into this bourgeois society. We're all contaminated with it, all of us, which is the isolation. See, I don't think separatism -- that we can afford to be any more isolated than we already are. See, I think my bourgeois tendencies isolate myself even further from the situation.

Q: Do you have hope?

A: There's no other choice.

Q: What was the question?

A: "Do you have hope." [Chuckling] Yes?

Q: [Inaudible]

A: The art pieces --

Q: [Inaudible]

A: No, I didn't want to take up your time by just talking about art.

Q: What would you have said? [Laughter]

A: See, you want to go don't you? [Laughter] What's the time, then? See, you can go now. She has to drive two hours to go back.

Q: [?] -- answer the question.

A: I wouldn't have said anything. It's not worth saying -- to talk about art, or painting technique.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I've forgotten. I don't think -- I only think in terms of "fun." I told you Star Trek and rats. [Chuckling, applause] I used to have these personal relationships, but it's been shattered for me. I've only got rats, and Star Trek [laughs].

Q: And I thought I had [?] --

A: See, it's made you feel good, isn't it? See, it's all relative. [Laughs]

Q: What is your view of, say, abstraction as used in other cultures or the traditional cultures, or what we call tribal cultures -- whatever you want to call it -- historical cultures that use abstract patterns as a means of communication, in tapestries and the painting of domiciles and so forth? Do you see that as "content [?] --" in their culture?

A: When do you think capitalism is going to collapse? See, I'm not a good person to ask that. I'd just be shooting off my mouth even more if I answered it.

Q: Well, what did you think of [?] --

A: I liked it. I like that tattoo on your arm. Show them. It's abstract. It's good.

Q: The concept of abstraction can communicate work and "hold" content. I obviously believe it can -- at least that's what I do every day in my life.

A: I figured that by your question.

Q: [?] -- I understand how you could see it in the context of a culture that you're a part of. I understand you're "sensibility" --

A: But I'm not talking about anyone else's culture. I'm talking from my own culture, which is *Bonanza* and *Star Trek*. I don't have any of those cultural references to abstract art.

Q: Yeah. I get it.

A: I mean, *Bonanza* is really abstract if you live in Liverpool all your life, and you watch Lorne Greene. That's abstract. No, I know what you're asking. You have your viewpoint and I have my viewpoint, and I have to present it.

Q: Well, the difference in our viewpoints is simply that I don't feel a need to dismiss your viewpoint in order to have my viewpoint.

A: Well, you've probably got more money than me.

Q: I probably have a lot more debt, too. I don't know. That's an assumption of yours, not mine. I don't presume to know how much money you have.

A: I told you. You don't have to presume. Next question.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: I said I didn't care. If they got money out of it, that was good. If any artist gets money out of doing anything they do, that's a good thing. But I'm here to give you a specific viewpoint. I'm not here to give you a liberal, general viewpoint on art. I've got a very definite view. You might have a differing view. But that's the way I learn something. It's not by hearing, "Oh, yeah, and there's great abstract art," and talk about, "Oh, yeah, there's great figurative art." I'm giving you a viewpoint which you can decide for yourself. It's not my idea to divide artists one from another. We're all comrades in the struggle against the genocide that's going on. I don't care what art you do. I don't care what art I do, if we're all part of that struggle. But, on the other hand, I can't dismiss what happened in the 1950s in this country, and how figurative art was wiped out. Yes?

Q: [Inaudible]

A: No, you said it really good. "Commodity making of the object." That's what I really meant to say, but I didn't. Are you a teacher here?

Q: No.

A: Because you ought to be. [Laughter] You're really good. You've got things so clearly. [Laughs] You've got a little brain on a stalk. [Laughter] This huge, throbbing brain on a tiny stalk. This woman needs to be watered. She needs to be given money. Yes?

Q: Why did the "multi-nationals" want to get rid of Margaret Thatcher?

A: Poll tax. There was too much resistance in the poll tax. They didn't have enough prisons. They couldn't criminalize the whole population. So they got Major in, with a different type of tax. She wouldn't back down on the poll tax, and she wouldn't back down over Europe. So those were two economic reasons why they removed her. But, she's waiting in the wings, and can return. [Chuckling]

Q: [Inaudible]

A: One of them. One of the roots. One of the many tendrils.

Q: [Inaudible]