JFL: What does “why” mean?

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JFL: WHAT DOES “WHY” MEAN?
Foreword

Chapter One - **JFL**: What does “Why” mean?  64

Chapter Two - **VIL**: What is to be done?  188

Chapter Three - **RB**: How?  199

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**VIL**: Vladimir Ilich Lenin, search www.amazon.com for Henry M. Christman (ed.), *V. I. Lenin, What Is to Be Done?*  
PH: What do you mean by the term “language?”

Q: Why are Flash Art’s cover always painted?
AD: Why is it painted with household enamel? And why on wood, why plywood? SG: Why do you use these materials?
RJ: Why is this so important? JC: Why did he make black paintings, then white ones (coming up out of the South), red, gold ones (the gold ones were Christmas presents), ones of many colors, ones with objects attached? HM: Why?
BJ: Why are these representations of nature being constructed now, near the end of a decade, a century and a millennium? CN: Why is the consistency of the surface so important in to your work?
PM: Why not empty this receptacle, free the surface, try to discover the unlimited meaning of total space, and pure absolute light? JT: Why limit yourself, why feel limited? CN: Why did you feel it was necessary to eliminate so many elements from your paintings? AP: Why

Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

Do you replace the name of the elements? AK: Why do we have all these ugly things which nobody needs? DC: And why did she refer to those ugly pictures as her art? TRQ: Why does Greenberg think it would be impossible for the peasant to appreciate Picasso even if Picasso’s work was officially sanctioned by the State (i.e. the dominant culture)? FS: Why paint abstractly today? JS: Why didn’t you just paint a bed? DB: ...Why not “paint” in between the paintings? FB: Why, after the great artists, do people ever try to do anything again? RJ: Why is this so important? TME: Why ruin a great painting? GB: Why was it desirable to get rid of it? EV: Why doesn’t he continue painting “Sunday,” a flower or a girl with blue eyes? JS: Why did you choose to paint such themes? PM: [...] Why did the portrait, along with still life, provide the chief terrain for the “slick tricks” of the “optical self-conscious new painting? EV: Why does he ruin his life with line and colors that have so little to do with existing reality? JS: Why did Cézanne do all that shuffling? CG: Why did Giotto break with the kind of Byzantine painting that was there in Italy in his time. MB: Why did you choose a realistic style? TD: Is that why only those painters who distrust painting attract you? Is that why only those paintings that display the extreme vulnerability of painting are able to move you beyond mere enjoyment, and thus withstand the peril? PM: Why did people want to own or look at paintings that were “representations of painting” in addition to whatever else they were? MS&MM: We have already said that this art has been excluded from the mainstream, but why is that so? ML: But why is that so? ML: Why

Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

is that? **AK:** Why have our standards fallen so low? **FS:** Why did Guston leave the canvas bare at the edges? **EV:** Why does he experiment? **AS:** Why was he so keen in selecting the bricks himself for building it? **FS:** Why did H. Frankenthaler use unsized canvas? **BG:** Why would you like to prohibit someone from doing such a thing? **A:** Can you explain why? **BO’D:** The easel painting is not transferable to the wall, and one wants to know why. **KS:** Why don’t I paint with my feet? **JS:** Why is it that you’re so very interested in painting the body and flesh? **CP:** Why, she asked, didn’t Klein’s early refusal of expressive brushwork and his limiting of the painting’s surface to a single uniform color win him a place of distinction as a radical reductive artist? **PC:** Why do you think you rejected those things? **DJ:** Why is it necessarily a reduction? **JPS:** Why doesn’t he try to achieve something perfect, relying on some reliable technique, instead of seeming to ignore his predecessors? **LS:** Why should there exist even one Christian painting, such as Botticini’s Nativity tondo in Florence (Fig. 16), where angels vent their joy at God’s human birth by bestrewing his pudenda with flowers? **SA:** But why should we look at 18th-century Venetian art now? **LN:** Why else would I be teaching David, Goya, Manet and Daumier these many years? **DL:** Why not feature an interview/photo of artists McEvilley in conversation with Jay Murphy, in Art Papers, (September-October, 1996), **GB:** Gene Baro, “Barry Flanagan Untitled Statement, Sculpture Made Visible: Discussion with Gene Baro” (1969), in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, (eds.), Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a sourcebook of artists’ writings, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), p. 655, **EV:** Emilio Vedova, “It’s Not so Easy to Paint a Nose” 1948, ibid., p. 51-52, **JS:** Jacques Saraben, interview with Francis Bacon “To Make a Sahara of the Mouth” trans. Thierry Dubois, in Art Press, no. 215, (July-August, 1996), p. 22, **PM:** Paul Mattick, “Light & Shade,” see reviews of books in Art in America, (September 1996), p. 35, **EV:** Emilio Vedova, “It’s Not so Easy to Paint a Nose” 1948, in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, (eds.), Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a sourcebook of artists’ writings, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), p. 52, **JS:** Jeanne Siegel, “Environments and Happenings,” (panel discussion among Kaprow, Segal, and Siegel as moderator on December 13, 1966) in Jeanne Siegel, Artwords: Discourse on the 60’s and 70’s, (De Capo Press, 1992), p. 168, **CG:** Clement Greenberg in “Edmonton Interview” see THE EDMONTON CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS’ SOCIETY NEWSLETTER Vol 3, Issue 2 & Vol 4 Issue 1, [Internet] available from: <http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/interview.html> **MB:** Matthew Baigell, “Leon Golub, The Mercenaries: Interview with Matthew Baigell” (1981), in Jeanne Siegel, Artwords: Discourse on the 60’s and 70’s, (De Capo Press, 1992), p. 242, **TD:** Thierry de Duve, Kant after Duchamp, (London, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), p. 45, **PM:** Paul Mattick, “Light & Shade,” see reviews of books in Art in America, (September, 1996), p. 35, **MS&M:** Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer, “Waste Not Want Not: An Inquiry into What Women Saved and Assembled” – FEMMAGE (1977-78), in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, (eds.), Theories who still find painting a challenge and have the discipline to create, hold a job, and exhibit work, here and abroad. **D:** Why is he obliged to paint? **AR:** Why are art objects special objects or more valued objects? **RB:** Why doesn’t it look that way, though, you know when you look at the art magazines and you look at who sells art and who... **RD:** Why “duplicate” the objects of the world in this way, except to accomplish with one’s own hands what the photographic process will subsequently do mechanically, according to its own laws? **HG:** Why do you think this is so?

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Chapter One


EV: Emilio Vedova, “It’s Not so Easy to Paint a Nose” 1948, ibid., p. 51.


JFL: What does “why” mean?

JC: Why do you waste your time and mine by trying to get value judgments? Don’t you see that when you get a value judgment that’s all you have?
Chapter One

MF: The fundamental question is Why photography? LN: [...] “Why the 1860s is the Best Decade of the 19th Century—Or Any Other.” GB: Why should I show anyone aside from my own time? CN: Why did you decide to make photographic rather than life studies the subjects of your paintings? RS: Why is it photography that plays such an important role for you? MC: Why is that? WGTH&MN: Why are there never any people in your pictures? ML: Why is that? FA: Why haven’t I shown that in my pictures yet? ML: Why does Mapplethorpe’s aesthetic surface in your pictures? A: Can you explain why? TA: There is no answer that would convince someone who would ask such questions as “Why imitate something?” or “Why tell a story as if it were true when obviously the facts are otherwise it just distorts reality?” RR: In the late seventies and early eighties you use photography a lot in your books, why? MH: Why do we mention this? RGD: Why do you like this so much, then? RB: Wilson holds me, though I cannot say why, i.e., say where: is it the eyes, the skin, the position of the hands, the track shoes? KS: [...] Why not feet? CC: Why didn’t we see more of the face? LM: Why does it please you? LS: Why don’t you keep your problems and your pleasures to yourself? Why? DO: Why don’t you just designate a site? MN: Why, then, one wondered, should the haptic be so elaborately theorized within a model of the gaze (even one regressed to a condition of blindness)? PP: Why do you attach so much importance to that notion? MR: Why is this important?

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Chapter One

**JFL:** What does “why” mean?

**MS:** Why cannot art exist any more in the West?

**Q:** Why me?  **AD:** Why am I a work of art?”

**AD:** Why was it a work of art when the objects which resemble it exactly, at least under perceptual criteria, are mere things, or, at best, mere artifacts?  **MD:** Why isn’t my chess playing an art activity?  **IN:** Why should the artistic imagination be so contained, or be unequal to the broadening scope of our world awareness?  **RK:** Why should it?  **TG:** … I said to him “Why?” and he couldn’t answer.  **TD:** Why couldn’t this urinal be a beautiful object at times, while at others, it thumbs its nose at the very idea of beauty?  **NC:** So, why then suppose that the


Chapter One

formity, cultural multiplicity. 

PM: Why determine this space? Why limit it? 

AH: Why choose Exit 52 on the Long Island Expressway for Landslide? 

JSS: Why is Bürger so pessimistic? 

KS: Why have his theoretical writings been all but forgotten? 

MM: Why do you want to work with paint and canvas? 

Q: Why do you use the medium of earth? 

A: Why did you decide to use felt? 

FB: Why did you do it with Blur? 

SW: Why did you choose these materials? 

JS: Why did you do that? 

A: Why did you do that? Why do you say it’s stupid? 

AR: Why do you want to work with a real flag? 

JC: (Why do all the people who are not artists seem to be more intelligent?) 

RL: So why does he create art? 

AS: But why should the Bride’s commands be combed?

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Chapter One

Rather, I began by acting on a rather “Bachelardian” principle of “why not?”

C.M.

MD: Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?  
AB: That seems interesting to me … and why not?  
LN: But why not?  
JS: […] Why not?  
FS: Why not?  
LM: Why not?  
LW: […] – Why not?  
SG: Why not 1945?  
JC: And if not, why not?  
AD: Or, for the matter, why not go all the way back to Marcel Duchamp and his readymades? Or why not a rude block of wood or a steel plate by Carl André, or one of Robert Mangold’s wall sections, displayed in 1966 at the Fischbach Gallery?  
MV: Why not just show photographs?  
RM: Why not to put the work outdoors and further change the terms?  
FN: Why not rather that which is great, sublime, gigantic—that which moves masses?  
SD: Why not do a real duplex between here and Baghdad, all night long on the 31st?  
KP: […] why not be tolerant?  
P: Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the songs of a bird? Why does one love the night, flowers, everything around one, without trying to understand them?  
PM: Why not empty the receptacle, liberate the surface? Why not try to make the limitless sense of total space, of a pure and absolute light, appear instead?  
TD: Why not go back to that of Joseph Beuys touched on in chapter 5?  
FN: Why not?  
CR: […] or “Why not modern or postmodern, for that matter?”  
HG: Why not bow one’s head when the boss reprimands? Why not write briefly, very briefly, when a magazine editor commissions a story?  
JMT: And if not, why not?
Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

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JB: Obviously it is no longer important who is or not is not a good artist; the only sensible question is—​as is already grasped by some young people—​why isn’t everybody and artist?

TD: […] Why isn’t everybody an artist? – had already answered, why indeed?

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notes from page 28


DC: Why, then, did she call herself an artist? CC: Why should others? JS: Why is one breast exposed? TD: Why would a urinal be better than a fat nude, even clumsily painted? AS: Why didn’t he give the literal translation, “She has a hot bottom”? AF: Why do cows give milk? MBJ: After all, why did some feminists come to focus the entire child-abuse debate around incest, notably father-daughter incest? AL: Why did women obtain the right to vote long after wage earners had obtained the freedom to organize? CL: Why bother with the right?

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JFL: What does “why” mean?

JD: Why can magnitude, which is not a quantity, and not a comparable quantity in the order of phenomena, let itself be represented under the category of quantity rather than some other category? [...] Then, another question, still the same, if phenomenalization is to be admitted, why would the sublime be the absolute large and not the absolute small? Why would the absolute excess of dimension, or rather of quantity, be schematized on the side of largeness and not the smallness? Why this valorization of the large which thus still intervenes in a comparison between incomparables? [...] Why is the large (absolutely) sublime and not the small (absolutely)? [...] So we have to displace the question: *Why should there be a preference?* And more strictly, why, if in phenomenality the excess of quantity is to be announce itself, and likewise the movement beyond comparison, why should it do so on the side of the large and not the small, the largest and not the smallest, the less large or the absolutely small? [...] Why does the large absolute (the sublime), which is not a *quantum* since it exceeds all comparison, let itself be presented by a *quantum* which does not manage to present it? And why does this essentially inadequate *quantum* present it all the “better” for being larger?

BO’D: (Is this why Cubist paintings tend to be so small?)

IZ: But why is Western art understood not just as one of several, basically equivalent art idioms, but as THE OTHER, so to speak? JH: Why were the pagan gods kicked out? AV: Why shouldn’t I kill Hitler, who everybody is trying so hard to hate. CC: (Why is it nearly always white people who do these things? And, in most cases, men?) MW: Why have there been no great black artists? BW: [...] “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” [...] SK: Why were you a white tourist; why weren’t you a black tourist? JG: Why is that when they hunt, an African hunter from the Kalahari, a French hunter from Saintonge, a Bengali hunter or a Huichol hunter from Mexico all adopt a certain body position, in which the spine is slightly curved, the knees are slightly bent, a position that is held at the base of the body by the sacrolumbar complex? AS: Why was Duchamp so particular about it? JS: Why were you in all these places? SK: But why do the blacks, and the Algerian in your film complain, complain of racism in France? BL: Why didn’t we witness the same thing in Paris? PLL: [...] (why do the Germans persecute me?) [...]
Chapter One

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**JC:** (Why do all the people who are not artists seem to be more intelligent?)

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**AV:** [...] Why don’t you Germans exhibit Hitler’s watercolors?

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**PM:** Why did people want to own or look at paintings that were “representations of painting” in addition to whatever else they were?

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**TD:** Why would a urinal be better than a fat nude, even clumsily painted?

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**TG:** [...] why should I pay so much for Lawrence Weiner’s Statements, a book of only twenty-six pages, [...]
Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

**EJ: Why such insistence on extra-terrestrials?**

**WGTH&MN: Why do you feel that there are no stars in art today?**

**GP: Why should this come as any surprise?**

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**TG:** Tony Godfrey, Conceptual Art, (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), p. 365, **FN:** Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, [Internet], available from <http://www.cwu.edu/~millerj/nietzsche/bge1.html>,

Chapter One

DT: Why do you feel Prada and Helmut Lang have become the focus of so much attention today? BO'D: Why was it necessary to invent them? CH: Why are there so many “pacified” people who, without even asking themselves why, frankly prefer a football match to a human and political drama? BB: Why then the common outcry over the genocide in Kosovo after these very same human and political drama?

Why must you take the Soviet government’s reactions into account? SG: If the models are secondary, why bother using glamorous ones? GD&FG: But why is a model still necessary? KP: Why then attack Marx? FB: […] why is it that the advertisements remain primarily graphic? RB: […] (why this sheet?) […] BB: It’s still an open question: why did the plastic art become the essential cultural practice of neutralization, at least until the late sixties? JSS: Why is Bürger so pessimistic? RJ: Why do you think the art world today is so quick to accept net art as a “valid” medium? LN: Why did that happened? AD: It has often been asked of me why the Brillo Box in particular showed this, and not one or another of the six or seven kinds of boxes Warhol showed that year. RJ: Why is this icon so powerful? Q: Why is Zittel an artist and not a commodity manufacturer? VM: “Why hasn’t a system of art been built in Russia for ten years?” SL: Why must you take the Soviet government’s reactions into account?

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Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

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MD: Why isn’t my chess playing an art activity?

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notes from page 40


JC: So why do you choose to work in such a conventional environment? OP: Why is there no art in space, why do we have no exhibitions in the sky? LS: Why do you like the indoors? JS: Why did you and other members of the New York Art Strike decide to sit in and close the Metropolitan Museum? A: Then why do you choose to work outdoors? RM: Why not to put the work outdoors and further change the terms? CC: “Why couldn’t he do this inside? […]” DO: But why not locate them in the stomach, the gut? CP: Why weren’t his attention to the gallery space as the ultimate frame of art, and his sale of immaterial works, more widely recognized as points of departure for the Conceptual artists of the mid – 1960s? AW: Why did you suggest that conceptual artists should be mystics?

Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

A: Why do you find it necessary to exhibit in a gallery? HH: Why have business executives been receptive to the museums’ pleas for money? EK: Why doesn’t art-business fuck itself? LS: Why are you making art? RS: Why are you not a logical positivist? HK: But if this is the case, why does curator of the show feel no obligation to provide a critical discussion of the artists chosen and the issues addressed in the contemporary art exhibition? JC: Why do you speak of holding an audience? LS: Why is it easier to make art than to deal with people? TG: Why not store it where one stored other things – such as in the freezer? DC: And why is it that, as we enter the era of postmodernism, we are witnessing the largest growth in museum construction since the nineteenth century? JS: Is that why you are producing a kind of “infection” or “contamination” of the traditional frozen or generic White Cube exhibition space? CR: Why are you now doing an exhibition of art? CP: Why this show now, little more than a decade after major Klein retrospective organized in 1982 by Rice University, a show which appeared at the Guggenhein and the Centre Georges Pompidou? DC: Why, we wonder, would anyone object to the name museum for the paradigmatic early art museum? KJ: If MASS MoCA can become a place where the public is invited in on the birthing of 21st-century culture and can do so under its own financial steam, why complain? SG: With reference to your exhibition at the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, why did you choose to collaborate with a microbiologist? GJ: Why do you turn almost all your energy towards education and enlightenment? CH: Why counterfeit? KS: Why, or rather, how? OP: Why do we not pool all human intelligence with the same security that accompanies its efforts in time of war and explode all the atom bombs in the world for the pleasure of the thing, a great display of human inventiveness in praise of human freedom? MH: Why, in my view, the Sensation show fails to provide us with this next step, this further integration, and, yes, this sensation […]
Chapter One

**TM:** But why do children like the museums that are so horrible? **LS:** Why do you like to see their weapons? **CC:** [...] why I go to see such horrible things. **PV:** Why is there violence? **LS:** Why are you sentimental? **PC:** Why are the things that make up the imperfect world mortal? **GD&FG:** This by way of response to the stupid question, Why did Proust make Albert Albertine?

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**JFL:** What does “why” mean?

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**AW:** Why is this? **KP:** Why is this so? **JJC:** Why is this so?

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Chapter One

**BB:** Again I ask myself, why anthropological permanences and why not a concrete, specific analysis of the means of globalization itself? **BC&OD:** If, as your press statement says, “this exhibition is based on the assumption that contemporary art at its highest level will no longer be confined to geographical borders,” why Europe then? **IZ:** Why do I think that one function of Huntington’s paradigm is to secure Western identity? **RS:** Why do I? **JS:** But the question you immediately want to ask is why this regional dimension as opposed to a national or a Nordic one? **AV:** [...] Why don’t you Germans exhibit Hitler’s watercolors? **P:** [...] Why are you ashamed to call yourself a Bulgarian? [...] **JK:** Why doesn’t the American artist show his earlier work? **JB:** For why does one laugh? **SD:** Why not do a real duplex between here and Baghdad, all night long on the 31st? **BB:** Why not bomb Moscow because of Chechnya, or Beijing because of Tibet? [...] “Why can’t we do to our Albanians what Turks have done to their Kurds?” [...] **ZK:** Why did you choose to present this show in Greece? **JK:** We live in an open world, and it’s very hard for me to understand why some of us seem to be afraid of it. **GD&FG:** But why were only three countries collectively able to produce philosophy in the capitalist world? Why not Spain or Italy? **DLM:** [...] (Why not China or Islam? is now a common question), [...] **CL:** Why this silence over Hungary, while such frequent references is made to the cultural revolution in China, or to Prague Spring? **EB:** Why did the idea of metempsychosis, of the great cycle of spirits entering and leaving nature, exist in the West for a time and finally disappear, to be replaced by the funda-

JFL: What does “why” mean?

mental dualism of matter and soul? JH: Why does Abbé Pierre dislike Yahweh? AY: Why on earth do they imagine to be obliged and called to improve life and living, to understand the Non-West, to demonstrate their involvement and participation, the will to analyze, to improve, to help? AR: “Why did I have to see it, this West.” IN: Why do I continuously go back to Japan, except to renew my contact with the earth? NS: Why are you interested in Japan? TG: Why, however briefly, had such a radical movement happened in Japan, where art had been aping Western models with such slavish reverence? TG: Why should this not be regarded as just another Fluxus event? RW: Why should they? SD: Why was it such a minor piece, almost folklore? WGTH&MN: Why did you choose Hong Kong? PT: Why did you come to New York? JD: Why you decided to move your collection to Miami? RDC: Why do you feel representing regional artists is so important?

* CR: Why is a film that I actually find bad still able to bring me to tears? MC: Why film? Q: Why haven’t you made use of books or magazines? LL: For instance, why have so few art shows been raided, while books and films are constantly banned? SP: Why should film replicate what the work of art already does by itself? If the mental starting point or inspiration for a new work of art can be another work of art, for example, Giotto’s frescoes, why is it not also possible to sculpt a film? FB: [...] “Well, why take over from the film? Why not leave it? [...]”

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Chapter One

JFL: What does “why” mean?

Michael Peppe: “Why Performance Art Is So Boring,” see High Performance 5, no. 1, (Spring–Summer 1982),

Michael Peppe: MP:


LW: Why don’t we speak of a “pure” brown?
LW: Why is it that a dark yellow doesn’t have to be perceived as “blackish,” even if we call it dark? LW: Why, for example, do we say that whitish green or red is “not saturated”? Why does white, but not yellow, make these colours weaker? LW: Why is there no brown nor grey light? LW: Why can’t we imagine a grey-hot? Why can’t we think of it as a lesser degree of white-hot?

AF: Why do people have different color skin?

AF: Why do people have different color skin?

Chapter One

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**JFL**: What does “why” mean?  

**AD**: Why does art need to be explained?  

**JMT**: Art history is full of memories of works destroyed or lost: why bother giving examples?  

**AD**: Here the deep historic question is, why was it “lost” and how was it “found” again?  

**EG**: [...] “why art has a history”? [...]  

**MR**: Why histories now?  

**PV**: Why tomorrow?  

**FN**: Why does one nowadays endure the truth about even the most recent past?  

**AS**: Why was the existence of Etant donné, which Duchamp described as a “dismountable approximation,” made public only after his death?  

**BB**: It’s still an open question: why did the plastic art become the essential cultural practice of neutralization, at least until the late sixties?  

**JS**: Why don’t we start right in the middle of the public life of your work so far, if not quite at the chronologi-
don’t the “intermittence” and “retrogression” of history threaten its “continued processes of growth”? **MR:** Why did you say you were interested in talking about Duchamp? **JFC:** Why speak of “post” when the expression now appears so devoid of specific meaning? **SM:** Why take Deleuze and Guattari as the criterion? **BL:** Could you tell me why it has such a bad connotation in art history? **KS:** Why is it that Mathieu’s contribution to the history of art (and particularly the history of Performance) was not recognized in time?


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**PF:** Why did you decide to make Smith rather than Moore your “father figure” in sculpture in the 1960s? **JC:** Why did you **TG:** We may, of course, ask questions such as “Why has Michelangelo made David double life size? […]” **HG:** Why do something big when you can do something small? **WW:** Why doesn’t the modern artist do the same thing? **LS:** Why juxtapose the Child’s genitals with rose, as Garofalo does in his Holy Family (Rome, Galleria Borghese) and as Pellegrino Tibaldi does in his Holy Family (Naples)? **HF:** Why this fascination with trauma, this envy of affection, today? **HUO:** Why do you think that’s the case? **Q:** Why is Zittel an artist and not a therapist? **HD:** Why was Dubuffet opposed to therapeutic activity in the asylums? **KP:** And if it is held that there are no false prophets because laws are arbitrary anyhow, so that the main thing to have some laws, then we may ask ourselves why it should be so important to have laws at all; for if there are no further standards, why then should we not choose to have no laws?

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Chapter One

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RK: Why do you keep your name in the phone book?

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notes from page 57


JFL: What does “why” mean?

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MV: Why write? JPW: Why don’t you write? […] GP: Why don’t you write an article for Flash Art on this subject? JS: Why did you write the first Truisms? EB: […] why I wrote Les frontières de la démocratie […] BG: Why are my texts condemned to be merely written and therefore so pallid? RH: And why narrative now? Why indeed might a “philosopher” be interested in a “writer”? Why did Lyotard, when referring to himself as a philosopher, set off the term with scare quotes?

Chapter One

RW: [...] Why could not Mallarmé, after an interval of time, have simply got up from his chair and produced the blank sheet of paper as the poem that he sat down to write? JS: Why a chair? MD: [...] why does someone like Bill Clinton achieve transtextuality [...]? TG: [...] why should I pay so much for Lawrence Weiner’s Statements, a book of only twenty-six pages, [...]
Chapter One


Chapter One

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JS: One might ask “Why Artaud?”

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JS: Jeanne Siegel, “Nancy Spero Woman as Protagonist, Interview
with Jeanne Siegel” (1984), in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, (eds.), Theories
and Documents of Contemporary Art: a sourcebook of artists’ writings,
(Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996),
p. 245.

Chapter Two – VIL: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

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VIL: Vladimir Il’ich Lenin, search www.amazon.com for Henry
M. Christman (ed.), V. I. Lenin, What Is to Be Done?
Chapter Two

HUO: What drew you to contemporary art to begin with? GP: What made you decide to become an artist? MM: What was on your mind then? LM: What was your job then? JFC: And what was your position at that time? LM: Yeah, what were the things that most influenced you, because you know, I want to try to get you a little more specific. JS: What did you intend to study in college? CC: What is the Rivington School? JM: What courses did you take? JS: What was Rainer like as a teacher? MM: In your reading, what kind of affinities do you have to any philosophical or religious outlook? DR: What authors influenced you? JS: What did you do after graduation? DB: What is it about two figures that maintains your interest today? JS: What did you write? BB: What would be more important to you? WS: What were your first impressions of contemporary art in Rome? JS: What did you draw? MCM: What you are saying seems to be very important to me.


VIL: What is to be done?

CC: (What was the answer?)


Chapter Two

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LT: [...] In what way, on what grounds, and in the name of what, can art turn its back to the inner life of present-day man who is building a new external world, and thereby rebuilding himself? GD: You realize the absurdity of what you advance? LR: What the average man of the street thinks? MFP&JD: Of what? DO: What's the problem? FL: What then do modern poets, artists, and painters do? PH: What would you do? DD: What do I have to offer? SL: And what should we, photographers, do? LT: If art will not help this new man to educate himself, to strengthen and refine himself, then what is it for? IZ: What can the curatorial strategies regarding the autonomous art and its political effects be? BMA: What is the difference between community art and the artists in the community? JM: What is the function of art? FM: What do you feel about art and politics? JGC: As an artist, what are your thoughts on this topic? EB: What is going wrong? LZ: What do you think that art can achieve today and is its responsibility? LL: What does it have to do with me? JB: [...] what do Chile, Biafra, the boat people, Bologna, or Poland matter? AP: But what does it matter in general? JS: What problems have you encountered? TD: What's the use of deconstructing the emancipation project, in order to find a way out of the disillusionment generated by its historical failure, if the result is to smuggle in another utopia through the back door, and a very stale one at that, smacking of Christianity on the one hand and reeking of bourgeois self-righteousness on the other? TD: [...] “What are you talking about⁉️” CH: What kind of world is he defending? BMA: What is the role of place, not just in relation to sit-

ing, but in relation to the work itself? EJ: In what way can art provide an interesting forum for the debate on fundamental human rights? JS: So what does this have to do with artists? AH: What could be made? What options were open to artists? What risks could they take? JFL: [...] “What does it matter?”[...] GP: What, according to your philosophy, should the role of art in society be? RG: [...] What is Marxism today? ODO: What has changed? TD: Certainly the Marxian utopia is gross in many respects, and it was indirectly responsible for half of the political tragedies this century has seen; but Marx’s redeeming quality was not to have justified class struggle and the revolution as a step towards the liberation of the whole humankind, then what would be? CH: So what is a consumer? CH: But what is use value? CH: What has happened to society? Q: But what is your opinion about this phenomenon of politically correct art? GP: What does the work of your assistant consist of? DH: But that happens when most workers don’t work in a fixed place? BO'D: What comment can you make on this? VF: Civilization evolves in this way—what can we do about it? TD: What’s left to do, now that we are faced with its fait accompli? JS: [...] “What should I do?” PR: What do we propose instead? LS: What for?

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**70**

**71**
Chapter Two

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JS: So what does this have to do with artists? JL: ...But what does that have to do with me? RMB: In what way do the aesthetic strategies of power disarmament touch on the current political struggles? GB: What have you got to say about the choice of Harald Szeemann as the curator of the next Venice Biennial? FL: What then do modern poets, artists, and painters do? JS: What is this history? What is the entity and the spirit of it? JK: What is then the contradiction? PH: Briefly, what are some of the historical trends? JFC: What is the status of Gramsci's concept of consensus in your thinking? MFP&JD: Suspense, what is called "thinking"? JS: Then how would you classify what you are doing right now? JFC: What was it like for you to live in North America? DD: What did you achieve? JB: What would have happened if TV hadn't been there? CH: So what's Baudrillard's America like? ML: What role do the media you use play in regard to your artistic production? ML: In what way is CAMERA AUSTRIA an interesting vehicle for presenting your art? KS: To what degree were Happenings and Fluxus capable of accommodating the extremes to which he was capable of living and working? RL: What extremes are you referring to? DB: What's the function of Empire? CK: What if we were to agree, like Burber, to read Rodchenko's anecdotal and everyday description of the Paris object-world as struggling to express the profound structural differences between capitalism and socialism, at the level of the commodity and bodily experience? JS: What are some of the particular problems that face the artist in New York City? HP: What were your expectations of a life as an artist? BF: What factors can make sculpture a means to a good living? JS: What is your income from export sales? JC: What is the percentage? DD: Are you unaware of local opportunities or what goes on in the art world? LM: Do you have any idea what you totally spent? AA: What do I need to think about concerning the handling of my property and art works?

notes from page 69

Chapter Two

VIL: What is to be done?

Chapter Two

DH: What were some of your influences and what drew you to becoming an artist? WS: What I’m really trying to get at is the development of your work. DR: Did you have a sense of disengagement with what you saw around as a young artist? SW: What has influenced your work? JS: And what is she doing? AW: What did you learn from Flavin? JS: What else do you try not to be? JS: What was your work like at this point? BM: What has Europe brought to your work culturally or contextually speaking? JS: Like what, for example? DS: But what of the objects you begin with? JS: What was your work like at this point? RK: What did you do before then? A: Alright, what was your next work? JS: What artists were important to you at that time? FM: What about your collaboration with Robert Morris? SW: What is like collaborating with your brother? RT: Do the two of you have a lot of discussions about what you do and how it work? CA: [...] what kind of experiences do you have? AH: What about your early sound installations, which weren’t site bound? A&AG: What inspired your idea for the piece? JS: What inspired you to make a piece that imitates the moment by Picasso in Chicago? Q: I mean, what aesthetic benefits can be gained from someone looking at an aerial photograph of one of your works? PH: [...] what more beautiful and poetic an answer could one find?

Chapter Two

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PC: What have you done to escape taste?  

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VIL: What is to be done?

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WGT: “To be or not to be,” is modified by Schlemmer into the question, “What is truth, in terms of nature of art”? JS: Can you state what your idea of art is? HC: What does it look like? BO’D: “And what does art say?” the situation asks. Q: What is your comment on Kosuth’s statement “Art is the definition of art”? JJ: On what? KV: What should we do with all these interpretations? AD: The question was not: What are the essential properties of works of art? It was, What is the difference between a work of art and something which looks just like it but which is not a work of art? JD: What is the question, then? LM: Yeah. What do you consider the state of the arts at this point and what do you consider high art? KV: What happens to this situation if the history of progress is demasked by art as only one of the many narratives in which a culture lives? What happens to art? AD: What of “Art after Philosophy” – to use the title of Kosuth’s essay–which, to make the point, may indeed itself be a work of art? EW: What kind of history? TD: But what is art? […] And how to find it if not in asking the very question of art’s conditions? JS: What is your definition of a system that is also a work of art? JC: What is the nature of Art when it reaches the Sea? TD: Let us generalize the question: since the test has shown that any ordinary object whatever could be a work of art, what are the conditions that made that possible? Or, more technologically: what are the enunciative conditions that confirm the statement “this is art”, whatever the thing designated, but given that the designated thing was indeed called art–art in general? MC: What makes the invisible visible, the
VIL: What is to be done?

MF: And behind all these questions, we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of an indifference: “What difference does it make who is speaking?”

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notes from page 80

PG: […] You know what creating really is? JMR: What is it to create? JK: In any case, what is more “creative” than creating a new idea of what art is? AA: What kind of paperwork is required to create a trust?

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FB: Let’s start by talking about tears. What are tears in your work? JS: There seems to be a lot of excrement in your work—what gives? KG: Is that not what life is all about? [...] JS: What was your first poster? A&AG: What are some of the influences on your work? MM: What predicated this move? JS: What do you consider to be the influence of Duchamp? PC: But what do you believe in? LM: What were the best examples in the visual and plastic arts? WS: What artist inspired you then? RK: What kind of intention were you dealing with at that time? JS: What was your personal reaction to some of your contemporaries—for instance, de Kooning? PK: What did you find unsatisfying in these early works? AH: Over the years pictures documenting your early work have become iconic, but what do they really communicate about those works or about the experience of making those works to us twenty years later? JS: What was the progression toward your form of abstraction? JS: What are your primary concerns, Mike, in carrying out one of your Depressions? DD: What role does cultural memory play in shaping your artistic language? AH: But, what was the piece? ML: What role do pictorial quotations play in your work? JS: What caused the shift in style? CD: What are you referring to, social phenomena, cultural practices? RMB: What is the idea at the bottom of King Kong? RK: What has been your schedule, say, this past year?

Chapter Two


Chapter Two

VIL: What is to be done?

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JS: But what is then your program? TD: […] What are you talking about? DO: What would you call yourself: artist, curator, activist, or all of the above? JB: What does it matter how the job is done as long as it gets done? GB: What are the consequences of such an association? TD: What could I possibly do with an imposed freedom or with an order there is no way of infringing? What could anyone do once it is mandatory that everything be permitted or, as the rebelling students said in May ’68, once it is forbidden to forbid? Do I need to insist? JFC: What was the situation in Germany? AF: What was the most important legacy of the student movement? DD: What would you like to achieve next time you show and what actions would you take to achieve them? AD: What happened then? Q: What need have I of any outer woman? CH: So, what are “needs”? DD: What are my long–term aims and ambitions? OW: […] What does a human being need? OW: […] What is the human being?

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Chapter Two

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TD: But then, what are we to do with the next set of questions?

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notes from page 85


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Chapter Two

VII: What is to be done?

* JMR: Does art have any other crucial question to ask its century than the reflexive ontology: what is art?

Chapter Two

CC: What was art? Or, fashion? NC: What does that have to do with the conditions requisite for the status of artwork? YL: What is an art: [...] YL: What is an art work: [...] TD: [...] “What Should Art Be?” HF: [...] “What are we talking about when we are talking about art” [...] MH: In what sense? AD: But of art itself? CC: Think you need someone to tell you what art is?” AD: But what are the alternatives? EB: What are the alternatives? BL: [...] What is art? What is that artists make projects in which they want the public to participate BL: [...] What is public science? [...] MA: What is art in open air? HC: What does it look like? JR: What sort of oeuvre is it? TD: [...] “What Is Art?” GRS: What is Pop Art? A&L: [...] what is it? [...] KV: What is an artwork? What makes something art? MH: What makes it art? TD: What can I make, then, so as to be an artist? CH: What is a “True” Work of Art? RS: What is your relation to Pop Art which has been described as being pioneering for the return to reality? NT: What is illusion, what real? LS: What is art? LR: What is art? JK: In any case, what is more ‘creative’ than creating a new idea of what art is? HF: (What is it, by the way, that renders Warhol such a site for projection?) AD: What is Warhol’s Brillo Box about? MF: Here the question arises: What is it about objecthood as projected and hypostatized by the literalists that makes it, if only from the perspective of recent modernist painting, antithetical to art? AD: What question does Warhol’s Brillo Box ask, or one of Beuys’s multiples of a square of chocolate stuck to a piece of paper? PR: What else is proposed? HF: [...] (what else but Campbell’s soup?) AD: But what makes it an art work? HD: What makes up an object, for us, in a work of art? [...] AD: If that is the basis, then what is to prevent a similar enfranchisement of objects heretofore regarded as lying as much outside the domain of art as African masks lay outside the domain of high art before Picasso? RW: Well what can I say? SM: What was the language spoken before Babel? JR: But what exactly is this other function that the figural introduces into art and its relation to discourse? DC: But what is it that makes it possible to look at the paleolithic markings on the walls of a cave, a seventeenth-century court portrait, and an abstract expressionist canvas an say that they are all the same thing? that they all belong to the same category of knowledge? PS: What language will you use?

Chapter Two


Chapter Two


VIL: What is to be done?

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AR: HA HA WHAT DOES THIS REPRESENT?
WHAT DO YOU REPRESENT?

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notes from page 93

**Chapter Two**


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VII: What is to be done?

**Comment?**

GB: What is your current preoccupations? DB: What are you focusing at the moment? DO: Do you find that you will be able to continue doing what you are doing? MCM: Can I ask what your current preoccupations are in your work?

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Chapter Two

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**DR:** And? **JS:** Joseph, what do you mean by “art as idea as idea”? **LAF:** Now what the HELL does that mean? **RW:** What do you mean by irony? **ES:** What do you mean by “beauty”? **TD:** What does this mean? **JK:** What do you mean? **SL:** What does it mean? **YM:** But what is the meaning of a picture? **WW:** Mr. Pollock, in your opinion what is the meaning of modern art? **HG:** What do you mean by gestures? **JB:** What meaning did this war have, and wasn’t its unfolding a means of sealing the end of history in the decisive and culminating historic event of our era? **GJ:** What does that distinction mean? **JC:** You mean that you want me to criticize them—to say which one I liked the most and so on, or what? **LS:** What does that mean? **AC:** [...] “What does your sculpture mean?” [...] **LG:** What does this mean? **KH:** [...] But what does it mean? [...] **DD:** What does this mean for you? **RI:** And what does it mean to me?  

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**VIL:** What is to be done?

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**MB:** What is culture? I write.

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**WW:** I suppose every time you are approached by a layman they ask you how they should look at a Pollock.

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painting, or any other modern painting – what they look for – how do they learn to appreciate modern art? CH: But to see what? CC: [...] “What were they looking for?” FB: What is white and what is black? SO: What possibility does such art conceal? JC: What can we say? RS: What is your position regarding the kinds of political action that should be taken by artists? RL: If someone says to Francisco, “That piece of yours is highly political,” what is his reaction? RK: What does the artist become, if he is not someone who seeks light? FM: What do you feel about art and politics? GP: What led to this clash? CC: (What other images of Korea have we ever seen? Reagan at the 38th Parallel?) TG: What of the T-shirt by the English designer Katherine Hamnett with the words ‘58% Don’t Want Pershing’ on it? DD: What do I want from my next exhibition? FB: Do you have what you want?

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GP: If Art (as I believe and as Marcel Duchamp has widely shown) is a convention, then what is Brian Sewell talking about? How can he claim to know what is art and what is not, or what generates emotions? JS: I wonder what purpose, if any, possesses an artist to make things? JS: What things? AD: Instead of providing “immediate enjoyment,” does not almost all of this art appeal not to the senses but to what Hegel here calls judgment, and hence to our philosophical beliefs about what art is? JK: What art has in common with logic and mathematics [...] MF: In what way is this discourse different from other discourses? LS: Of what value is art? AA: What can I do with my art works to minimize this tax? PC: What is taste for you? JK: And what does his taste reflect? MFP&JD: What does the law say? TG: [...] (what is Duchamp if not the father of work like this?) […]
Chapter Two

prediction if the subsequent century and half were as filled with artistic incident as the period that followed Hegel’s? **TD:** What’s left to make, given the fact that judgment has been rendered? **AA:** What do I need to think about concerning the handling of my property and art works? **EB:** What kind of relations are knit between these two notions? **TD:** Or yet again: given that the readymades have received social sanction, what do they have to say of the institutions where that sanction took effect? **EA:** And what is the paradox about? **JS:** What’s your connection to craft? **DS:** and art, what is that?

**HPO:** Peter Herbstreuth, “Cityscape Helsinki, Marku Valkonen, Director of FRAME,” ibid., p. 67.  
**JS:** Jeanne Siegel, “Environments and Happenings,” (panel discussion among Kaprow, Segal, and Siegel as moderator on December 13, 1966), ibid., p. 177.
TRQ: What two aspects of culture does Greenberg contrast in the opening section of the essay? What is Greenberg’s stated objective for the essay? What is “Alexandrianism” and how does it differ from “avant-gardism”? What work today would fit these definitions? What, according to Greenberg, was the function of the avant-garde from the late 19th to the early 20th Century? What is the shift that takes place in subject matter in avant-garde art and how does Greenberg explain this change? What is the avant-garde’s relationship to the ruling class? In what sense is this relationship a problem? What is “kitsch” and where does it come from? What are some of the dangers that Greenberg associates with kitsch? What is Greenberg’s response to MacDonald’s view? What does the hypothetical story about the peasant viewing a Picasso and a Repin illustrate? What, according to Greenberg, is the relationship between social order and artistic production? What is the role of kitsch in the fascist State? What overriding reason does Greenberg give for the prevalence of kitsch? What is the alternative?

Chapter Two

VIL: What is to be done?

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DO: Derrida?

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PE: What are the interests of the gallery? CA: What the museum is really interested in […] Q: Want to own a Warhol but don’t have millions to spend?

DD: What roles does the viewer play in your works? LS: What has the acceptance of your work by others done to your character? FB: What is the reward in the art world; you have a tool to express a specific content and you have a wide audience and yet you still want to work within the fine art’s boundaries? MG: What different goals are you aiming for when you address the public? EA: What kind of staff does the Center have? DD: What does space conceal? JS: What is the thinking behind exhibiting in Harlem? DW: What is the publicity like and does it attract reviews? DD: But what is success really like? JS: What is the curatorial philosophy of the space? CC: What are the community values? Should the Contemporary Art Center be allowed to display these photos? ZK: What does being the spectator of your own work involve? JGC: What are you bringing to New York City and how did you decide what to exhibit? PF: What is display in my work? JM: What response are you expecting from your audience? CS: What multiple levels of uneasiness, pleasure, curiosity, erotic fascination, acceptance or rejection were activated in an audience? UM: Do you believe the impact of what is happening now – with conceptual art and what I call the other culture – that impact is going to hit the so-called art world, the galleries, the museums? What changes do you envisage? AH: What is your relationship to money as a person who has made work for twenty-five years that is not easily collected? WGT: [...] What do you promise yourselves from your role as artists, and what do you expect from the art audience that you address? JD: To what extent are the works of art on display and archives accessible to the public, and are you actively lending works for museum exhibitions? RZ: [...] what public spaces are truly accessible to the public? GJ: [...] What part does money play in your work? JR: What would happen if a major corporation decided to use all the new devices available to them? MR: One question to rise about this standard of intelligibility is weather the market-relations are really separate from what we do? HUO: So they cannot censor what’s already happened? TG: What are we actually looking at? DD: What is the publicity like and does it attract reviews? DD: But what is success really like? JS: What is the thinking behind exhibiting in Harlem? DW: What was in that show?

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Chapter Two


notes from page 115
**GD:** What is the meaning and significance of artists’ interviews and statements in the nineties? **GRS:** What would you consider the difference between subject matter and content, between what is depicted and what it means? **DP:** What does it mean for an artist to be Corsican? **AW:** What do you mean by this? **DH:** What do you mean? **RMB:** What options exist for producing meaning alongside, or counter to, ideology? **RW:** What does that mean? **MD:** But, what does more “real” or more “truth,” mean? **ML:** What do you mean by that? **BO’D:** What is supposed to be?” and “What does it mean?” [...] **KS:** What does it mean to deny the authenticity of the artist as subject of his or her own discourse? **MF:** [...] what meaning do they have? **PC:** What does that mean? **EB:** What does it mean to educate? What does it mean to punish? [...] **PC:** What does that mean? **PC:** What does this mean? **LAF:** What exactly does “dis-course” mean? **Q:** Could you explain what you mean by the discourse of reason? **TG:** What does “transformed” mean? What makes this act art? **KV:** But what does that mean this relationship with nothingness? **MG:** What did Ioganson mean by “cold structure?”

Chapter Two

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**Q:** At what moment does one start making indifferent art? **TG:** And what of the artists form the 1960s? **HF:** But started what exactly? **JS:** What do you see as the major difference between the 1940s and the 1970s? **GM:** What politics inform accepted understandings of art and culture? **CS:** What do you see as being the important issues for artists, curators, critics, gallery directors? **DD:** The important questions are: does the work sell, what income would be made from those sales and is promotion effective and appropriate to your career? **Q:** What are your political ideas? **DD:** What did you achieve? **CS:** Why do you think so much politically motivated art fails to provide an aesthetic experience for the viewer. **JK:** What is the function of art, or the nature of art? **JB:** Before we ask WHAT CAN WE DO? […] **MS&MM:** What is mainstream? **JB:** What else do the media dream of beside creating the event simply by their presence? **LT:** If art will not help this new man to educate himself, to strengthen and refine himself, then what is it for? **OP:** What remains of art, of the constructive ability of man, if we look down on the world from above? **DD:** What has that to do with morality? **WW:** […] What is your feeling about your contemporaries? **GL:** […] the basic question is, and will remain: what is man? **DD:** What are my weaknesses? **JB:** What can we do now for the realization of the alternative? **JB:** If we finally ask the question: WHAT CAN WE DO? […]

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Chapter Two

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**GP:** If Art (as I believe and as Marcel Duchamp has widely shown) is a convention, then what is Brian Sewell talking about?

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**VIL:** What is to be done?

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**OD:** How have you established a permanent collection and what is its focus? **PE:** What are the principles of the development of the collection? **JD:** What compelled you to begin acquiring contemporary art, and can your collecting interests be characterized? **FB:** What leads these people to invest in art? **FS:** What is your aesthetic approach to collecting? **OD:** What are your attitudes about breeding? **MG:** What is the most challenging piece in your collection? **FS:** What prompted you to start collecting? **TD:** What work could you choose as an example to lift the mortgage? What exemplary thing are you doing to draw from your collection and make into a paradigm of the historical transition which is our own?

notes from page 120 

* SzM: What is the connection between Wittgenstein and Marxism? TG: What of an art as concept and nothing but concept? LS: Of what value is art? AL: What are these values? JS: What percentage of your turnover does it represent? TG: But what exactly is Bruce Nauman saying? What does he represent? AR: **WHAT DO YOU REPRESENT?** TG: [...] ‘What do you represent?’ TG: [...] ‘What is the context?’ PH: What exactly happened between 8 October, when Apollinaire radically revised his text, and 10-11 October, when Duchamp came back to Paris from Munich, the opening of the Section d’Or exhibition on 10 October and the trip to the Jura that Apollinaire, Picabia and Duchamp went on between 20 and 26 October? JFC: What does October represent for you? AD: The historical problem or central question of modernity, in my view, is: What happened to account for the representation, by these artists, of their own past as less relevant for them than the imagined past of others cultures? What accounts for the profound shift in self-evaluation between the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1850 and the Exposition Universelle of 1889? SF:...

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VIL: What is to be done?

Chapter Two

mine? JB: But what is today? JS: What aspects of Duchamp have been key for you? RS: What are the lattices and grids of pure abstraction, if not renderings and representations of a reduced order of nature? BK: What consequences does this have for the self-representation of the body? DW: What are the bands representing here? AS: Is there a subject which cannot be represented in art, given that you are working in realms of the horrific, in terms of what human beings can do to each other TG: But what exactly is Bruce Nauman saying? BB: What is Jeff Wall’s position?

PPP: What is Rome?


Chapter Two

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**TRQ:** What is “kitsch” and where does it come from?

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**VIL:** What is this principle of party literature?

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**JR:** What does it mean for the very idea of an avant-garde and the types of historicity associated with it, or for the kind of conception under which the art works falls in Malraux’s “imaginary museum”? **JM:** What did the students in the French May of ’68 mean when they wrote “Power to the Imagination” on the walls? **JS:** What did the title mean? **JR:** What does it mean to speak of the unrepresentable, or to think of art as showing it? **DC:** But what could this mean to the museum and to painting, which had hitherto resisted photography’s allure? **RS:** What does color mean to you? **Q:** [...] What does it mean?” **JP:** [...] What does this mean?” **ES:** What is the function of the drawings in their relationship to the sculptural work? **EL:** **TM:** **ES:** What does the concept ‘genre’ mean today? **SK:** The question is, what does privileging the contemporary mean? **RMB:** What do you mean by “get any further”? **JC:** Right. Now if they decide they know what it means, do they believe that? Now, say they believe it and they understand what it means. **DW:** What do you mean by facets? **RS:** What does the lack of sharpness in your pictures mean: inconsistency of their
Chapter Two

contents? A&AG: What does the piece mean to you? RR: Do you think you have a romantic approach to your art, or to put it differently, what does beauty mean to you and your work? GJ: You alluded to the idea of “social sculpture.” What do you mean by it? MN: […] What do time and space mean to you? GP: Does your concept of what it means to be an artist require a lot of work, discipline and practice? BB: What do you mean when you stress the presence of the family structure in the Italian ambiguity, and above all in Pistoletto? PUH: What does this statement mean for Habermas’s interpretation of the present German situation? LAF: What exactly does Foucault mean by the Clinic? MS: What can handwork mean now? EH: What does the hypothesis that Camillo’s idea was to make human mind a universal library, an encyclopedia of knowledge to be activated by the theatre of memory as a reminder, as a way of operating, really mean? RS: What do all these advances mean for the sculptor? JS: What did making an extremely precise copy of someone else’s original (even one already mechanically reproduced in a book) mean for you? AH: When you say not commercial, what do you mean? Not easily sold? Q: I mean, what aesthetic benefits can be gained from someone looking at an aerial photograph of one of your works? PC: What do you mean, fringes? CH: What does this mean? SL: What did she mean by that? WE: “What do you mean?” SL: What does it mean? TD: What does this mean? Q: What does that mean?

JS: What did all this mean to you?

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VII: What is to be done?

Chapter Two


VII: What is to be done?

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AH: What is it within a piece that gives the viewer the sense of danger or risk? JS: What do you expect the viewer to do with it? TD: And what does he choose to show? And what does this exhibition show? JS: What is the difference between these paintings in which elements that hang from the surface extend to the floor and a Combine like Bob’s where a chair hangs from the canvas and also rests on the floor? PF: What is the pedestal? BL: […] And then—this is a bit tricky—posing the question, Why can’t there be a conversation? What sort of thing can be publicly shown on the difficulty of reaching an agreement?

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Chapter Two

VIL: What is to be done?

PH: What exactly happened between 8 October, when Appollinaire radically revised his text, and 10-11 October, when Duchamp came back to Paris from Munich, the opening of the Section d’Or exhibition on 10 October and the trip to the Jura that Appollinaire, Picabia and Duchamp went on between 20 and 26 October?

HF: Now what is artistic, aesthetic, about a work which is a body of concepts? MN: [...] What is more important for the realization of your artistic ideas, the word or the image? TD: But what is an “aesthetic Idea”? YL: What idea? JS: If “Art as Idea as Idea” is the subtitle, then what’s the title? AD: So that it is almost as if the structure of the art world exactly consisted not in “creating art again,” but in creating art explicitly for the purpose of knowing philosophically what art is? AZ: What duties does the title confer upon you? BB: What histori-
cal conditions disqualify the notion of the Freudian unconscious as the central notion of aesthetic production.

Q: What is your position in the — what you call — post-historical phase of art?

AD: To what degree is my prediction borne out in the actual practice of art?

KH: Andy Warhol said he wanted to be a machine, but what kind of machine?

AD: But the question would be what, in addition to being the latest link in the causal chain, would make the emergence of Man the end of a story? What does a story require?

JS: What's ahead?

Q: What are those bad theories?

CD: [...] “What is an artistic image?” and “What makes such an image different from other images?”

JS: But again, what's the quality of the image?

HF: What more exact representation of the pathological public sphere than this twining of iconic mass murderer and abstract state execution? That is, what more difficult image?

GB: What is a digital image?

JC: What do images do?

EA: And what impressions did you get from computer editing?

VL: And what happens to the computer?

MB: What happens, for example, when one lives an event as an image?

EA: What can you say about computer art?

CH: What is a “True” Work of Art?

CC: I guess the next question would be—who gets to describe what’s authentic, anyway?

MH: Mmmm—What would you say about the relationship between your work and photographs of it?

PC: What if there were choices of signs?

ML: What makes you copy them?

VL: And what is for you the starting point, the original object?

RB: Resemblance is a conformity, but to what?

SM: But what sameness or “oneness” is intended?

DC: What different readings result from these two modes of appropriation?

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Chapter Two

AZ: Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of souls. What does this mean? What duties does the title confer upon you?

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notes from page 136


VII: What is to be done?

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general, if you want to talk about it generally? **LR:** [...]"What do you think of it?" **PH:** What do you think about curator’s role today? **LZ:** What do you think that art can achieve today and is its responsibilities? **RR:** What do you think is the main concern in your work? **JC:** What do you think about eugenics? **MR:** What do you think Duchamp’s attitude toward America was? **WS:** What do you think of German model? **SzM:** So what do you think about this, that for an American, it’s much easier to have an international perspective? **CN:** What do you think are the necessary conditions to encourage a rebirth of figurative art? **DW:** What do you think of vision then, not vision in the sense of divine inspiration but say the sense of man’s vision? **RH:** What do you think? **CA:** What do you think about improvised music? **DW:** What do you think of the low level of perception?

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- **BM:** Bartomeu Mari, “Joseph Kosuth in conversation with Bartomeu Mari” see *Joseph Kosuth, Zeno At The Edge Of The Known World*, (Venice Biennale XLV, Pavilion of Hungary, 1993), p. 152,
- **JK:** Joseph Kosuth, ibid.
Chapter Two

**DD:** What is my profile as an artist? **Q:** What in your view, constitutes a “good artist”? What are the conditions; is it the gaze or the context? **DD:** What is the context is. **Q:** What is it that makes you say, “This is a good artist and that is not a good artist”? **MV:** What is the use of criticism? **MM:** Then what are we to think of the world and bureaucracy of “art appreciation”? **AD:** What could they have been getting out of all this? **AR:** Who chooses what to say? Whose and what subject? **GP:** What role does the market play in the success of an artist? **DO:** What could you ever got anything from what’s called destructive criticism made by critics? **CG:** What is it that I have and that no other kind of art can have? **CH:** So what is an art lover? **JS:** What role does theory play in your work? **DC:** But what is tyranny if not that form of government that seeks to silence all criticism of or opposition to its policies? And what is the aesthetic production most acceptable to tyranny if not that which either directly affirms the status quo or contents itself with solipsistic exercises in so-called self-expression? **RA:** What is the content? **JFC:** What differentiates Coleman from this weak subjectivity which effectively risks “weakening” the possibilities for criticism?

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**DD:** Debbie Duffin, Artists Handbooks, Investigating Galleries: the artist’s guide to exhibiting, (AN, Publications, 1994), p. 69, **Q:** What is to be done?

GB: In your opinion, has the Venice Biennale done well to appoint a foreign curator?

TG: But what authority could the directors of the Society say it could not be defined as art? And, contrariwise, if they could not define what art was, what authority did they have?

LT: If art will not help this new man to educate himself, to strengthen and refine himself, then what is it for?


MK: Why did Conceptualism eventually become so mainstream, so institutionalized, so academified, when it was revived in the 1980s as the establishment taste of curators and critics like Laura Trippi, Dan Cameron, Craig Owens and Hal Foster, to name but a few?

powers, apparently photographing its own accord, when the result was very different from the intention?

DR: What about Man Ray?

VL: What about Alexei Shulgin... You mix a lot with him, don’t you?

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Chapter Two

**Chapter Two**

*JS:* What do you see is the relationship between your use of words and Wittgenstein’s linguistic theories?

*JS:* What’s the relationship of two people to each other and then what does the whole thing mean?

*MH:* Mmmm—What would you say about the relationship between your work and photographs of it?

*WS:* What is the relationship between the painting and the performance?

*HJR:* The question was posed: what is the relationship between aesthetic and political processes?

*HJR:* What is relationship between civilization and wilderness?

**Q:** What is the relationship in the ’90s between art and theory or between the visual and the conceptual?

*BMA:* What is the relationship between the publicity churned out by organizations and the work itself?

*DW:* What’s the relationship between the map in this situation, and the [mirror displacements]? 

*PE:* Your work has involved a lot of icons of Mexican culture, what is your relationship to Mexico City?

*AH:* What is your relationship to money as a person who has made work for twenty-five years that is not easily collected?

*JD:* What is your relationship to or connection with Venezuela and the Latin America market?

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*JS:* Jeanne Siegel, “Environments and Happenings,” (panel discussion among Kaprow, Segal, and Siegel as moderator on December 13, 1966) ibid., p. 177.


**Q:** Question in “An Introductory Conversation, Arthur C. Danto” in *L&B*, volume 11, p. 16.


*BM:* Bruce Mau in “Laboratorium is the answer, what is the question?, introduction” see TRANS> arts.cultures.media #8, 2000 Passim, inc. pp. 110-111.


*PC:* Paul Cummings see “Interviews with Robert Smithson for the Archives of American Art / Smithsonian Institution” (1970), Interview conducted by Paul Cummings July 14 and 19, 1972, in Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson, The*
Chapter Two

BM: What is their relationship with the public? With art? What is the relationship between the studio and the laboratory?

EA: What is your relationship with the art market?

MG: What relationship do you have with these pieces of art that crowd your living room?

JS: What do you think is the relationship between the artist’s position in society and the work of art?

JS: What is the relationship between the real elements and the paint?

PC: What was your relationship with the Park Place group?

KV: But what does that mean this relationship with nothingness?

RR: What is the relation between your life and your art?

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JJS: Taste then is something that repeats something else that has been accepted; is that what you mean?

JJS: And good taste is what is approved and bad taste is the same repetition which is not approved; is that what you mean?

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Chapter Two

*P.A.N: What about limits in art? TD: What about an avant-garde mayonnaise, indigestible as hell for the average mortal, quasi-aphrodisiacs for the aficionado? AS: And what about advertising companies, where the system


VII: What is to be done?


Chapter Two

VIL: What is to be done?

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RR: A riddle: what do many art critics possess but never mention?

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MD: Can one make works which are not works of “art”?

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AH: When you say not commercial, what do you mean? Not easily sold?

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RB: Resemblance is a conformity, but to what?

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________________________________________

WB: What is aura actually?

________________________________________


TR: Rosalind was asking, What is in these documents?

TD: Now, what if, as suggested, we read “art” wherever Kant wrote “the beautiful,” and simply draw the consequences of this substitution, refraining from all interpretation?

SM: What is an “unfinished work,” if all its elements are in accord, and if it possesses a charm which could easily be broken by an additional touch?

MA: What happens when the artist is dead?

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VII: What is to be done?

Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, p. 353, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, **LS**: Lucas Samaras, ibid, p. 355, **RJ**: Ray Johnson, “What Is a Moticos? (1954), ibid, p. 356, **DW**: David Wojnarowicz, “Post Cards from America: X-Rays from Hell” (1988), ibid, p. 373, **DW**: David Wojnarowicz, ibid, **DW**: David Wills, “Deposition: Introduction to Right of Inspection [Droit de regards], in Art & Text, no. 32, (Autumn, 1989), p. 11, **BK**: Billy Klüver, “Theater and Engineering–An Experiment: Notes by an Engineer” (1967), in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, (eds.), Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: a sourcebook of artists' writings, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), p. 412, **PDA**: Peter D’Agostino, “Proposal for Qube”

**JH**: What are you running away from? **A**: Oh, what were they? **GJ**: What is you idea process like? **MK**: [...] What is the difference between them–the “original” exhibition and its bookish offspring, what loss is sustained by their inevitable separation? **GP**: What has enabled these young artists to make the grade so young? **UM**: What is he doing or undoing? **ODO**: Are you trying to do something with the figure that goes beyond what other people have done before? **BL**: [...] So, the question is what did these


is a child? What is an adult? the state’s management of borders, over the way the states use borders to control populations? EB: What are their causes, and into what are they likely to evolve? CH: What do you want? Do you want to jump me? CH: What’s the difference? CH: What’s his strategy? TD: What did Duchamp do with this fearsome power? TD: What has made this situation plausible? JD: But what decides that, in this quantum, the more is worth more than the less, and the large more or better than the small? DS: Can you say what gives you this feeling? MF: What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? ZK: What is the outcome of meeting with other world cultures? JGC: What is your approach toward making self-portraits? D: And preferring what? LR: […] what are some of the things you do with your face? and what are some of the thoughts that go through your mind? YM: What about your type of painting, your style or your technique? BKR:
Chapter Two


What type of welding equipment were you using and what type of metals were you working with then? **BKR**: What materials are used in the work included in your the 1993 retrospective at the Neuberger Museum? **JC**: At that point, what have you given up? **JC**: What would you say about something that happened… **JC**: What are you going to do with your time? **RK**: In what sense? **DD**: What was the point of the selection? **DD**: What next? **DD**: What would you like to achieve next time you show and what actions would you take to achieve them? **MF**: With what authenticity or originality? **LE**: What could be more direct than our own turbid reflection in a piece of murky glass? **NJ**: What if you only had half a yard of dirt and you wanted it a yard size, right? **DW**: What do you think of vision then, not vision in the sense of divine inspiration but say the sense of man’s vision? **DHT**: We only have one single life—what should we do with it? **RS**: What line or color hides the Globigerina Ooze? **JS**: What were those paintings? **SW**: What is your concept of space, and your idea of objects related to space? **DO**: What categories are you thinking of? **AS**: But what’s in a word, or in a play on words for that matter, even or même? **SW**: What are you trying to achieve with the water element? **DC**: It is only thereby possibly for his work to ask, What makes it possible to see a painting? What makes it possible to see a painting as a painting? **JC**: And what is the purpose of writing music? **JC**: What is the nature of an experimental action? **JS**: Do you like what you see? **JS**: What was your reaction when Hilton Kramer in his review summed up your paintings by saying, “The apparent solemnity of these black paintings harbors a deadpan wit”? **JS**: What do you feel are the major differences between the Pictographs and your recent work? **YL**: And what is an encounter with an art–composition? **BO’D**: What perceptual law could justifies (to our eyes)
such a barbarity? PLL: And what if Syberberg were addressing us as well? CB: What were the general arguments Mondrian employed to attain his view of reality? … DB: So what is the legitimate content of a work, given that expressionism and its predicates are out the window? CR: What can film space add to what may be said about the loss that has occurred within it? ML: What are dividing lines, the transitions between sculpture and painting? GB: What more could be said about these images? What further possible relation could they be said to have to the logic of electronic reproduction? BO'D: […] otherwise; what was the point of three-dimensionality? RB: What did I care about the rules of composition of the photographic landscape, or, at the other end, about the Photograph as family rite? RB: […] what motive and what interest is there in photographing a backlit nude in a doorway, the front of an old car in the grass, a freighter at the dock, two benches in a field, a woman’s buttocks at a farmhouse window, an egg on a naked belly (photographs awarded prizes at a contest for amateurs)? EG: But what are words? EG: But what is a poem? BB: What other examples of ambiguity could you site? Myth, national culture, national identity, history? EB: What are the stakes of these differences, which are comparable to what religions formerly called heresies (and indeed, it is striking that as religions have lost their hegemonic position, they have gradually renounced the use of the term)—what are the stakes of these differences which we are coming up against now and which we will always come up against again? EB: […] What is a black man, and first of all what color is he? WE: […] What have you been photographing here today Eggleston? RS: What is the secret to Anton Corbijn’s portraits? What brings them together? MA: But what if this is how it was; can it be that what we think to be the style of Cezanne is the
Chapter Two


“style” of nature itself? **MA:** What would the shot be like: the Annunciation in the beginning, or the apparition of three wanderers before Abraham? **VL:** And what is the role of the ritual? **VL:** What is the difference between an analogous system and a digital one? **EA:** Coming back to Mapplethorpe: what do you like in his photographs? **VL:** What do you call “laboratory photography”? **VK:** What is interesting about Russian or German tradition, especially Russian? **VL:** What kind of photography do you prefer to deal with: portrait, fashion…? **VL:** What are your relations with people you shoot? **DB:** What exactly is it that Hamilton does with Duchamp’s writings? **TD:** What “new light,” exactly? **TD:** Now, what if, as suggested, we read “art” wherever Kant wrote “the beautiful,” and simply draw the consequences of this substitution, refraining from all interpretation? **SM:** What is an “unfinished work,” if all its elements are in accord, and if it possesses a charm which could easily be broken by an additional touch? **TD:** What remains of surrealism, once these two ends, false and unjust, are stripped bare? **TD:** What is left of it today? **JD:** What is to erect en mesure? **JD:** What is the colossal? **Q:** But what are the limits of that? **KV:** What is its importance? **MF:** [...] “what is painting?” and “what is good painting?” **TD:** What is this nature of the medium with regard to painting? **HF:** What puzzles me is, why do we always find ourselves arguing painting, when we set out to talk about sculpture? **AW:** The question thus


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Chapter Two


arises: What does this odd conflation of the new and the classical signify? MG: What, however, did the Constructivist make of it? YAB: What then is this method? EB: Now, what should we call this “other stage”? LAF: What are you talking about? LAF: What good can someone trained in medicine do to those who are not physically ill? LAF: What marks the shift into the modern world? LAF: What was Foucault challenging? LAF: If the prison does succeed in remaking the individual through this process, what kind of person will be made? CH: But what methodology could he use? OF: What is to be made of the new material? JFC: What was the importance of the book by Margarete and Alexander Mitscherlin, Inability to Mourn? BB: If you consider the sixties and seventies, even the eighties, in what artist is there an obvious and persuasive continuation of surrealism? PC: What conditions must obtain in order to conceive of the One as the Good? PC: What is the significance of all that? YL: What can a horse do? What can a photographic image do? What can a painting do? What can a thought do? What can a fish do? Indeed, what can a mountain do? YL: What does the term embrace? PC: What conditions must obtain in order to conceive of the One

What is to be done?
Chapter Two


178

LAF: Lydia Alix Fillingham, ibid., p. 56,

LAF: Lydia Alix Fillingham, ibid., p. 83,


ÖF: Öyvind Fahlström see experts from

HIPY PAPY BTHUTHDTH THUTHDA BTHUTHY: Manifesto of Concrete Poetry in *Documenta X – the book: politics poetics*, (Documenta and Museum-Fridericianum-Veranstaltungs-GmbH, 1997), p. 256,

JFC: Jean-François Chevrier in “B. Buchloh, C. David, J-F. Chevrier, The Political Potential of Art,” ibid., p. 376,

BB: Benjamin Buchloh, ibid. p. 394,

PC: Pierre Clastres in “Society Against The State,” ibid., p. 430,

YL: Yve Lomax

reached or rather long after than what is the wrong word? For the last time at last for to end yet again what the wrong word? RS: What does it come out of? Semiotic... DW: What’s the difference, then, for you between philosophy when you read it, and conceptualization...? DR: What kind of canvas do you use? MB: Why don’t you talk about one of your pieces, Bob, the one on the Mono Lake, for example? MB: What exactly is your concept of a non-site? GB: What led you to sculpture in particular among the visual arts? TG: What was the situation in art and culture that led to these strange objects appearing? TG: What were Duchamp’s objections to painting, other than resentment at the way the Cubists had treated him? CC: [...] “What were they looking for?” GB: What was it that led you to use such unconventional materials as cloth, rope, and sand? CC: Is that what they call acting? GB: What, for you, is central to sculpture? GRS: What have you tried to do in this paint-
Chapter Two


work? WGTH&MN: What part does subversion play in your work? HUO: What role does painting have in your work, and what role do you see it playing in society? What about its inter-relatedness to other media? CB: What will be the final destination of the work? EJ: What is your opinion of the increasing importance given to Chinese artists in Western institutions and international art exhibitions? WGT: [...] What is the difference between what you produce as film, and what you produce as art? WS: What is the relation between the painting and the performance? WS: In what way did the space suggest the work? WS: What were your specific concerns in that work? WS: What did you do after the paintings of ‘62? WS: What do you consider your last painting? SL: What are the social and personal values expressed through an artist’s work, and how are those values relevant to shaping culture? SL: What is the nature of such change, and how can it be discussed? JS: What do you see as those rules or conventions to be broken down? A: What was the next piece after the first grass work? GB: What led you to it? GB: To what degree does your choice of materials and color reflect an aesthetic concern? YM: What inspires you to paint? YM: But what is the meaning of a picture? YM: What do you want from a painting?
Chapter Two


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Chapter Two

MH: What do you have to say about that, Dennis?

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Chapter Three – RB: How?

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Chapter Three

how, **DW**: how, **DW**: how, **JFC**: how, **WW**: how, **SL**: how, **RT**: how, **GP**: how, **BM**: how, **TD**: how, **OD**: how, **RJ**: how, **AR**: how, **EB**: how, **MA**: how, **AA**: how, **JGC**: how, **RS**: how, **DW**: how, **DW**: how, **JG**: how, **JS**: how, **DW**: how, **JG**: how, **DS**: how, **JS**: how, **JS**: how, **JS**: how would you, **JS**: how, **JS**: how would you choose the colors, **JS**: how, **JS**: How could he

Chapter Three


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UM: [...] One last question: where is Alexander Brener now? Is he in jail somewhere, or is he free? What is he doing or undoing?

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