

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

**INTERVIEW WITH:** DAN GRAHAM, Artist

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[Crew Discussion]

SB: Hi, Dan, hello. I was asked to say the day of today. It's November the first, 2011, and we are at The Museum of Modern Art on 11 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street at the Drawing Study Center. I am Sabine Breitweiser, Chief Curator of Media and Performance Art, talking to artist Dan Graham. Do you want to introduce yourself?

DG: Yes. I actually think of myself as more of a writer than an artist, and I don't think of myself as an architect, but my work is always a hybrid. So I began with magazines, magazine articles and pages.

SB: Okay, Dan. You usually start a conversation talking about someone's zodiac, so I thought that might be a good point to start today.

[0:05:17]

DG: That's for picking up women. [laughter]

SB: That's for picking up women, so pick me up. [laughing] So, you're an Aries, and you recently sent me your zodiac description where you introduced yourself as being a pioneer, re-inventing, constantly yourself.

DG: Well, I wouldn't say that. I would just say that I admire, among the politicians, Khrushchev, who was an Aries, who de-Stalinized Russia. And also his son is a very famous American computer scientist. But in terms of the zodiac, my birthday is

March 31<sup>st</sup>, the same as Al Gore, one day from [Flavin](#), who had a huge influence on my work and my life.

SB: You were born in '42, right?

DG: Yes. And also, the day before me are Goya, Van Gogh or van Gogh, and Baudelaire. And I have to say, Goya was not crazy, but he was very idealistic. He was frustrated because the French revolution didn't produce what he wanted it to produce.

SB: And you were born in Urbana, Illinois, right?

DG: Because my father went to University of Illinois.

SB: I see.

DG: Although I grew up in New Jersey.

SB: I mean, how you set yourself within the zodiac and how you compare with other people sharing the zodiac with, this clearly shows how you work, how you usually like to respond to other artists. And you said that once your work often came out of a response to the work of other artists, as something you agreed with or you had another idea about it.

DG: Well I, actually, I would say that the work is an homage to the artists I love. I was very close to [Dan] [Flavin](#) and the person who discovered me was [Mangold](#). [Mangold](#) was [Sol LeWitt's](#) best friend. I showed [Sol LeWitt](#), his first one-man show. But [Mangold](#)

SB: In your gallery, maybe. Let's talk about when you had your gallery, the John Daniels.

DG: Well that was just an accident. I was

SB: It was an accident? Why?

DG: I knew nothing about art. I was almost a high-school dropout. I was doing nothing in New York, and I had two friends who wanted to social climb, so they started a gallery. I had read in

SB: Who were these two friends? If I may ask

DG: John Easton

SB: He was the partner of the gallery?

DG: John van Easton. Well, they weren't partners; they put a little bit of money in. [David Herbert? Robert Terra?] and my parents didn't know what to do with me, so they invested money, which was a tax deduction.

SB: And where was the gallery located? What did you do?

DG: 64<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue. It was the old Andre Emmerich space, that's where the galleries used to be.

SB: Uh-huh. And who did you show? Which artists did you show?

DG: First one-man show, [Sol LeWitt](#). In group shows, we showed [Robert Smithson](#), [Flavin](#), [Donald Judd](#). We also showed some pretty bad artists by accident. But the first show we did was actually around Christmas, and I had decided, anybody who came into the gallery should show. And the person I got most interested in was [Sol LeWitt](#), because we shared the same interest in Michel Butor, the great French novelist. Robbe-Grillet was touted as being important. He was [Judd's](#) favorite writer, and Sol said, "That god-damned romantic, [Judd](#)." Because actually, I figured out later, see, I grew up, actually, on French novels and Roland Barthes, because they were all translated in the 60s.

SB: And you were writing also about the artists, about [Flavin](#),

DG: That's much later, no.

SB: That's later, of course, but the gallery, being a gallery, thinking about these artists, informed you as a writer but also as an artist.

DG: No; not true.

SB: Not true? So what did [Flavin](#) do? Was this the first time he came down with the fluorescent tubes? In an exhibition on...

DG: No, he showed with Green gallery. You see, the other great gallery was Green gallery, that showed [Dan] [Flavin](#), [Robert Morris](#), [Donald Judd](#); and [Sol LeWitt](#)

wasn't able to get a show, so he was very happy to get a show with me. And [Flavin](#) was frustrated. And also, [Flavin](#) discovered my – I had written an article about Dean Martin, about the TV show, and [Flavin](#) loved television. So, from the very beginning, after reading my article, he got very interested in me and his other person who was very influenced by him, Michael Asher. And he got us together, actually, with Heiner Friedrich. But [Judd](#) showed a very good plastic piece. We had a show called "Plastics," a group show, and [Smithson](#) was just a hanger on. He was actually coming out of kind of a gay background, but he wanted desperately, he was very ambitious, he *desperately* wanted to get involved with minimal artists. So he would hang around, and I put him in the Plastics show.

SB: But what I read about you, and what people speak about you, this relationship with these people you were showing at that time, it's kind of striking that the work they did, like [Flavin](#) and [Sol LeWitt](#), they used, more or less, the interior of the gallery as a system to create the art,

DG: Well the, I

SB: So the work was referencing the gallery as an interior cube?

DG: No, that's not true.

SB: It's not true?

DG: No. [Sol LeWitt](#) was actually, [Sol LeWitt's](#) biggest influence was DeChirico, and he used the city plan. In other words,

SB: So, another interest you share; urbanism, right?

DG: No, no, not share. He worked for I.M. Pei, so the grid of New York City was very important. But we all got, we got the idea of the city plan, see, this Brian O'Doherty idea, the white cube is not what art was about; there was no influence in that. Actually, [Donald Judd](#) wrote an article about the city plan, a city plan of Kansas City, where he's from, which was neoclassical. And then when he went to New Jersey, he discovered there was a conflict in his work between the 19<sup>th</sup> century city plan, which is neo-classical, and the highway culture of New Jersey. So that tension was what his work was about. And so, he was very interested in architecture, from that point of view. [Sol LeWitt](#) and I were interested in Michel

Butor, who did a novel called *Passing Time*, which was set in a place, an industrial city in northern England, and he got lost in the city and it was like a labyrinth. So the whole idea of the city plan as the basis for art was why he did Homes for America. I *hated* the idea of the white cube. I thought that was a dumb, dumb, stupid idea that had nothing to do with art.

SB: So the gallery

[Crew Discussion]

DG: I think the other thing I should say is, I thought of myself as a writer, and every artist who I showed, every artist who I showed on the gallery wanted to be a writer. So, [Smithson](#) was influenced by Borges and William Burroughs. I was influenced by Michel Butor. [Judd](#) wanted to be like Robbe-Grillet.

SB: Did you consider yourself as an artist at that time you were running the gallery?

DG: No, I didn't; no; never. I never considered myself as an artist. The person who got me involved with being an artist was John Gibson, many years later. I never thought of myself – I didn't go to art school, I had no interest in art. Um, the biggest influence was, when I was fourteen, I read parts of, I read "Nausea" by Sartre, because I thought high school was like nausea. I was almost psychotic then. And then I also read "Being and Nothingness." And of course the mirror stage of Lacan comes from "Being and Nothingness." That influenced my art. And when I was thirteen I read Margaret Mead. And I loved Levi-Strauss. So I was very conversant at the beginning with French writers, but in the end, I got very, more influenced by Walter Benjamin, who was translated in America by Hannah Arendt, and it was available in '65. So actually, Benjamin had a huge influence on my work.

SB: So you were reading really a lot. And

DG: Well, everybody was then, because there was *Evergreen Review*, a publication of Grove Press, which, by the way, John Gibson worked for. And everything was being translated, but our biggest influence, actually, was Godard's early films.

SB: So the gallery closed after a year because

DG: Less than a year.

SB: Less than a year. It didn't work.

DG: We sold nothing.

SB: You sold nothing. [laughing] And you moved to your parents', right? You went back to New Jersey, or you went on a train ride, at least, where

DG: The problem was, the work, that I had a lot of creditors and I was trying to avoid them.

SB: Yes. And, I'm looking here, on this i-pad, probably your first works? Is this true?

DG: I don't think, no, not my first works. The first work was, well, I don't know if it's a work, I don't consider it really a work of art. It was, basically what I did was, when I was going back to New Jersey, I discovered along the railroad tracks, situations that reminded me of [Judd](#).

SB: Can you describe what you saw? The tract houses you saw? Right?

DG: Well, they're not exactly tract houses. It was leftover space. In other words, tract homes were logically laid out, but these were very mannerist. [Smithson](#) was a mannerist. In other words, they're right next to the railroad track, very irrational. And also, I was very interested in pollution, because [Smithson's](#) favorite film was *Pretty Poison*, about pollution. And I also, through [Flavin](#), got very involved in Hudson River School painting. And of course, his hero was Bierstadt and mine was Church. And of course, what you saw at around sunset was pollution mixed with sunset. And the sunset idea came totally from my hero, [Dan Flavin](#).

SB: You're talking about the film now, *Sunset to Sunrise*?

DG: No, I'm not at all!

SB: No?

DG: I'm talking about my photographs of houses.

SB: Okay.

DG: The sky which is polluted with the sunset situation is very important. The work directly comes out of not [Judd](#), but [Mangold](#). All of my pavilions come from [Mangold](#) and that kind of a suburban semi-sunset, kind of brown, red rose color, which is in the photographs, that comes directly from [Mangold](#).

SB: So your work it kind of unfolds? Looking at the work now, which is more than 40 years, unfolds a little bit in chapters, one could say, how you work. So, looking again at the *Homes for America* [MoMA #729.2011.a-b], because behind you we have installed the layout of the magazine article we just acquired from the Herman Daled collection, *Homes for America*. Do you want to speak a little bit about it?

DG: It's much more complicated than you might think.

SB: Yes?

DG: I showed – [Smithson](#) was really very ambitious. He wanted to get in, so he married somebody who was a high school sweetheart, even though his background was gay. And he had a salon. And he had me invite all the artists who I liked to the salon: [Flavin](#), [Sol LeWitt](#). And in the salon, we all showed what we were doing. I had taken these photographs along the railroad tracks. I showed them. That was before [Smithson](#) went to New Jersey. He took that idea from me. And what I liked about them was, with the slide form, it's better. It was a little like what John Martin was doing, you know, the great painter? Because originally, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, John Martin painted on glass, and it was illuminated with light. That was the beginning of cinema. And what I liked about the slides when you showed them is they had light through them, like [Flavin](#).

SB: That's a piece we're actually restoring right now,

DG: Uh, no, but

SB: Together with you, this month?

DG: Yes. Well, it wasn't a piece. I never considered it a piece. Actually, Mel Bochner used to hang out, because he was, in a very insidious way he wanted to find out what other people were doing. And his girlfriend was Susan Brockman. And for some reason, I got into the show called Projected Art at the contemporary wing of

Finch College. The director, Eileen Rosenau was doing the best shows in New York. Not Rosenau. Elayne Varian was doing the best shows in New York. So I showed the slides as slides. They all faded because I had no money to make copies. And to me, that's much more interesting than what [Jeff Wall](#) is doing, because

SB: The light boxes of Jeff Wall

DG: No, because, the whole idea of the light actually going through the slides is what the work was about. It was about, and that was like [Flavin](#), but it was also like Church. And of course, all of that comes from Flavin. And of course, what Jeff Wall is doing is, he's taking a [Flavin](#) and making it a kind of conservative, old-fashioned museum piece.

SB: And you used a very cheap camera with a fixed focus, right? An instamatic?

DG: In the beginning, it was a fixed-focus camera. A little bit later, I borrowed my father's 35-millimeter. I actually did this as a hobby. First I was desperate to do what other artists were doing, but I had no money. But I was very lucky, because Susan Brockman, who, by the way, I found out later, was not only a girlfriend of [Mel Bochner](#), but she was also the girlfriend of [Willem] [de Kooning](#). She was a filmmaker. She was the assistant editor.

SB: So you showed the slide show which was later called Homes for America?

DG: No, I never called it, no,

SB: Yes, that's what I want to say, you never called it Homes for America. In the Projected Art exhibition, there you got the opportunity to write an article about it.

DG: No, that's not exactly what happened.

SB: So how was it?

DG: Susan Brockman said, why don't we put the photographs in Arts of America, I mean, sorry, in *Arts Magazine*. I realized my real interest was actually *Esquire* magazine, because *Esquire* magazine, which had the best writers, also had color features of the sterility of the suburbs, with kind of boring, formalistic photographers who would go and show the sterility of the suburbs. So, also, through Michel Butor, whose work was serial, because I was the one who got [Sol LeWitt](#) into serial

music, not Bochner. I wanted something that was serial. I was also very influenced by one or two things I know better, Godard, which was like a magazine page. So I thought, instead of making things fine art, why don't you just put them in magazines? So I concocted in two days the article. I went to the library and I researched the phenomenon of tract homes.

SB: What did you find in the library? What was your resources, what references you used [INAUDIBLE]

DG: Nothing. There is no references.

SB: You used a real catalogue? Or promotional material?

DG: No, no! I figured this out very quickly. There was something called the California method. You see, in New Jersey, after World War II, the people who worked in the shipyards, which is where I grew up, the method was, after World War II, using the way you build ships in mass production, to build houses that way. In California, it was similar, so you had the California method of mass production, and there was mass production to house people, families, after World War II. And in both cases, it was along the highway. My work is different from [Matta-Clark](#), because Matta-Clark's work deals with houses that were built after World War I, and they weren't along highways, they were along trains. My work was actually along highways. I also was very involved in, a writer who was influenced by Flaubert, about the banality of the suburbs, and my work is poetic. Everybody thinks it's sociological. Buchloh thinks it's sociological critique of minimal art. In fact, it's a celebration of Italian-American petit bourgeois.

SB: So why do you think Buchloh thinks this?

DG: Because Buchloh read Adorno. Later, my ideas became very close to T. J. Clark. We both think that the petit bourgeois, in other words, upper lower class people becoming, I mean, upper lower class people who aspire to be lower middle class, are the revolutionary class.

SB: So, this analysis of

DG: It's not an analysis.

SB: No, let me. The study of the seriality of

DG: No, it's no study.

SB: Of permutations of colors, of ways how you can order...

DG: It's a joke.

SB: Yes, it's a joke. So, as you say, this is poetry, and not a

DG: Well, it's a kind of poetry of banality. And there was a great artist around that time, [Darby Bannard](#), the best friend of [Frank] [Stella](#), whose works – there was also an article, an essay, published in America by Roland Barthes about Saenredam, you know, the great church painter in Holland. And he talked about how the work was like sherbets. So the color is the color that people used in houses, in these houses, and was really influenced deeply by [Mangold](#). The color was really from [Mangold](#). And [Judd](#) had this, the tension in [Judd](#) was very important, the tension between the neoclassical and new materials of highway culture, the new plastics. And I think [Judd](#) was deeply influenced by [John Chamberlain](#), in using these materials. And the seriality was because I introduced [Sol LeWitt](#) to a magazine called *Die Reihe*, which was about the serial rows of things. I never thought that this was a serious idea. It was also listening to music. I was listening to Mr. Pleasant by The Kinks; Nowhere Man by the Beatles. And what I wanted to do with them in magazine pages is do something like a pop song, disposable and very fast. And it turned out I couldn't do the *Esquire*. In fact, the whole layout I did was dropped.

SB: Yes, you spoke a little bit about the layout. It appeared in a totally different version, right?

DG: Well, no. *Arts Magazine* decided that because it was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, that they would key my work to [Walker Evans](#). My work is very similar, but I never knew Walker Evans. There was no influence at all. And they cut out all the photographs.

SB: Mm-hmm; yes. And I was always wondering how these two tableaux came into being. Herman [Daled] has, had in his collection, now we greatly have, was this, a layout you did after the article. You didn't send these huge plates to *Arts* magazine and say that's how you wanted it.

DG: No.

SB: How did you make this?

DG: No, what happened was, here's how I was introduced to Herman Daled. I did a piece called Side Effects/Common Drugs [696.2011]. John Gibson, who I was almost showing with, but not really, put it up in a show. Herman Daled, who was a radiologist, had a convention in New York. He saw it. He loves cliché – because my work is about clichés – he loves clichés. He took it with him. It was \$500.00. And he showed it to [Marcel Broodthaers](#). Marcel Broodthaers was a huge – the work is very similar to Marcel's. So Marcel got me into the best gallery in the world, MTL gallery, and also introduced my work to Daled. So Daled asked me, what are my best pieces? So he'd buy each one for a thousand dollars. So I thought Homes for America.

SB: This was in '66? When was that? Something?

DG: No, my work was '66 but

SB: When did he buy it? Do you remember?

DG: Um,

SB: Something? When was the show with John Gibson?

DG: Well, he didn't buy – the show was around 1969.

SB: Mm-hmm, so in the late 60s.

DG: But the works were from, all of that work was actually from '66 or '65. Many of them were published. See, after my gallery went out of business -- Homes for America was a fluke. But after it went out of business, I had the idea of putting things in magazine pages, as a magazine, because they would be disposable. Because the whole fiction at that time, and you get this with [Carl Andre](#), was that you can defeat monetary value by just doing things that are disposable. There were disposable dresses, and it was also a kind of pop culture, and I thought, Why do pop art? Also I loved [Roy] [Lichtenstein](#). So what Lichtenstein did was he took things that were cheap, magazine, comic book printed quality, and he said he wanted to destroy value. Unfortunately – in other words, he wanted to make the work look very trashy. So, unfortunately, what happened was, the work became

valuable. So my idea was to put them directly in magazines and be disposable and have no value.

SB: And how did you, I mean, there are these publications, for *Publication* you also did, where all of these works are published very soon. And we just spoke about *Common Drugs and Side Effects* [MoMA #696.2011], and we have also *Schema* [*Schema (March 1960)*, MoMA #563.2011.a-o] here up there and a number of works. How did you have access to these magazines? How did this come about? You said this space in a disposable...

DG: Well, I think it's more interesting than you might think. Sam Edwards, who was the editor of *Arts Magazine*, had no background in art. He was interested in literature, and he had a kind of avant-garde magazine newspaper form, format in Reno Nevada called *Second Coming*, because he was interested in, through Henry Miller, he was interested in sex in literature. So he became the editor. He didn't know much about art. Susan Brockman, his assistant editor, really did the magazine. And I had access to one magazine, because after he was fired from *Arts Magazine*, he had a publication called *New York Review of Sex*, a combination *Screw* magazine and *New York Review of Literature*. He got me some of the magazine pages. Also, *Schema*, which is the best piece I've ever done, I had in page proofs for *Arts*, but they killed it.

SB: How did they kill it?

DG: Well, killing means it was in page proofs and they decided not to do it. Many of my things were killed, like the Dean Martin, like my Eisenhower and the Hippies. That was in page proofs and it wasn't done. The Dean Martin piece was finally done in a magazine called *Fusion*, a rock and roll magazine in Boston, but my real interest was writing in a magazine context. Because to me, rock criticism was the most important. I loved Leslie Fiedler, literary criticism. I loved Barthes and Benjamin. But to publish there were these magazines sponsored by record companies, where rock-and-roll critics could publish.

SB: So this was a similar system, like the arts magazines sponsored by galleries, where an artist could publish to get the media to react or...

DG: No, it was sponsored because they would put advertisements in, but also the people who wrote would promote.

SB: And if you would write for rock magazines, rock articles, you would also get free tickets to rock concerts.

DG: Correct. I must have said that.

SB: One of the huge benefits

DG: But also, my passion has never been art. It's always been architecture tourism, and rock and roll, and rock and roll writing. And I always followed my passion in what I was doing, but I *loved* the magazine page. I wasn't the only one who did.

SB: Who else did it? Who else in your time?

DG: [Smithson](#), really, basically, wanted to be a writer. Actually, his best work was his early homosexual drawings, but he always wanted to be a writer because he loved William Burroughs. Um, [Sol LeWitt](#) and I loved Michel Butor, and Butor had a huge influence on Homes for America. But I also liked, and I think another important, well, let me describe Side Effects/Common Drugs [MoMA #696.2011]. Basically,

SB: Do you want to talk a little bit about this piece, since we have it in the collection of Herman Daled?

DG: Well, it was, the Rolling Stones had a song called Mother's Little Helper.

SB: Exactly.

DG: It was because they were in the newspapers, that people said that they took too many drugs, so they wrote a song about housewives taking drugs. Also, Larry Poons was very important, so I wanted to do something about op art, and Lichtenstein, as I said, my hero, and also [Sol LeWitt's](#) hero, and also because he had a kind of Jewish ironic take on things.

SB: Did you take drugs at that time?

DG: Very little.

SB: Very little.

DG: But as a kind of cliché of the time. And also, the drug culture was everywhere, and many songs, like, not only *Mother's Little Helper*, were about suburban housewives using tranquilizers.

SB: So it was something really everyday like the housing, in a way.

DG: It was a cliché of the time.

SB: It was a cliché how country life is, or the suburban life is, yeah.

DG: Well, *Country Life* is another kind of magazine for upper upper class people who want to have nice houses in the countryside. But magazine culture was full of these problems. And in fact, what I wanted to do was, with the magazine pages, is to relate to not only the advertisement but also what the articles were at a particular moment. And the whole idea was, the work would be contextual, not a monument by itself. This was very much what Venturi is doing. In other words, the meaning of my magazine pages didn't only come from themselves but from what else was in the issue. And every issue had a theme. It was also disposable and throw-away. And I tried different formats out. *Schema* [*Schema* (March 19660, MoMA # 563.2011)] was really from Ramon Llull.

SB: Yes, we should talk maybe about *Schema*

DG: I think it's really an extremely complex piece.

SB: Yes, it is hard to talk about, right? I did it once for you, right? For an Austrian magazine, if you remember, in the mid '90s, and I had a hard time to complete it, actually.

DG: The person who understands it most is actually Gregor Stemmrich.

SB: Gregor Stemmrich?

DG: You had the book, the Flick collection book?

SB: Yes.

DG: We were all interested in mathematics and physics.

SB: Heisenberg, you often refer to him.

DG: Well, I didn't know anything about it. We read paperbacks, but we would go to book stores and look at paperback books, because we couldn't afford the books. But the biggest influence was Borges. Borges did a story called *Library of Babel*. And Borges was deeply influenced by Ramon Llul, you know, who had this *Theater of Memory*? He was Catalan. And I've written about this in *Arts Magazine*, about the importance of Ramon Llul. Also, Mallarme's book was important, but the whole idea of *Schema* is that every – it was a little like Frank Stella, where everything was self-referential. But in my case, the self reference was, every *Schema* would be different. It had to do with

SB: Depending on the medium, the way you published it.

DG: Depending upon each particular page's materiality. And there is some relationship between materiality and information as a kind of material structure. It's also, a computer could find all the variations before they actually happened.

SB: Do you remember [how] often you published *Schema* [*Schema* (March 1966, MoMA # 563.2011)]?

DG: I can't remember.

SB: I have fifteen pages here with the

DG: I think

SB: *The Dasch Standard*

DG: I think in the end, maybe about twenty.

SB: Mm-hmm. Are you still doing it?

DG: I don't even think about that, because I have no interest in work for that period. It also doesn't really come up any more. I don't do trademark works, unlike certain artists who are successful, because I really moved on.

SB: What I was always curious about, how sufficient this use of the media space actually was. Because even in the 90s, there was an institution started called the *Museum In Progress*, which just used the media space.

DG: No, that was boring!

SB: Yes, I know. And they published it as the real utopian idea of the museum. I just wonder, with what kind of limitation, ramification or troubles you had to deal with when you tried to publish your works in the

DG: Well I published almost everything, at least three-quarters were published. The one that wasn't published, particularly a favorite of mine, was *Detumescence*.

SB: Mm-hmm. But it was an advertisement in the *Village Voice*, right?

DG: No, it wasn't.

SB: No? It wasn't?

DG: No, it was not. It was to be a magazine page, by itself, and I was looking for a hole inside magazine culture. In magazine culture, advertisements try to arouse you to climax to buy a product. So I was looking for a hole. The idea of a hole was very important for me, because [Judd](#) used to say, not [Judd](#). Carl Andre was interested in topology, as I was. He said, "A thing is a whole in a thing it is not." And I had done this puzzle, *Puzzle One*, which also has a hole.

SB: The puzzle, I thought, yeah. Mm-hmm. Do you want to speak about that? How this I mean, we know very little about this.

DG: Well, I don't know so much about it either. All I know is it has to do with nominalism, in other words, the idea of one, whether it's physical, empty, or, and that comes from [Flavin](#). [Flavin](#) was a medieval scholar because he was a priest, almost, one day from being a priest. So there was something medieval philosophy called nominalism. A lot of my things were philosophical models. In fact, *Two Adjacent Pavilions* was like a philosophical model. So I was playing with philosophical models. But the main thing was, the structure of magazines, I was interested in. And so, this might have been a feminist piece, actually. I advertised for a clinical writer, I mean, a medical writer, to write in clinical detail what happens to the male penis after climax. It's also about the whole idea, instead of a climax, the kind of lassitude that happens afterwards. And I was very deeply influenced, as I was with my Dean Martin article, in the whole idea of lassitude. See, Dean Martin, relaxation was very important in the 1960s, even before yoga. But Dean Martin was too relaxed. He was lax. So that's my piece, *Lax Relax*.

SB: Exactly.

DG: And that's puritanical. I guess Europeans can see a little bit of American Puritanism there. But I like the idea of lassitude, but also, I realized, even then, there were articles in all the magazines, that females can experience multiple climaxes, and men can't. I was a feminist from the very beginning because of Margaret Mead. And then, of course, there was this great book, Shulamith Firestone's *Dialectic of Sex*. I actually had Shulamith Firestone come up to Nova Scotia College of Art to do a book. It may have been only partly feminist, but basically it's about humor. And the key thing about my work that's different from conceptual art, which I always hated, is, my work comes from Stanley Brown and On Kawara. It's about existentialist humor. [On Kawara](#) used to send postcards saying "I'm still alive." And Stanley Brown's work, he doesn't say it's humorous, but I think it's very humorous.

SB: And both, I would say both, like you, construct their work in response to someone else, in some way. Because to say, "I'm still alive," to someone is an interaction, is a conversation you start with someone.

DG: No, I

SB: And Stanley Brown, asking someone where the way to this and that is starting a conversation. And your work brings a

DG: I actually disagree.

SB: You disagree?

DG: No, On Kawara's work comes out of beatnik period. His early work was beatnik period. Just like, [Sol LeWitt's](#) favorite artist after [Giorgio] [de Chirico](#) was [Alberto] [Giacometti](#). So we're coming out of a period of Samuel Beckett, [Bruce] [Nauman](#) comes out of that, and I think, originally, On Kawara. But On Kawara's, the existentialist thing, like Samuel Beckett, is whether you're alive or dead. It's a kind of nihilism. And I got that actually from Sartre, when I read Sartre. And Sartre was the secretary for Heidegger. So those issues of being and nothingness were quite important at that time. Oh, but the main thing about On Kawara is, instead of doing a normal painting, he just sends these postcards. That, to me, was more – conceptual art was very boring. Seth Siegelaub picked my brain. He got me together with some very bad painters, and said, "Let's talk about information." I gave them ideas. And then, the work that came out of it, to me, was extremely –

this idea of artists' philosophy, to me, doesn't make sense. In other words, it was didactic in a very done way. And the idea of dialogue, which was Ian Wilson's idea, to me, that was a very simplistic idea. So I don't agree with that.

SB: And Siegelau, but Siegelau did something which relies to your early publication works in some way. He established this contract, the artists' rights.

DG: That was many, many years later.

SB: It was later, but in a way, it deals with the publication rights of an artwork

DG: I had no interest

SB: Where you were focusing on that.

DG: No, I was totally against that.

SB: That art is sui generis.

DG: No, I was totally against that contract idea. My work

SB: You never used this Siegelau contract?

DG: No, of course, my work was for free!

SB: Yes.

DG: I did my work for free! The whole idea of the artists' rights, that doesn't interest me in any way.

SB: This was a big criticism, actually, people had about the Siegelau contract.

DG: No, but

SB: That it commercialized something which was originally

DG: No, I don't have that argument. Seth was a genius in one way. He took very bad painters – [Robert Barry](#) and all those artists were very bad painters – in his gallery, and by putting them together with me and other things in the air, he produced artists who got better and better as they went along. Huebler actually developed himself into a very good artist, and also Robert Barry. [Lawrence Weiner](#), who was always a supporter of mine, learned a lot from my hero, [John Chamberlain](#). He

also, the Palms come directly out of Carl Andre. He was a very smart guy who was doing pretty bad art. But the work was poetry, and the fact is that he denies his work -- what I liked about Weiner is, his work is a hybrid. It's between

SB: Like yours.

DG: Yes. And when it became generic, which has become more recently, I kind of lost interest in it. But on the other hand, he was, also he comes out of beatnik poetry, which is interesting. I'm not a poet; I'm a very bad poet, kind of a juvenile poet. But I think the fact, most art came out of literature. My interest in literature was actually the literature of pop music and also normal magazine culture. And I have to really emphasize the importance of Godard for everybody.

SB: Now I have to come back to *Schema* [*Schema, (March 19660, MoMA #563.2011.a-o)*], because one of the pages as you published it is called *Poem* [MoMA Arch. 72], and you refer often to your early conceptual works as poems.

DG: No, I thought I was a poet. I never considered myself a conceptual artist. In fact, I still don't. I hate conceptual art. I actually despise it. But the artists I like, and I think it -- the artists I like are actually doing anarchistic humor.

SB: Let's have a break, here, at the anarchistic humor. This is okay then, yeah? I think I need some water.

[Crew Discussion]

DG: Can I say something very personal about Sabine? We're both, I knew nothing about art when I got into art. We both invented ourself, improvising with the situation we found ourself in.

SB: That's true.

DG: And I always hated art schools, but I wound up teaching at an art school.

SB: We can talk about that later. I thought the next phase would be the sort of educational lab situation and how you developed Nova Scotia ...I need a break...

DG: [45:50] Well, I just think there's too much academicism, and I like to respond to things very directly. Also, Sabine and I

DG: I just wanted to say, to continue with the concept, with my earlier

SB: Early conceptual work

DG: Well, not conceptual, the conception of Dan Graham.

SB: Yes.

DG: I was deeply influenced by two artists I showed.

[Crew Discussion]

SB: Okay, going back to your early

DG: The reason I got into art was the people, was the accidental meeting I had with these artists whose work I knew nothing about. [Flavin](#) and [Sol LeWitt](#) were both guards at a Museum of Modern Art show, *The Great Russian Experiment*, with Camilla Gray<sup>1</sup>. So their work comes

SB: Which was the show again?

DG: It was called *The Great Russian Experiment*.

SB: And when was the show?

DG: '65, I think.

SB: Here at The Museum of Modern Art?

DG: Yes<sup>2</sup>. By Camilla Gray. And they were guards.

SB: They were guards in this show. And that's how you met them?

DG: No, no. I met them because they were both involved with Green gallery, which was showing the first conceptual, the first minimal art. At that point, they were friends, although later they weren't friends. Well, all of my work comes out of their

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<sup>1</sup>Not a show at the Museum of Modern Art, rather a book by Camilla Gray; *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922*, published in 1951

<sup>2</sup> Not a show at the Museum of Modern Art, rather a book by Camilla Gray; *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922*, published in 1951

idea, their understanding of art, which was Russian art, constructivist art. And my work, you know, Constructivist art was basically somewhere between, a hybrid between design, art, and architecture. And also photography was very important with [Aleksandr] [Rodchenko](#). And the other things that was important, that both of those artists had enormous humor.

SB: So this combines somehow how you define your art as a hybrid covering so many media at the same time and

DG: No, what I'm doing now is, all my work, like the Dia Foundation, is basically functional, it's quasi-functional. Everything I do is quasi functional. It's not architecture. I would never consider myself an architect. It's not just a hybrid, that it's quasi functional. And also it responds to light. Like [Flavin](#). But the humor was so important; all my work is about humor. And I think the artists I admire most: Lichtenstein, [Sigmar Polke](#), and to a certain point [Gerhard] [Richter](#), and certainly Fontana, the work had humor. [Sol LeWitt](#) told me after I showed him that his grids were jungle gyms for his cats. And also, he did this great Muybridge piece, like Muybridge. It's a series of peepholes where you look at a naked woman, and you're getting closer and closer to her, and as you get nearer to the vagina, it becomes her belly button. And [Flavin](#) also had a kind of nasty sense of humor. He did a piece called Barbara Roses. It was a flower pot, small pot, with a light which had a rose inside, and he called it Barbara Roses. He was attacking the critic who got him in the Sao Paulo Biennale. There's a real nastiness to [Flavin](#). But [Flavin](#) is the one who really picked up on my work. He, I read, the article, he loved television, as I do, so I wrote this article about Dean Martin's TV program, and he got very involved with it. And he also knew that his two real followers were me and Michael Asher. So he got us together with Heiner Friedrich for Dia. I turned down Heiner because, well, for many

SB: When was that?

DG: I think around 1970. I turned down Heiner. Whereas Michael Asher, a very great artist, the early work with sound environments, very much deriving from [Flavin](#), he did a show. Well, first Heiner said, "We have to get you better shoes." And then he did a show at Heiner Friedrich's gallery. He says he's against galleries.

SB: You're talking about the Munich gallery, now.

DG: The Munich gallery, which was a beautiful show. I didn't want to get involved, because, for two reasons. I'm a populist, so. Heinrich's idea was that of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Ludwig II, getting involved with somebody like Wagner on a kind of Valhalla kind of idea. I'm a populist. Secondly, I'm very close to being psychotic, so I thought that it would make me crazy if I got in an isolated situation.

SB: You're talking about the grants they provide to artists, this Dia kind of Friedrich.

DG: No, the idea was, you don't have to do work. You just do one work and you're like a genius. I think it harmed a lot of artists. It was good for [Flavin](#) because he was working class. It definitely harmed a great artist, [Walter DeMaria](#), whose work was so incredibly good and diverse, because it slowed them down. But my Dia piece was basically an attack on Heiner Friedrich and a redefinition of Dia. Often my work, I have to admit it, like [Flavin](#), my work is based on not only humor but also anger.

SB: So let's talk a little bit how you developed the pieces, and I thought if we go back a little bit to the chronology, now being in the early works you did for publications, talking a little bit about your films, your film performances, maybe that would be something to cover, since we just recently acquired them for the collection. How you came about, how you used the camera, with your body, for the camera.

DG: Well, the work is, I wrote an article called Subject Matter, which was not published in *Arts Magazine*. I discovered in New York, in New York, we're really backward. We didn't know the work of [Bruce] [Nauman](#), Steve Reich, or what was happening in San Francisco with [Simone Forti](#). But I learned about the work through [Richard Serra](#), first, because Richard Serra told me his biggest influence was Simone Forti. And through, also through my friendship with [Dennis Oppenheim](#), Dennis said [Nauman](#) was very important. So I wanted to make, um, also for me, [Michael Snow](#), who – my best friend was Steve Reich, and Michael Snow is also his best friend. So my work comes really out of [Nauman](#) and Michael Snow, but in a very simple way. I used a simple fixed camera, super-8 camera,

SB: Again a fixed camera, like for the early *Homes for America* [*Homes for America*, 1965-1967/2010, MoMA# 13.2011].

DG: Also, I wrote an article about [Sol LeWitt](#), about subject and object. So my interest was developing using the camera, relation between subjectivity and objectivity.

- SB: So what was the first of these series called *Five Films* [MoMA # 14.2011.1-5], which were also published in this book, actually?
- DG: Well, the first was a rip-off of Michael Snow which I don't like very much, but it's also
- SB: You're talking about *Wavelength* of Michael Snow?
- DG: No, not *Wavelength*. I'm talking about *La Region Centrale. My Sunrise Sunset* [*Sunset to Sunrise*, MoMA #14.2011.1] was basically, it's Michael Snow's work but it's also a little [Mangold](#), because Mangold in his work dealt with the cliché that [Lichtenstein](#) was dealing with, in other words, the sunset.
- SB: Okay, so
- DG: That's a very bad piece, which I
- SB: Sunrise Sunset?
- DG: Yes, it's a piece that I think is very minor, and it's basically a rip-off. Afterwards, I did *Two Correlated Rotations*. I had the idea of, see, with [Nauman](#), you're always looking at the performer from the outside, and I wanted to be inside the performer, which the spectator can identify with inside and outside. And that actually derives from an early video piece I did, a rolling piece, where with a video camera – this was at Nova Scotia College of Art – I had the video camera which I was holding in my hand, aimed, there was audience in between. I was aiming at a monitor on the other side of the stage. And as I rolled, I was aiming the camera, by guiding my legs, aiming it at the monitor to get a feedback situation. The audience who the piece was really about – it wasn't about me as a performer – they can see my point of view, or they can look back and see themselves, the spectators. And of course, I was very influenced by James Gibson, who is a writer about perception, who used Mach, the idea of Ernst Mach.
- SB: Which you put on the catalogue, on the cover of these catalogues.
- DG: It's also about a big issue for all artists in the 60s, topology. In other words, the idea of the topology – who, he also said, my work is also about learning process, it's about feedback and learning process.
- SB: I think this was kind of a statement to put these Mach drawings

DG: No, I just think it was a good cover.

SB: You thought it was a good cover? [laughter] But I think it more or less covered really, your intention of the piece of this looking from the inside to the outside and the perspective feel it creates.

DG: No, but what it doesn't have is the fact that spectators are implicated.

SB: Exactly! Yes.

DG: My work changed with minimal art, in two ways. Main thing is, I would go more interested in the spectator rather than the performer, and secondly, I got very – and actually, subject matter, I talked about this beautiful [Bruce Nauman](#) performance at the Whitney. He, his wife, and [Meredith Monk](#) were bouncing off the wall of the Whitney, and making a phasing pattern like Steve Reich, and also, he played the architecture, because you can go anywhere in the architecture and you can hear yourself in relation to the architecture. My work also got *deeply* involved at this point with a new issue that minimal art didn't have: time. I was interested in Steve Reich, [Lamonte Young](#), because when I did *Aspen* magazine I had Steve Reich and Lamont Young in my issue. And also, the element of time, I got interested in the Baroque. In other words, as you walk in my pieces, time is very important. It's not static, static, present time. It's about the relationship of the body of the spectator in relationship to time, also the relationship of one spectator to another spectator in the audience. So all my work is about – it really comes from Jean Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre says, the beginning of the ego for the child, and I have to admit, is when the child sees himself being seen

SB: In front of the mirror

DG: by somebody else who they see at the same time. And all my work after that point was in relationship to time. And also, it's not the static gaze, it's really about gaze in a time continuum. The best text about my work ever is the interview that I did with Rodney Graham in the retrospective catalogue, the Whitney catalogue. Because he says my work, starting with the Venice Biennale piece

SB: Ambiente?

DG: The Ambiente piece, has a lot to do with time. That was a big break, actually, because these early magazine pages were about instantaneous present time. So

I, actually, I'm always criticizing myself. Every time I do something else in a new medium, I critique my old work.

SB: So that's still connected a little bit to the films, because I think there's an interesting step, how you use some of the architecture and you did quite a number of films where you were rolling or were you

DG: No, remember, I only did five films.

SB: Five films.

DG: The last film was too expensive for me. It was Body Press, and it cost me too much money. So Body Press

SB: This was the first one where you used an architecture, actually, to

DG: Well, it's not architecture

SB: Or a cylindrical mirror.

DG: Well, that was simply because I was interested in the Baroque. It's anamorphic distortion. In the Baroque,

SB: Do you want to explain how you, how the piece was constructed?

DG: Um

SB: And where did you perform it, actually?

DG: I didn't perform it at all.

SB: You had two performances?

DG: I rented, my friend [Italo Scanga](#), the great artist, who taught at Tyler in Philadelphia, had a kind of factory building north of Philadelphia. And I built a structure which was a mirrored cylinder. And I had two performers. I have to admit this is soft core porn. I had two performers, a male and female, naked, and they both had a camera rotating around their body. See, with [Bruce] [Nauman](#), you're looking at the body from the outside, but here you're on the inside, and you rotate around to get the body and whatever feeling you have, the body, the spectator

could actually feel the skin. And of course, sometimes the body makes the camera go up, and the camera's always filming

SB: It's spiraling around the body somehow.

DG: Well no, no, well, it's a helix, it's not a spiral. And it's rotated.

SB: When do they hand, when do they exchange the camera?

DG: Many times, every time they go around the body once, they exchange the camera. But it's a little more complicated. It's filming the body as seen through the anamorphic distortions of the cylinder. And of course, I'm interested in the body as 360-degree space. In other words, and also, it's a time situation, and also, the gaze is very important, because at one point, you're just at the body level, but the camera could be tilted upward because the body [is] tilted upward, and you can see the eyes reflected. And eventually it goes up to the eyes, so it's identified with the eyes itself. It's all about, it's much more interesting than film theory, a screen magazine, but I was very involved with that. And of course the best piece dealing with film theory and the gaze, you see, in film, you identify with the camera, but, sorry, with the performer, as if you're inside their point of view.

SB: And in an earlier version without the mirror, you did this piece with Simone Forti, right?

DG: No, no. I didn't do it.

SB: *Helix/Spiral*. [ MoMA #14.2011.4a-b]

DG: No, I didn't do it with Simone.

SB: Someone did it with Simone Forti.

DG: No, no; the original was actually done in Colorado, because it was a landscape piece. All of my work, when I did it outside, it was the body at 360 degrees but it was also the sky, also 360 degrees. And Simone did another version which I actually don't like, which was actually a rehearsal, in black and white, and it doesn't really have the landscape aspect. The reason it's included is because Chrissie Iles, who was the one who put together this anthology, really, and Marian just wanted more work to sell, and Chrissie, I should say. And Simone is a lovely person. It was just a rehearsal. But she did it because I got her to do a book at

Nova Scotia College of Art, and she just loves working with other people in a kind of collaborative way. And we put it in because it made for another sale, a little bit more money for Marian. But basically, it's not the piece. The piece was actually the first version I did in the landscape with Super-8 cameras. On the other hand, Simone is so lovely, and it was a very generous act of hers to actually do it. Also, it was a very heavy camera, and I couldn't handle it. We used a heavier 16-millimeter camera. And she is so much better at handling cameras than I am. In fact, in the *Body Press*, I didn't even put myself in.

SB: Wasn't there also the request for women camera

DG: No.

SB: Camera women?

DG: No. It had nothing to do with that at all.

SB: No?

DG: No, and my first, the first *Body*, in *Body Press*, I used a woman. No, there was no request for that.

SB: So what is fascinating in these works that art is really generated as a process, in a sort of interactive

DG: Well, the process

SB: Situation.

DG: The process idea was because I was the first person who introduced New York City to [Bruce Nauman](#). And also, and I was introduced to [Bruce Nauman](#) by a show that Lucy Lippard did, *Eccentric Abstraction*, with [Eva Hesse](#), [Bruce Nauman](#), and [Gary Kuehn](#), who is a very underrated great artist. And the whole idea was, process takes place in time, and it's informing, it's an informing situation. And I took it into topology and the spectator, more than [Bruce Nauman](#) did. And you know who else did that, in a miraculous way,

SB: Who else?

DG: Lygia Clark.

SB: Mm-hm. Were you familiar with [Lygia Clark](#)?

DG: No. But it was the 60s. And the 60s, we were all involved in topology. All of the great work was about topology.

SB: In the 60s, you didn't show in London yet.

DG: I didn't show anywhere because my work was never known by anybody.

SB: When was your first show in London? '71, or earlier, with Nicholas Locksdale?

DG: It was Lisson Gallery and I showed this great piece, *Past Future Split Attention* [MoMA # 744.2011],

SB: Exactly.

DG: I showed *Two Correlated Rotations*. But the work is uncollected. Only one piece, I've only sold one piece to a museum, *Two Correlated Rotations*, and only one sculpture, if you can call it a sculpture, to [Anish Kapoor](#). And also, I was very involved with my friend there, John Hilliard, who was doing similar work. My work was known but very unsuccessful, in England.

SB: Let's talk a little bit about how your work comes out of teaching situations, especially when you were teaching at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax.

DG: Well, actually, the reason I got there, went there, is because [David Askevold](#) had a course called, which was based, it was called Projects. It was based on students taking a conceptual artist's projects and realizing them. I had no money. I never had any money in my life, and I wanted to make film and video, so I invited myself up there.

SB: You invited yourself up there.

DG: They had equipment, and the early video pieces I did were all based on *Radical Software* [magazine]. They were learning processes. They're documented in video television architecture. And that's where that roll piece is. But also, I did some amazing pieces for cable television, and also introduced a piece of mine, a conceptual piece, Likes, which was a computer dating service based on astrology. And I was on local TV. And also, my best piece that I did, though

SB: Maybe you want to explain that a little bit?

DG: Well, it's, ah, the most important piece

SB: It's not a very known piece? That's why I thought it would be interesting.

DG: It's not really known. But the most important piece I did that wasn't realized was Production Reception. The idea was, on local cable television, which had public access, to show the local news program, in other words, local news,

SB: You showed the broadcast room.

DG: Well, no, it's not that simple. I showed on one cable station, on public access, I showed how it was produced through the control room, and in another one, how it's received in a typical house, in the living room. And then a local news program is like newscasters just getting home during cocktail hour; it's called the happy hour; being happy. The piece was not realized and [Dara Birnbaum](#), when I got up there to teach, we did another version that's not really a good version, because it wasn't live. And Dara has taken too much credit for it, because it was really a bad piece.

SB: And why was your first version not realized? They just didn't want to do it?

DG: Well, a lot of my pieces, I would say, only one out of twenty things that I propose get done. It was actually taken up in a very stupid piece that Sam Douglas did about the same phenomena. But I would say, my work is always, it's only a small chance that things would get done, and I was very happy that I got published in this great book, *Video Tales in Architecture*. Also, I think, my critique of it, it was structuralist, and I got very out of structuralism after that.

SB: It's interesting you brought us up this book now which unfortunately, we don't have here, because this publish a number of these video installations which were actually done in a more kind of a lab situation.

DG: No, there was no lab situation.

SB: I mean, that you had the equipment but they were not set up as installations, as some of them were later shown in galleries? Is this right?

DG: No, they were first done, there were two that were not done in a gallery, well actually a strange gallery. The one that was briefly produced in Documenta,

SB: *The Window*.

DB: *Window*, that was actually done in a shopping arcade in Brussels, because the galleries, for some point, the galleries were acting as show windows.

SB: So this was done later in Brussels?

DG: No, it was done, it was first done in Brussels. No, the version they did in Documenta was a stupid version, it didn't really work.

SB: You're talking about Documenta.

DG: Yes, the whole show was a nightmare to be in.

SB: Let's talk about Nova Scotia.

DG: Well no, this was done in Brussels. My best, I had one in a great gallery, I showed with MTL gallery, and I did some great pieces with MTL. And that was done in Brussels with MTL gallery.

SB: I was just trying to envision how you did these video pieces, these video installations in Nova Scotia. You had the facilities there and you were experimenting, or how?

DG: It was just done as a, no, it was just done – they were not pieces. It was done as a learning process.

SB: Exactly, that's what I wanted to hear. And were the students part of this? Because you see these images where there are people around and you were

DG: Well, let me explain one other important piece that I did that's not documented. It was called *Two Conscious Projections*. It was really about a change in feminism. I had a student behind a monitor who had a camera, a man. He was aiming the camera at a woman seated near the monitor. And I asked the woman and the man to speak simultaneously what they were seeing. And the man was like an old Freudian analyst, like Sigmund Freud, who thought, the idea was, the man knows everything. He is the male analyst. And the woman is just a subject. So all my work is about subject object. But what happened was, the people in the audience - - and I used volunteers from the audience, they were just students – eventually they identify with the woman, because obviously, she was able to talk about herself

much better because she integrated her subjectivity into what she was saying.  
Then the man; it was also a cliché.

SB: Were they naked, the two?

DG: No, of course not!

SB: They were not naked?

DG: No, there was another later piece where they were naked. It has nothing to do with nakedness at all.

SB: Yeah, I just was wondering if they were naked there.

DG: No, I didn't believe in that. Later there was a joke piece where they were naked, and of course, that's reproduced, but that was not important. The important thing was, it was a psychological cliché that people project onto each other all the time, but here you can hear people speaking, and they speak simultaneously, at the same time. It's a little like, the other great piece I did was Past Future Split Attention [MoMA #61.2009], which is about, which is based on Gregory Bateson's great double bind theory of schizophrenia, and also on the wonderful novel by Brian Aldiss, *Cryptozoic*, about time going backwards. It is two students who know each other. One describes – it was videotaped. One describes the future of the person who is then describing the past. It's like a feedback loop.

SB: I thought we could do that, actually. [laughing]

DG: No, I never reproduce them.

SB: Yes, I know...

DG: But the great piece I did that's in the book, probably the best piece I ever did in video, was called Yesterday Today.

SB: Yes, that's a fantastic piece.

DG: It was actually done first with John Gibson Gallery. Very funny, because, um

SB: Maybe we should describe the piece a little bit.

DG: Well, in the gallery I had a monitor that was showing a view from John Gibson's office. And I tape recorded everything in the office. And you can hear, with the live feed, what people were saying one day before. So it's a simple way to make video with almost no money. It's also like Watergate, because I once, when John Gibson went out to lunch and I went out to lunch, I came back and he was erasing everything. [laughter] So, in a way, it's like Watergate. But you know what happens, actually, it's similar to a work Michael Asher was doing, the Claire Copley piece. When people go to the office, they talk about gossip, prices, and all kinds of things that are private.

SB: You definitely don't want to have [it] published in front of the gallery.

DG: [laughing] No, the piece was actually sold to van Abbemuseum, because Lawrence Weiner said he had no money, so he said, "I'll give you a drawing; you give me this piece, and I'll sell it and I'll take the money."

SB: So it was acquired through [Lawrence Weiner](#) for the van Abbemuseum.

DG: No, no. It was acquired because, no. It was because Lawrence claimed he had no money. So I gave him a piece, and he sold it. I never got a penny for it. It wasn't his generosity, it was his lack of generosity, because he said he was very poor, and lately, he became very rich. But the fact, the thing about Lawrence that I love is, he introduced me to my favorite artists, [John Chamberlain](#), and a fellow Aries. I just read a long article about [John Chamberlain](#), of conceptual artists, and Lawrence was a generator of ideas. Unfortunately, I never talk to him because Lawrence is about Lawrence now, and not about his love -- you see, all my work, like Lawrence's work, comes out of love of other artists' work. I hate young artists. The only artists I promote are over 40. I get so stimulated. I don't teach very much because I'm not, there's no interest, but I used to teach at the Rex Academy, and sometimes when you see artists before they become gallery artists, the work is so extremely stimulating.

SB: You're quite a good promoter of artists, women artists, especially, but also a lot of young artists, I hear, too.

DG: No, I don't promote young artists. I refuse to promote young artists. The last artist I promoted was Tessa Dean, before she was doing these huge, very bad projections. Also, James Coleman was not young. All of these artists were around

40 when I supported them. So, I really dislike young artists who have gone through art school.

SB: I'm looking at this catalogue and I can't just, because it says "Dan Graham Theater" and it publishes starting with *Lax Relax* in '69, and *The Performances*, and I think it's quite stunning you publish a book called *Theater*. And it shows you, obviously performing, performance audience mirrors, standing in front of a huge mirror, like a really huge stage mirror. And I thought, let's talk a little bit about these performances where you use a mirror but it's, again, as you say, about the subject and the object and the audience.

DG: Well, I used the mirror because, again, as a [Bruce Nauman](#) thing. I wanted the spectators to be implicated. So the work is really about spectators, and less me as a performer. In fact, I was a very shy performer. I did performance because, at the time, [Joseph Beuys](#) and [Nauman](#) were doing performances. I was not the first. Beuys was a shaman, and you were supposed to look at him as some kind of mystical figure. So I was kind of critiquing [Bruce Nauman](#), because he also was a politician. He said, "Here, I have a party. You do this." So in my piece, I'm like the cliché politician who is describing the audience to make them relate to him. But in fact, it's much more complicated. It's about time, my work. The audience, it's also about duration. Also, I'm using some American conventions. When I describe the audience or myself, it's like a description in a radio program or in a television program of baseball or sports. And of course there's a relationship

SB: Why a description of baseball? Maybe I'm not familiar with radio

DG: Play by play. In other words, when you're describing sports, you're saying, this is happening now, this is happening, this is happening.

SB: Ok, I get it.

DG: And also, there's a contrast between continuous present time and also instantaneous present time, which is renaissance perspective. And of course the video piece that the Centre Pompidou has

SB: *Present Continuous Past*

DG: That's the relationship between the instantaneous present time, the time in the brain, and also people moving in time. So I'm always making a contrast between Baroque time and Renaissance time.

SB: Especially with [Audience- Performer/ Audience /Mirror \[MoMA # 60.2009\]](#), there's kind of a piece you did prior to this performer audience sequence, and

DG: No

SB: In Vienna, you did a session, *Performance Audience*

DG: No, I did *Performance/Audience/Mirror*.

SB: Yes.

DG: Which is the best version. Because the earlier ones were just trial runs.

SB: Should we talk a little bit? This has three stages, like three chapters, of a theater, if you want, I mean because you

DG: No, it doesn't; it has four, not three.

SB: It has four; that's true, actually, thank you.

DG: I begin with, there's a mirror behind me. The audience is seated. I begin by describing myself, which is kind of self consciousness. And remember, Bertolt Brecht, who took the idea, by the way, from Todorov, in other words, the alienation effect of making things strange by being self conscious in acting, that comes from Brecht, but Brecht took it from Russian, you know, Todorov? Russian formalism? Brilliant idea, but I got very away from Brecht.

SB: Is this something you learned from the show at The Museum of Modern Art?

DG: No, I didn't. I learned it from Brecht, because we were very into Brecht in America, way before that show.

SB: You were describing your own gestures in the...

DG: No, no, but first of all, it was not Russian Constructivism. Todorov was not Russian Constructivist. It was literary criticism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. You know Todorov?

SB: Yes, very little. I'll learn it from you now.

DG: Well, it was called Russian formalist criticism. So I begin with a kind of Brechtian idea, but also, the audience can see me. It's different from what I describe. They also see themselves looking. And the next part is, I describe the

SB: Because you are standing in front of a mirror.

DG: No, I describe them, so there's a time situation. They can see themselves in instantaneous present time, or they can hear me talking about them in kind of continuous time. Then I turn around and I describe myself again, but it's different from the audience. I can move and get different angles. The audience, being an audience, is fixed. And then I describe them, themselves, but I can move around. So it's all about playing with Renaissance perspective in relationship to a new continuous present topological time. There's a contrast between the two. And it's all about time.

SB: And I remember when...

DG: And it's actually a critique of Beuys. I'm really critiquing, Beuys had this whole idea of the shaman guru. And [Nauman](#) has the idea of the isolated performer.

SB: Self.

DG: Self. So my idea is about the spectatorship. And it's really, it's the clichés of actually the politician describing the audience.

SB: But I remember when we performed it and I was sitting in the audience.

DG: You were nervous. [laughing] Maybe.

SB: Well, you can kind of exposed- because I was the organizer, but also the other thing is, being, you feel kind of exposed as an audience, seeing yourself in the mirror and knowing the others see you in the mirror, and you see us in the mirror, of course. You turn into an object.

DG: Well, it's Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect, transposed to the audience. But the fact is

SB: Also, the audience is not expecting to perform, originally, that's a big difference I would say.

DG: Yes, but if you're in the back, you're less exposed. I did also a beautiful piece with Glenn Branca, very similar.

SB: Yes, in the

DG: In the Bern Kunsthalle.

SB: Yes, I have the catalogue here, which has also

DG: Well no, we didn't do it, that catalogue came out before the piece was done.

SB: Before the piece? Interesting.

DG: The piece was in

SB: But it has a record included [referring to catalogue in her hand]; unfortunately, it's not here.

DG: No, but that was done before the piece. It was actually

SB: The record is not the recorded piece of the performance?

DG: No. No. No. You can get it from *Electronics Intermix*.

SB: I know the piece.

DG: It was actually improvised. The piece was *Time Delay and Two-Way Mirror*. The audience is on one side, on the left, and the musicians on the other side. There were three musicians. There was a TV monitor behind two-way mirror glass, and that was showing everything time delayed, six seconds. And of course, because you could, and the monitor was behind the two-way mirror glass, but you could still see it, and it was reflected on the front of the audience. And the performers would look to the monitor, because the work was about time delay. And the audience, normally, in a performance, identify, the audience, they look at the performers. They looked at the performers but they see themselves looking. It was a very simple piece, and actually, Glenn, I did so many works with Glenn.

SB: Spectacular, I imagine, in the center room, the famous central room.

DG: It was a very tiny little room.

SB: Yes, but it's a central room, with these big heaters in the corners, right? It's a very significant room. Is it the room where it took place?

DG: Yes. It turns out that the Bern Kunsthalle has had some of the best shows in history. Although nobody came there because it's a terrible, it's a city of old people. And I remember Adelina von Furstenberg refused to go there, because she had her own scene.

SB: And this performance took place at the opening, I guess, or?

DG: Yes.

SB: So what remained after it? The show was on the

DG: My video, my beautiful videotape.

SB: The videotapes.

DG: By the way, the person who videotaped it was probably the greatest video artist of the 70s.

SB: Who was it:

DG: Darcy Lange.

SB: Darcy Lange.

DG: Do you know Darcy's work?

SB: Yes, it's a great work, great artist. I didn't know he taped that.

DG: Oh yes, he was a close friend. You know, his work, he's having a big show in Spain now, in a museum. And of course EAI has all his work, thanks to me and Mercedes. He was a great friend, Darcy, and normally I don't videotape pieces. In fact, I didn't even want to videotape it, but Darcy insisted on being there and doing it.

SB: And he's definitely someone who uses video as a means for social interaction, and the research he's doing, right?

DG: Well, his work, in a different way, was about learning process, and feedback. But it all goes back to all the great work of Paul Ryan and people in *Radical Software*

[magazine]. I think this is pre-Dara Birnbaum's work in Spectacle. I got out of video immediately because all my work, I needed analog machines, because I can't afford digital technology, and when digital came in, I got out of it. In fact, all my work uses minimal means because, to be honest about my life, I seem to be a very successful artist, but in fact, I lived in a \$450-dollar apartment until 12 years ago. I've never had any money. And there's been very little success. Mainly, my work gets done because I'm in big shows like Documenta; it gets produced there. But lately I haven't been in any big shows, and I probably will never be in any more. So I have to do things again with small situations. And I'm supported, actually, by European socialism, particularly Norway, which is doing great pieces because they have a lot of money for education. And also some of the mayors of socialist cities in France. And of course, the great country of Belgium, where my work was loved for many years and continues to be loved.

SB: With collectors like Herman Daled So, if we're talking about the artist Dan Graham making no money, maybe before we go

DG: No, I made enough money. I didn't have money for equipment.

SB: Let's talk about Dan Graham shares. You offered, you did a piece on you offering shares that people could invest in your maybe we want to

DG: It's called

SB: That's another early publication.

DG: It was called *Income Outflow* piece.

SB: We have it here.

DG: No, it was basically an attack on [Robert Morris](#).

SB: Yes. So that's another example how you respond to a piece by other artists.

DG: Well, Robert Morris took everything from [Duchamp](#), you know, the *Mirrored Cubes*? That's from Duchamp. So what he did was, with the Whitney Museum, there also was a time when the artist got, of the artist contract, so he had a show at the Whitney. He decided to invest the Whitney's money to make money for himself in the stock market. And I relate that piece very much to Walt Whitman, the

American idea that I am everybody, you are everybody. And I did a piece which was only partly successful where I offered stock, where people could invest in me.

SB: You advertised that, right?

DG: Well, you have to do this to become a corporation. It wasn't really an advertisement.

SB: You announced your founding, your establishment

DG: That's part of the legal thing.

SB: It was called Dan Graham Incorporated.

DG: Well, it was basically, it was the last conceptual work I did. It was basically because in the *Artist Workers Alliance*, the idea was you have to have a contract. And I think what happened was, cynicism. That whole period was very cynical. In other words, it was, we're not doing, it was, the artists wanting to make money. And I think Morris captured that because he was basically a cynical artist using other people's ideas, although his best ideas were when he was married to Simone Forti. He did great works which were very similar to Simone's.

SB: So talking about your money piece, who bought shares? Did you sell shares, at all?

DG: Lawrence and one other person; people. But they weren't

SB: So, friends.

DG: But they didn't even buy shares. It didn't go that far. In other words, it's another one of these fictions that it was more than it actually was. And *For Publication* – this was actually very interesting – [Daniel Buren](#) introduced me to a person doing editions in Italy. So I bought all my early magazines with pieces. I sent them early magazines all the way down to Italy. And because the person doing editions had realized this was not art, he threw everything away.

SB: Oh!

DG: So later, for the Otis Art Institute show, which was where John Knight taught, I did a publication. It says Marian Goodman, but it was really me. I just did it again with

Marian. And it's all the work I did for magazine pages. The work is not so well known.

SB: Let's see if I [can] find *For Publication* [Sabine gets up to look for book on a table off camera].

DG: Well Marian actually has a lot of them, but she doesn't show them.

SB: Yes, she republished this.

DG: No *she* didn't; *I* published it and put her name on it. Marian did not publish it. I paid for it.

SB: You paid for it.

DG: And I put her name on it. And also, she doesn't distribute it anywhere.

SB: I can't find it right now but we have it here.

DG: But you know the work backwards, forwards and backwards, anyway, so you don't need to see it.

SB: Yes, yes. Maybe we make a break here before we – see, I've got it. I've got it. I'm sorry. I've got it. So here's *For Publication*.

DG: It was designed by my friend Mike Metz, who designed all of my great catalogues.

SB: Yes, that's a very important book.

DG: Well it's important because nobody knows the work. And the design is so beautiful. It's not my design but Mike Metz, who is a great friend of mine.

SB: And there is the *Arts Magazine* version of *Homes for America* published also, which I think is also interesting that you published it later in the way that

DG: Well, this is documentation.

SB: Yes; yes.

DG: There was no such thing – look; let's face it. What Herman Daled has is kind of like -- the best work that's not in his collection, which I had given to Servalves museum, is *Detumescence*.

SB: Mm-hm.

DG: I was actually embarrassed about it when I did it, just like an early piece called Piece. Some of the early work which was about sexuality, I was kind of embarrassed. I also didn't think it was important. But there's a lot of pieces of, earlier pieces. For instance, I did this piece called *Eleven Sugar Cubes*, which was in *Art in America*. I took out – it's like an early cartoon. I took sugar cubes and put detergent on them and put them in the water, where they foamed. Apparently, apparently, Rodney Graham- I thought it was a bad piece; it was kind of silly. [Rodney Graham](#) now is doing pieces where foam is coming out of a sink. Rodney likes the piece, but I was really embarrassed about it.

SB: Okay; let's do a break, I think. We have a lunch break and then we go to the galleries looking at works.

[Crew Discussion]

**Location: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Painting and Sculpture Galleries Walking**

DG: He did some of the best shows. And he's the best writer, actually.

SB: Yeah.

[Crew Discussion]

[Sabine and Dan are walking through 4<sup>th</sup> floor galleries 24 and 25 ]

SB: Should we talk about Herman a little bit while where here, or we just pass through

DG: It was what?

SB: Herman.

DG: I think we talked already about Herman.

SB: OK. Yeah, that's fine. OK, then, let's go.

DG: It's just. I relate my work very much to [Marcel's \[Broodthaers\]](#).

SB: Yeah.

DG: When I first saw his work at MTL Gallery, the best gallery I showed with, I didn't understand the work. I realize we both deal in stereotypes and print in clichés. The word for clichés comes from printing.

SB: That's right, yeah. That's right, yeah. And if you think about his fictive museums and your works you did for magazines.

DG: Well, I never, no, I never understood his work when he was alive, but he loved my work.

SB: Yeah.

DG: He discovered *Side Effects of Common Drugs* [MoMA #696.2011], and if you talk to Herman, but basically, he was with the best gallery I ever showed with, MTL. MTL showed both [André] [Cadere](#) and [Daniel] [Buren](#) because it was a dialectic. Cadere absolutely hated Buren, so it was a real dialectic. It was the best gallery I've ever showed with, in Brussels.

SB: All right. Any work you feel strongly connected here in this room?

DG: I never understood his work.

SB: You never understood his work?

DG: No, he liked my work. It was

SB: Oh, so he comes from poetry?

DG: Well, Nicholas Logsdail said something very funny about it. We did a poetry slam actually at 3A Gallery, and Nicholas said the best artists gave up poetry.

SB: [Laughing] The best artists gave up poetry. Yeah.

DG: No, he couldn't earn a living. But this is very important, [On Kawara](#) [[Dec. 12, 1979, MoMA #61.1981](#)].

SB: Yeah, that's someone you're close to.

DG: No, but I was introduced -- [Kasper Konig](#) was my best friend. He introduced me to On Kawara, Stanley Brown and also [Robert] [Artschwager](#), [Claes] [Oldenburg](#).

SB: Kasper was at that time in Nova Scotia? Running the program?

DG: No, I got him to Nova Scotia. He was

SB: *You* got him to Nova Scotia.

DG: No, when he was in New York, he actually took a ship to New York. And he had no education, and we just met. We had the similar background, and he got me into all the shows I've been in, like Documenta. We just were close friends because of his irrelevant sense of humor. Nova Scotia was because he was doing books, one on Franz Erhard Walther, another on Sally Brown. And On and I hit it off, but unfortunately, even though On and I were very close friends, Kosuth used to stalk me and stalked me to On's place. There were a lot of obnoxious people in New York, people who wanted to be artists, who knew nothing about art. But, the thing about On is, like me, his interests were physics to mathematics. He also liked pachinko, playing pachinko. He wasn't so interested in being a career artist. In fact, I never wanted to be an artist, a professional artist. I'm still not a professional artist.

SB: Here we are at the Museum of Modern Art. [laughing]

DG: His early work was actually beatnik work.

SB: Yeah. Okay so, [walking] some of the people we were talking about.

DG: I introduced everybody, including [Sol LeWitt](#) to [Carl Andre](#), because I saw a work of his, Styrofoam stacks at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery. And I introduced [Sol LeWitt](#) to him, to his work. I know his work, Carl told me his work comes directly from [Agnes Martin](#), Ezra Pound and Gertrude Stein's poetry, and also Brancusi's bases, not the sculpture. I wrote an early article on him for *Arts Magazine*. But the Styrofoam piece maybe was his best work. But he influenced me because he was interested in topology, mathematics, and he was saying "A thing is a hole in a thing it is not," which is a kind of topology.

SB: Okay, so, something you feel here strongly associated to you want to talk about? The [Robert] [Smithson](#) maybe? [Standing in front of [Mirror Stratum, MoMA #73.1979](#)]

DG: Well [Smithson](#) comes out from, [Smithson](#)'s work -- he wanted to be in my gallery very badly. His work comes directly from [Paul Thek](#), pyramids. Instead of mere pyramids, it's directly from Paul Thek. He was interested in mannerism because

had a gay background, and her introduced me to mannerism. His favorite artist was [Jacopo da] Pontormo.

SB: Pontormo?

DG: Who I still like a lot.

SB: That's interesting, yeah.

DG: He thought that [Judd](#) was a mannerist, but he wasn't. So [Judd](#) wrote an article saying [Smithson](#) is not my spokesman. People really disliked [Smithson](#) enormously. What I liked about him was he was self taught. He liked science fiction, but we liked different people. He liked kind of pulp, whereas I liked more intellectual things like Philip K. Dick and especially Brian Aldous. He loved Borges, in fact his writing was an imitation of Borges. What I liked was he was self-taught. He dropped out of school, went to correspondence school, and did his art on his own. So, this kind of idea of not going to art school and doing it on your own was pretty important to me. And also, [Flavin](#) was one day from being a priest. He also didn't have an art background. But, that was the sixties.

SB: Very different than today, actually; yes. This is a piece you saw exhibited at that time?

DG: Well, we, I put [Smithson](#) in a show I called Plastics for John Daniels Gallery. His work, the vortexes they come from only one source -- the Daily News Building lobby.

SB: Ah really?

DG: Because [Smithson](#) was following fashion. The thirties were in fashion, and that's the best Deco; it's in the lobby. It's pretty amazing. It's on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.

SB: That's interesting. I never thought about that.

DG: Have you seen that building?

SB: Yeah.

DG: It's beautiful, isn't it?

SB: Yes, it's beautiful, yah. No, it's great, yah. So, the use of mirrors and geometrical forms.

DG: The interesting thing about [Smithson](#) was, he was deliberately sloppy. He hated galleries, but now that it's been rebuilt, it's really different. On the other hand this is a really good piece.

SB: That's a great piece, yeah. So, [Douglas Huebler](#) you spoke about?

DG: Well, Douglas was a very bad painter when I met him. But what I like about Douglas is he invented himself in a very honest way. I used to visit him in Truro, and there's something very honest him. He honestly, he didn't go to art, he was a teacher in a very bad art school, but he actually, in a way, found his own way, in a very nice way. This guy I don't want to talk about.

SB: It's good if we don't talk about him.

DG: And [Hanne Darboven](#).

SB: One of the only women represented in this group of conceptual artists.

DG: Well, Hanne Darboven was absolutely crazy.

SB: Did you meet her when she came to New York?

DG: Yes, she was schizophrenic. She was in love with me. I saw [Sol LeWitt](#) seduce her. She comes out of music, musical notation. I never understood the work, but for some reason she had a great love for me. But she was more than just slightly crazy, and not crazy in an interesting way like Ezra [laughing]. Maybe I don't understand the work.

SB: Yeah. OK, I mean here we are. Where you start, [Flavin](#), in this room?

DG: He called himself "Flave."

SB: He called himself "Flave"? Yeah?

DG: Flave. His father was a bus driver, he hated his mother. So, he was very anti-woman, in a horrible way. He understood my work immediately because we loved -- he was fat, and we loved Arthur Godfrey. Arthur Godfrey, who was a big TV idol, he had a song called "Slap Her Down Again, Paw, Slap Her Down Again." He had

a sadistic sense of humor. But his work derived very much from Hudson River School, which is, and my work, my landscape pieces, are totally about light. That's why the work works so well in Norway.

SB: Mm-hm; mm-hm.

DG: He and [Judd](#) were best friends up until a point. [Judd](#), I met in New York. He was a very fragile person. His early writings were about women, [Lee Bontecou](#), and [Yayoi] [Kusama](#). And Kusama was very interesting. She had two boyfriends at the same time. They were both very repressed people, [Judd](#), and also Joseph [Nellus?], who lived with his mother. And I think [Judd's](#) early work identifies with the female body; the holes? And I think he became macho at it because of covering up. He was the best writer in the world, but the *Specific Object* was a bad article that was an attack on [Jo Baer](#). You see, his best friend was John Wesley, Jo's husband. And, they had a brother-sister rivalry that was very strong. I used to, in a way, even though I loved [Judd](#), I supported Jo, because Jo was a real mentor to me. I put her in [Name?] Magazine.

SB: Ye, you supported her a lot; I remember.

DG: She had a deep influence on my work, on my thinking. Is this Irwin, or is that Doug Wheeler?

SB: This is an Irwin, I guess. Yeah.

DG: It might be an early Irwin. I think it's Irwin.

SB: [walking] It's a [Craig Kauffman](#), actually.

DG: Oh, Dwayne Valentine; no, Craig Kauffman.

SB: Craig Kauffman.

DG: Craig Kauffman was one of the greatest artists ever.

SB: Mm-hm; now nearly forgotten.

DG: No he's not forgotten.

SB: He's not forgotten?

DG: No; it's all been revived by David Zwerner.

SB: That's true.

DG: Dwayne Valentine -- Craig Kauffman and [Larry Bell](#) were the two best artists. And they were also in a show in the Sao Paolo Biennale that [Flavin](#) and [Judd](#) were in. I was always in love with LA art. My favorite LA artist and close friend was Michael Asher. And there was a relationship to plastics there, which was very similar to [Judd's](#) interest in new materials. But also, light was very important. The best artist was Doug Wheeler who did light environments. [James] [Turrell](#) is an artist I dislike enormously because his work is stolen directly from Geroni Stonnson. Also, it's all fake mysticism. Whereas these people were not mystic, they were really dealing with contemporary materials in a very beautiful way.

SB: Yeah. Do you remember seeing these works installed at the time in the 60s?

DG: Yes, of course.

SB: Yes, because it makes a great difference, I think, if you

DG: No I gravitated. I was teaching at UCSD. [John Baldessari](#) brought...

SB: How often did you go there, to LA, at that time?

DG: Well, I was there for half a semester, and John Baldassari who was teaching there at UCSD, brought in Michael Asher, and Michael and I bonded because we both came out of [Flavin](#). And we just bonded and became close friends for a long time. I saw the other, and I also always loved Larry Bell who is one of the most gentle and kind people and a great artist.

SB: And very fragile; yeah.

DG: And very, very -- not only a great artist, but a great guy.

SB: Yeah, I never met him.

DG: I never met [John McCracken](#), but. For me, the reason I did the big show in Los Angeles which went to the Whitney was because I learned so much from LA artists, an enormous amount. And they seemed to like me a lot. All my best artist friends -- see, in New York if you become famous. Like I wrote the first article

about [Jenny Holzer](#), but then she moved to Upstate New York. New York artists become famous, isolated,

SB: And they disappear.

DG: And disappear in the countryside. LA, all the artists collaborate, because they have their own space. And, they often come from the Midwest like [Ed Ruscha](#), or from Utah, like [Paul McCarthy](#), and it's a new lifestyle for them, although Paul McCarthy's work directly comes from San Francisco. You will say that. Paul Cotton was his biggest influence, he said. And also this wonderful woman, Barbara Smith.

SB: Mm-hm, mm-hm, I remember. Do you want to continue through the galleries, or?

DG: Well, I want to talk about, just [Lichtenstein](#).

[Crew Discussion]

SB: Lichtenstein, you mention him so often today.

DG: Well, and also [Oldenburg](#). I want to talk about Oldenburg.

[Crew Discussion]

DG: After my gallery closed down, to earn a living I did lighting for galleries, and I knocked down walls for people's studios. For five dollars an hour I knocked down walls for Lichtenstein's studio. I got to meet him for five minutes and he was such a modest, workaholic person. Also, he had a kind of Jewish, ironic humor. And in my articles, I always compared the Ramones to Lichtenstein. The idea of Jewish humor was very important to me. Lichtenstein also, when I met [Gerhard Richter](#), he said he was so in awe of Lichtenstein, he was afraid to introduce himself to him. So all of [Sigmar] [Polke](#) and Richter come directly out of Lichtenstein, not Warhol.

SB: Yeah.

DG: Also, his work, as you can see, is very emotional, like this crying woman. And Oldenburg I met through Kasper Konig.

SB: Yeah, he introduced [INAUDIBLE]

DG: A great thing about-- he had a deep influence on me, because when I did Star of David and Yin Yang Pavilion, I got very involved in Oldenburg's sense of parody in sexuality. And actually

[Museum Staff enters]

SB: Sorry, Dan...

DG: [Judd](#) wrote a great article about Oldenburg. He said the work is about sexuality in advertising and media. And I think [Jeff Koons](#) comes directly from Oldenburg. There's a real kind of sexuality of the body. And I hate to say this, I think [Franz West](#) took a lot from his early ceramics.

SB: Probably, yeah.

DG: A lot. A lot.

SB: Yah; yah.

DG: He later became a very close friend. But, Kasper was very close to him. Of course, he was European, he was Swedish.

SB: He has a little bit different itinerary, I would say, but, yah. (So I think that these people work here. Do you want to say something about Jo's work? Because you really didn't.

DG: Well [Jo Baer's](#) work. My favorite artists were actually painters, [Mangold](#) and Jo Baer. Actually, I collect painters, because it's easier to put them on the wall. Jo's work, she wrote an article about rock bands for my Aspen magazine issue. And the work is really about -- Mach said, when you put two colors together, the contrast enhances the color, so it's really about luministic color, very similar to [Flavin](#) in a different way.

SB: Yes, and I think that's a nice display here with [Flavin](#) [[untitled \(to the "innovator" of Wheeling Peachblow\), MoMA # 3.1969](#)] and Jo Baer [[Primary Light Group: Red, Green, Blue, MoMA #495.1969.a-c](#)]. Okay.

DG: Oh, let's just go, let's finish it off.

SB: We don't need to do a whole thing, I think we should sit down now, and talk about your work now, 'cause I think this was enough.

[walking in gallery]

DG: The one thing I wanted to say about Sol, I'll say – do you want to sit down? I gave him his first one-man show; I gave Sol his first one man show. And his work is always about humor. He said the grids, I mean the wood frames were jungle gyms for his cats, because he was anti-humanistic. He worked for I.M. Pei and he got me involved in the city plan. And also, many people don't realize, his favorite artists were [Giorgio] [de Chirico](#) and [Alberto] [Giacometti](#), and also, he liked Antonioni films. And, [Carl Andre's](#) favorite artist– I think I said that -- was [Agnes Martin](#). So people's influences were very different than you might think. There was no such thing as Minimal Art.

SB: I just saw, I thought maybe you want to quickly talk about [Eva Hesse](#)? Because I know this was an artist – should we just go around the corner? -- which was important to you, before we talk about Alteration. Because, (maybe we should wait,) that's a piece MoMA acquired at the time of it was shown, which I think is quite special.

DG: I worked for Eva. Minimal artists didn't understand her work, because she was a Surrealist. She was discovered by Lucy Lippard in a show called *Eccentric Abstraction*, because Lucy was a student of [Max Ernst](#), who by the way, a great Aries artist, who seduced all his female students. But Eva's work really comes from a Surrealist background. And, she was deeply depressed every time I knew her. Sol didn't understand her work, so she made a combination of Minimal art and her own surrealism. And actually, the show Eva did, I'm sorry that Lucy Lippard did, was called *Eccentric Abstraction*; it was the first introduction of [Nauman](#). Eva always was researching everything. She knew Oldenburg, and she loved Oldenburg. Oldenburg and [Nauman](#) were important. We minimal people were very rigid, we didn't know that.

SB: Uh huh, great. So.

DG: She was quite a brilliant woman, Eva.

SB: And I remember we had a drawing where, on the backside you had a little love poem to Eva Hesse. Right? In one of your

DG: Well, I also have her in my collection, her drawings.

SB: Her drawings. So you were trading with her at that point?

DG: No, she, I guess she, she really wanted to seduce me very badly, to screw up Sol, in a certain way. It was a strange dynamic, where she really had a fucked up relationship with men.

SB: OK. Good.

DG: Quite beautiful, but so troubled and depressive, I didn't want to be involved with her.

SB: Yeah. Did you see her exhibition now at the Brooklyn Art Museum?

DG: Well, I know all her work

SB: Yeah, but these are early paintings; actually, very beautiful.

DG: I'm kind of aware of them.

SB: Yeah. No, you should go and see it. It's great.

[Crew Discussion]

**Location: Gallery 24; Sabine and Dan seated in front of [Alteration to a Suburban Home](#) [MoMA # 628.2011.a-e].**

[Crew Discussion]

SB: Okay, then, so, we're on the next chapter.

DG: The next chapter is work in my later years. Einstein's last book was called *Out of My Later Years*.

SB: Out of My Later Years. That's where we are. The later years and the late 70s, so to say.

DG: Well,

SB: Second half of the 70s.

DG: Well, I did a very great piece and a great exhibition, Ambiente, with Germano Celant.

SB: In Venice, a group show.

DG: Well, it was about, Ambiente means the environment, so it's about art that used the environmental space; [Vasily] [Kandinsky](#) using the walls. Also [Jannis] [Kounellis](#), who had a, was arte povera. He had a horse with hay as a tableau vivant. Then he went into, actually, Germano was following Panza's collection when Panza was just beginning to collect work; people like Doug Wheeler, who I mentioned. Michael Asher was in the show. And so the idea was light. LA artists dealt with light in storefronts. And it was the best show I was in because it was didactic. What I like about these big shows, like the Venice Biennale or Documenta, is they're didactic and you can play with the didacticism. [0:02:20]

SB: Didactic in terms of the title of the exhibition or the topic?

DG: Yes.

SB: Yeah.

DG: Yes, and it's a Germanic idea, usually, that you should learn something. But I think these big shows like Documenta or Venice Biennale are basically about entertainment and education for the whole family. They're summer shows. Well, I was in Berlin on a grant, and I realized that instead of showing my time-delay videos – I had a whole period of time-delay videos – it wouldn't work because the Italians can't really deal with that technology.

SB: So you were afraid it won't work, so you have to do something?

DG: No, no. I have to be practical, as an artist. So I sent it – I know they go to design, so I sent a diagram which is two rectangles, a rectangle divided in half into two squares. On one side was the mirror, and the dividing room was Acoustipane, the kind of glass where you can see people but you can't hear them. And there were two entrances. And it had a lot to do with the flow of the audience. Also I realized that Venice Biennale had pavilions by every country. For example, the English pavilion was neo-Georgian, and you saw the main artists of that country. And

everything, it was a showcase for the top artists of every country. So I wanted to deal with showcase windows. In fact, one of my best pieces, video pieces, was a design for two showcase windows opposing. And I was very involved in the idea of using glass and two-way mirror glass, because when you look at a showcase window, you see, often, little pieces of mirror reflecting you and making you an un-whole person. But then you look at shoes, and you see a ghost image of yourself onto the shoes, and you're a complete person. But my interest is not the objects but of people themselves looking at each other. So the way this piece functions is, people look at each other.

SB: So the spectator, you put the spectator in the center of the work

DG: Yes.

SB: In this project, actually, yeah.

DG: And I had been doing that with my early video time delays. In this piece, the audience acts – it's also like minimal art, except it's not minimal art, because it's the gaze of the spectator. And you go into the room with the mirror, and you look at yourself close at the mirror. You look back, you see yourself being seen by other people. People in the other area, through the glass, can see you, and both are gazing. And there's a difference between the two. They're not symmetrical. People with the mirror can look at the other direction and they see a white wall on the other side, and they don't see themselves. And you can go back and forth. And it's all about flow of people, observing each other, going through the exhibition. So it was part of exhibition design. That part, in a way, comes from Russian constructivism. The work got very, very good reviews, but I realized there was a flaw. It was a white cube situation. So I designed, two years later I was asked to do a show at Oxford Museum of Modern Art, and I designed a series of models, because I was interested in architectural models because I saw a show of the New York Five in Leo Castelli, architectural models, so I said, "Why shouldn't artists do architectural models?" So I designed about eight- ten pieces.

SB: So going back to Ambiente where you did the pavilion, the pavilion was actually a pavilion within an architecture but not a free-standing pavilion as you did later.

DG: It wasn't a pavilion.

SB: Right. We speak still about a pavilion. It were two rooms. But looking from what you did later, we always

DG: [0:05:58] No, what I did later was totally different. I critiqued that because it was a white cube situation, and I thought that was very boring. So I thought, "What would happen if that white wall was a window? Then it would be architecture."

SB: Exactly; yeah.

DG: So I took that out. And my idea of architecture, I was staying in London that summer, and I found some architecture students to make models for two different kinds of pieces. One group was sculpture pavilions, and the other were kind of fantasies about suburbia. But also, architectural models are very important. When architects do them, they do them for fantasy situations and also as propaganda for getting pieces done. So my work worked in that direction.

SB: So sitting here in front

DG: No, I'm not

SB: That's too fast for you?

DG: No, this was not to be realized; this was an unrealized piece. The realized pieces were sculpture pavilions. I didn't know this but actually, Rietveld's sculpture pavilion in Sonsbeek, which I never saw, was a good example. It was an open pavilion with open glass, where sculptures were housed, but you could look at it when it was open, and you could look inside and outside. And I put people where the sculpture was, as an inside outside situation. It was a way of going way beyond Mies van der Rohe into exhibition design. And I designed two different pieces which got realized two years later. One was Two Adjacent Pavilions, which was realized in Documenta. And the first one realized was the piece for Argonne, the sculpture pavilion.

SB: That was the first pavilion, the Argonne.

DG: That was done first in the Argonne National Laboratory in '81, and then Two Adjacent Pavilions in Documenta. So these were the first pavilions.

SB: Which was then later bought by the Kröller-Müller Museum, where it is.

DG: Much later.

SB: Much later; yeah.

DG: The interesting thing about Two Adjacent – well, I should give people their due for those pieces. The Two Adjacent Pavilions, I was selected by a committee that Judith Kirshner

SB: Curator.

DG: Was in charge of. And that piece was very interesting. I was near the Farnsworth house that owes a lot to [Mies Van der Rohe](#). It's also, I saw [Sol LeWitt](#) doing things outdoors, and minimal art outdoors never worked, because it has a white cube. So I wanted to, as a challenge, try to put something like that outdoors. It's also, it has a lot to do with the sun, shadowing of the sun. It's an open pavilion with two of the sides being mirrors backed on mirrors. The other one's open and glass. And it's very much like the [Farnsworth house](#), which is nearby, and as you get closer, the shadowing keeps changing because of the sun. It's like [Sol LeWitt](#). The sun makes shadows. And also, it's very cubistic. As you walk in closer, it becomes cubistic. In some ways – I didn't know this, but this is like early [Richard Meier](#) and the New York Five, whose work I had seen, in a certain way. It was a little restricted area because it's a national nuclear laboratory, so it was restricted. I did it very, very fast. And it's a little bit inaccessible, but then I ripped myself off. At the Moderna Museet, I did another version, a variation. And Two Adjacent Pavilions, I was using two-way mirror glass for the second time. I had used it, actually, in Two Viewing Rooms, a video piece. It's a material I used, two-way mirror glass, because corporations were using it in the 70s. Jimmy Carter was such an important figure for me. He challenged corporations. He said we shouldn't produce work, things; we have to conserve the environment. So, corporations were on the defensive. Two-way mirror glass, which you know as one-way mirror glass, is actually, whatever side gets the sunlight is reflective, and the other side is transparent. So, corporate buildings cut down air conditioning costs by reflecting the sun. They also had a surveillance situation, because also, the main thing was, the corporations showed the sky, which meant they were identified with nature.

SB: Or they became somehow invisible or immaterial in some way.

DG: And unlike modernism, inside, people could see without being seen.

SB: Exactly.

DG: And what I did was deconstruct that. I made the two-way mirror glass both transparent and reflective, and it goes back and forth so people see each other seeing each other. And also my work became impressionist for the first time. People lie down on the grass, inside and outside. It's a human scale. Everything was, the size of the two pavilions were seven and a half, two and a half feet by two and a half feet [sic], or in your terms, 2.3 meters. But they were different. The top of one was transparent, and the top of the other was opaque. So the one that was opaque was always, you could always, in the inside, you couldn't be seen on the outside. Whereas the transparent one kept changing as the sun changed. And when I first saw the piece sited – I sited it actually, it's like a Rococo pavilion sited in the country along the river in relationship to the main building, which was also Baroque. And the interesting thing is, all the work I did in Europe, I did in parks which were overlay of different historical periods. So, when I first saw the piece, I heard a police siren and a dog barking. People were walking their dog, somebody went inside, and the dog couldn't see them. It was a piece that was designed, actually, it was designed, the Documenta was a very interesting situation. It was curated by Rudi Fuchs who was turning very anti-American. So the curator, Coosje van Bruggen, who later became the wife of Claes Oldenburg, said, "Dan, we should do something outside, that way we'll escape Rudi's interest in [new expressionism?]." So I selected most of the artists for – I selected Jeff Wall, Dara Birnbaum. I selected most of the artists for Coosje. But she said something very smart. She said, "Do something outside." So that happened. And it was rescued by the fact that Kasper König moved it to another situation and it's a [Kronen Müller?] because this wonderful woman, Marianna Brower, wanted to do a show of work indoors and outdoors. The show, it was with [Sol LeWitt](#), me, Stanley [Brown], but it never happened, but they acquired it. It's a very important piece, but it's quite modest in scale. In other words, it's not monumental. It's just enough room for three people inside and two people lying down. In fact, people camped out and were lying down.

SB: I think it's very beautiful, with the changing of the seasons, if it snow then it changes. It's a piece you always see new, depending on the season you're

coming or what the light conditions are. And we recently spoke when you gave a lecture in New York recently about how optical your pavilions are, how they operate with the

DG: Well, when I was 13, I had, I built a telescope with my father.

SB: Really.

DG: And of course, I have to admit this, as a strange kind of feminist, the work is voyeuristic and about the male gaze. There's no question about it. But also as people, it's also a photo opportunity for parents, and kaleidoscopic inside for children. [laughing] So it's a kind of a family situation, although oriented toward my interests as a 13-year-old. And the other group of work we have here, the [Alteration Suburban House](#) [[Alteration to a Suburban House, MoMA #628.2011](#)],

SB: Talk about family situations, [laughing] that's the key word.

DG: These were suburban situations. This piece, which has been written about by Jeff Wall, and I actually, the show in Oxford was all models. And actually, Herman Daled, I actually suggested that we ship this to Herman, because I thought he would want the piece. I had big problems with David Elliott, who really was not interested in my work. So I did it. As you see, it's in a flipped back position because it was made – all of these early works, models, were made by going to hobby shops and buying things.

SB: So this was made in Oxford? Or you made it here and it was shipped to Oxford?

DG: No, I made it with an architecture student when I was living in Brixton over the summer.

SB: I see.

DG: It was done with almost no money.

SB: While the later models are done by Gary what's his name, in Britain?

DG: No, but that was a bad idea that Nicholas Logsdail thought that he could sell as sculptures, so whenever I show them, I show them with videos as education. He thought they were sculptures, which they're not. My work is not much to do with sculpture. So this piece is very interesting. It really relates, unconsciously, to

[Gordon Matta-Clark](#). It's the same idea. Jimmy Carter said we shouldn't produce, so I cut away. It's a suburban situation. It's called a ranch house, after the war, a rectilinear house. The front was often a picture window. And what I did here was, I made the picture window into one sheet of glass, like a Neutra house in California. In the center is a mirror which divides the front from the back, with a door. And the front, there's always the kitchen, the living room, and that's exposed. And in the back is the private areas: the bathroom, the bedrooms, and the study. And it looks like it's voyeuristic in a certain way, but in fact, what is happening is, it's very much combining Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth house with [Robert] [Venturi](#), two architects who were against each other at that time. It's a kind of strange mixture of two things.

SB: Combining them.

DG: And the Venturi part is very interesting. Well, first of all, the Mies van der Rohe, the Farnsworth house is in the countryside. So it's a glass building but you can see nature, but nobody can see you. So it goes back to an aristocratic situation. And also, the interesting thing about the Farnsworth house is, it's a horizontal version of his office towers.

SB: I remember also you mentioning once, when we showed it and you gave a tour, that you were also influenced probably by the habit in the Netherlands? Where people never put curtains on the window, and you sometimes walk through neighborhoods, and you literally see through the buildings? Is this true?

DG: No, I wasn't. I was influenced by the picture window in America, which came before the Dutch. There's a Protestant tradition, but it was called a picture window. This is a classic American house. And I used the picture window in a later work. So the other part of the work is this Venturi. It reflects- Venturi's work is not monumental, like Mies', it's inflected toward the surrounding buildings. So what happens is, across the street, the facades of the other houses are reflected on the mirror. And it's actually not revealing people inside, it's revealing you, if you walk on the sidewalk where you're exposed, that space that's supposed to be a safe space is exposed. It's kind of hallucinogenic. And the cutaway was deliberate. It's like Matta-Clark did, because the idea was not to produce monuments, but to cut away to save consumption. That was very much Jimmy Carter. I was also deeply influenced by the same work that Matta-Clark was influenced by. [Michael Graves](#)

did a house called the Benacerraf house where he cut away an existing house to reveal the structure. But it's highway culture, and Venturi wants his buildings to be like billboards, so this is like a billboard for a housing project, except you actually see it in reality as you go through it. It's an homage to Venturi in many ways. The next model, which is one of my favorites, was also an homage to Venturi. It's a video projection outside of a house, but it's a very tiny little model, that's why no one is interested in it for museums. It was just done from a hobby shop. And the video projector was just coming in, so, outside, as an ornament of what home life is like, I showed outside on the video projector, what people are looking at on the home TV.

SB: Like a billboard in front of the house.

DG: Well, no, it's a symbol. Venturi had a show called Science of Life, and he said, in Italian American homes, there were always ornaments of manger scene or cupid. And in German or Norwegian houses, you have gnomes. Gnomes outside as symbolism, it's a little like Palladian symbolism for petit bourgeois. And what's interesting is, you can look at cartoons, if you're kids. At night, you can look at pornography, or you could just see PBS. And also, Venturi did this wonderful guild house for old age people, and he knows they watch TV most of the time. So what he did as an ornament on the roof, he had a gold anodized TV antenna. So it owes a lot to Venturi, in a way. It's a really favorite piece of mine, but I think it's never going to be at any collection because it's very, these things were very small and very modest.

SB: And this was in the Oxford show already?

DG: Yes, all these were. Also I did a clinic, which was also a very important piece. This is in a suburban setting. It's a little like the Venice Biennale setup, except it's a box which is a medical clinic. The actual, on the first floor there's a waiting room entry with sliding doors, glass doors, and in the center there's also glass doors. And where the receptionist sits and the doctor writes out prescriptions is a mirror. And as you sit there, it's like Foucault, it's alienation of the clinic. But also, usually in dentists' offices or doctors' offices, you have bad photographs of the environment or bad paintings. I mean, of the sky, skyscape or paintings. But here, people see themselves. And downstairs is the doctor. I always thought this was a minor piece, because it's too obviously sociological, but I'm coming to like it a little

bit. This is also a piece that is unsalable, but so be it. It was all documented in a catalogue I did with the Oxford Museum of Modern Art and the Renaissance Society, which I think is out of print. It also has my piece, Cinema. I like the idea of architectural models because they're a hybrid between art and architecture, and models now, unfortunately, I have to be honest about this. [Julian Opie](#) saw the work; he copied it; sold a lot of them. [Lissel and Bell?] sold it, saw it, and Thomas Shidda. It became artistic. And my work was really not to be art or architecture. But I worked with one of my best friends and a great writer, and still a great friend, Mark Francis, who is a curator. He also, along with him, we did a lot of work for Mary Kelly and Jo Baer.

SB: So one could say the first architectural models of pavilions were not meant to be built but they later, as I recall them, were really meant to promote the project to happen, like the Star of David, or others I remember, or the Skateboard Pavilion, for instance, to

DG: I don't think I deliberately thought about this. I didn't strategize.

SB: I mean, this you explicitly said, you never expected that someone will do this with their house, or that it will be built. And it's not meant to be built, it's more to transform an existing house, right?

DG: Well, I think it's cinematic. In a way, I know a lot of architects, like [Aldo Rossi](#), referenced to Antonioni. And [Sol LeWitt](#) referenced Antonioni. And I think there's a lot of aspects of my work; first, Walter Benjamin was interested in the show. I think the whole city is cinematic. When you walk through the city and you see arcades and showrooms, it's a hallucinogenic situation where you see yourself as if you're in a cinema. So I think it references to that. Actually, I didn't think deeply about any of these things. In fact, maybe I'm not a deep thinker. [laughing]

SB: I disagree, in this case. You are a deep thinker because I know you have a whole theory about the pavilion,

DG: After the fact.

SB: Yeah, yeah; exactly. That often comes, the thing, and then you start thinking about it. That's normal. About the rustic [hearth lodge?], and pavilions and its function in

aristocracy. Maybe you want to give us a little bit the background of, which actually turned into

[Crew Discussion]

DG: Well, what happened is,

[Crew Discussion]

DG: You'd better be sorry; that's a woman's body [referring to crew adjusting equipment]. [laughter] What actually happened was, these pieces were built for summer shows, like Münster,

SB: Yes, the *Octagon*.

DG: As well as Documenta.

SB: Which is a beautiful work, I must say.

DG: Well, that was all Klaus Bussmann, who was a collaborator of [inaudible] -he found the site. It's a Baroque palace with eight allées and he said there used to be pavilions. There's one gazebo, it used to be pavilions, in the center of the allée. So I constructed the piece to be both – and it's also an overlay of Baroque and 19<sup>th</sup> century garden. So this octagonal pavilion, two-way mirror, the center of it, the top was like Aldo Rossi, 15-degree angle wood top, and the center was a pole. And the poles are very important, because it's like [Brancusi's Pole of the World](#). But it turned out to be good for children, who would rotate around it, as kaleidoscopic inside.

SB: They like to play in there.

DG: And also, I mentioned this in lectures, a little like Jerry Springer, when women rotate around a pole, which often happens in strip clubs.

SB: I was wondering. [laughing]

DG: But that wasn't conscious, but children always -- my work is always a play space for children and a photo opportunity. I've done Skateboard Pavilion for International Garden Year.

SB: In Stuttgart.

DG: My work is always around – the two-way mirror is a reference to the center of the city, which also has a two-way mirrored office building. And then with my two-way hedge labyrinth, the hedge is a reference to the edge of the city, the hedge labyrinth from the Baroque period, but also the boundary line of suburbia.

SB: That's a piece you realized, actually, quite often, Mirror and Hedge Labyrinth.

DG: No. It was turned down by International

SB: But I think there are two executed projects, if I recall.

DG: What happened was, no, well no. It was turned down by International Garden Year in Stuttgart, as was my Skateboard Pavilion. Many years later, I did it for a collector in La Jolla, and then I did a variation for Walker Arts Center, and that's about it. A lot of my work was garden work, like the [inaudible] piece, because in the 80s, all the great – the socialist government in France was making all the museums regionalize the art. And they made museums as basically over in historical parks with chateaux. And what people did then is, with their car, they would take the family, camp out, and then look at art the next day. And it was, I really, I think the family structure for my work is very important, so, the family aspect is important. Because art is really for – all museums are like this. You take your kids there for entertainment and also education. But the great piece I did which is a culmination of this work was *Double Exposure*. It was designed actually to be where the *Two Adjacent Pavilion* was in Documenta. Unfortunately, it was turned down by Catherine David, finally realized in a park in the Serralves Museum. It's a strange piece. It's a time-delay without machines.

SB: Photographic time delay.

DG: What?

SB: A photographic time delay.

DG: But it's like you said, well, it's a triangle pavilion you can enter, two sides two-way mirror. And on the front is a transparency. It's not a Cibachrome. It's a Cibachrome, but it's not with a light box. It's very light. It's a photograph of the landscape 50 meters in front, so you can look through it and the clouds change, the time of day changes, and the seasons change. Again, it goes back to my love for Church, Cole, and also John Martin, in a certain way. But it's also, I realized

this whole machinery for time delay I was using, in a way, was cumbersome and also high technology. The piece is -- [Jeff Wall](#) said it couldn't be done. I offered to collaborate with him to do a piece, but he said, no, he didn't want to. He said it would fade. I found a situation where it stays there for ten years, and then you put a new photo in. It's loved, actually, by the director, João Fernandes, and I'm going to do a feature on it and another piece up in Norway, in Domus. And I'm doing an interview with Sisa, who seemed to love the work.

SB: So maybe talking a little bit, since we're talking about what it means to commission or to collect your works, and you spoke about what it means to preserve your works, or eight to ten pavilions had to be redone several times for Munster and Octagon. How should a museum like The Museum of Modern Art deal with an artist who is doing these kind of hybrid works? What would you envision?

DG: Well, I want to talk about the museum, because my work deals a lot with museums. Buren has this idea, and actually, Andrea Fraser, that the museum, institutional critique, is important. I have always loved museums. And I did an article called "Against Buren's Idea of the Fixed Museum" from the Enlightenment, called "The Museum as Garden, Garden as Museum," because I think the first museums were Renaissance gardens, and every decade, the museum changes.

SB: Every decade; so often.

DG: Well, in the 80s, the great museums were like Münster, Documenta, and the [Frocks?], which were overlays of different historical period gardens. Many were temporary, like the International Garden Year. And in the late 80s and 90s, everything was for educational programming. So I designed for Münster, which was turned down, a children's day care center with a computer, cartoon, and CD ROM, which, by the way, is dated. It was actually realized at the Camden Art Center. But it was turned down by Kasper König for Münster. Finally, I wanted to do something like this again, so I designed Waterloo Sunset for the Hayward Gallery, which is an education situation, free, for people to look at cartoons. I have two kinds of cartoons, historical cartoons like Krazy Kat and Mickey Mouse and Power Puff Girls, but also you can see Art Council videos. So [Rodney Graham](#) came there, and looking at a cartoon, he pressed the screen, and he was able to get Tracy Emin's *Why I Didn't Become a Dancer* video. [laughing] It's also used for educational purposes. It's an ellipse because all the corporate buildings had to

become ellipses in the 80s because they wanted to be gentler and kinder. A friend of mine, a critic from Japan, sat down. They were doing a Lichtenstein show and the children were making Lichtensteins; he was making a Lichtenstein. My other great piece, like this, is a girls' makeup room, which unfortunately is uncollectable. I do all these things because museum – also, the Heart Pavilion, I designed for the lobby of the Carnegie International, because the lobby is so important in a museum. It's a romantic pickup place. And it really works in the Carnegie because of the Andy Warhol silver paintings below, there. Andy actually had a hard time in Pittsburgh because it was a steel town, and he was frightened by the steel workers, but it's actually a very sentimental town. They like Hallmark cards. So the heart really made sense. My work is always site specific, and the best works I've done are in very remote places, like up in Norway. I usually only work with socialist countries. I'm a European socialist and an American anarchist, more or less. In Norway, all the money goes for education for children, so I have a beautiful piece up in the mountains. A local museum, Lillehammer, is responsible for children's education, but the mountain area is so remote, they got a bank foundation to give money to sponsor the piece.

SB: So what do you think is the state of the museum now? How would you respond with, you say you are site specific, but it's obviously more than a site. It's also situation specific of the state of the museum, if you say education was important, the museum as a meeting point is important. What would you feel is important? How do you envision the museum today?

DG: Well, for me, since I didn't study art, I love – the most favorite museum is in your home city, ex-home city, Kunsthistorisches Museum. [laughter] For me, I don't so much about art, and I love the Prada on Sunday. The reason is,

SB: Kind of a response to Vermeer or to Goya?

DG: No, the reason I like the Prada in Madrid is, on Sundays, there are fathers going with their daughters, often quite beautiful and fairly young. It's a real social space. Voyeurism is on many levels. Girls look at themselves; it's like a Boticelli painting. The whole social, the whole human situation in museums is so important. And also, for me, it's educational.

SB: So that's what your response would be, again, to contribute.

DG: Well, every museum has, museums have multifunctions. And the most important thing in a museum, of course, is the book shop.

SB: Dan, I'm just looking at *Rock My Religion*. We haven't talked really a lot about your rock and roll, [laughing] the rock and roll in your life, so to say, or in your artistic practice. Maybe we should.

DG: Well, I don't call it an artistic practice. I'm basically a rock and roll writer.

SB: Yes, that's what I wanted to say. [laughing]

DG: And [Rock My Religion \[MoMA # 483.1985\]](#) was made, it's because I'm a feminist, and I realized, I had tried to do feminist pieces, performances pieces. I realized, the best, I needed to hear one. So I found Patti Smith, who was very unknown, and I also made a connection between, it's a history of rock and roll, between. See, America was full of utopias. Also, rock and roll begins with the industrial revolution. It's kind of a terrible sound, which is the sound of the mills, made into ecstasy. Also, people came to America for utopian solutions. The Shakers believed that having children was a burden for women because they died in childbirth and it was a burden for women, so the Shakers came about with a celibate situation. But on the other hand, there's a great book called *Seven American Utopias* by Dolores Hayden. There was Oneonta nearby, where everybody had a different sexual partner every night. America was utopia. It was full of utopian communities like this. And it still, the idea of the 60s being a utopia, which is in vogue with [council Rigrubus], was a total falsification. America was a funny mixture of dystopian and utopia, and experiments that worked and didn't work. But the experiment for me that worked, well, for instance, it was, the piece was done in the 70s. In the 70s, the real communal space for artists was a small rock-and-roll club where everybody performed. And what was happening very quickly was, with business culture coming in, artists became businessmen. And I saw [Robert Longo](#), who had a rock band, become into an artist businessman. So this work was about trying to resurrect the idea of community. I think the idea of putting rock and roll in a museum is crossing. It was a horrible idea because it should be in a small club or a garage. And I guess I have two passions in life, three, maybe. One is to learn about art from the past. My favorite artist from the 19<sup>th</sup> century was Thomas Eakins, Phil Laurent [Phillipe Laurent Roland], or John Martin, and maybe Thomas Cole, and certainly [Georges-Pierre] [Seurat](#) and

[Gustav] Courbet. I find my first work very much involved with Seurat. I think he was the greatest artist of his time, because he showed the working class at leisure, as spectators. But in terms of rock and roll, it's not that I haven't grown up, it's just that I love rock and roll. But also my best friends were always musicians. My best friend was Steve Reich for many years, then it was Glenn Branca. And I guess I share a passion. When I teach in art schools, what I share with students is a love of music. I think, well, I was just at MIT with, there's a building, a media lab, and the top scientist there was describing the building. Boston is a big rock and roll city. So we discussed -- my hero, Ray Davis of the Kinks, when I did *Waterloo Sunset* for the Hayward Gallery, Ray Davis came to the dinner, and I spent time with him. I guess I have idols. Not only rock idols but also artist idols. And I was asked by *Glass* magazine what gave me faith. I said what gives me faith is having conversations and dialogues with artists older than me or my age, and also with so-called younger artists. And I mentioned three early-middle-aged artists who I am in dialogue with. I don't trust young artists who come out of art schools. Most of the artists who I like a lot, like [Dara Birnbaum](#), or Cory McCorkle, come from architecture schools. And Kathryn Bigelow was an artist who became a great filmmaker. I think people should go on to other things besides career artist. Maybe it's because I'm really a part of the 60s, when people can do anything. Including Andy.

SB: Yes. So what, your history at the Museum is rather short here, actually. What are the curators you remember, projects you did together? Is there something specific that comes to your mind? We spoke about Barbara London. She invited you to do a project, right?

DG: I actually did very little with MoMA because it was so bureaucratic.

SB: Yes, I know.

DG: The best museum I ever worked with was the Walker. It's not because of the curators. It's because they were educated by good directors and they all select -- the board of trustees members. The Daytons are in their eighties and they did a research and discovered my work, *Two-Way Mirror Hedge Labyrinth*. I've never been able to sell work with a gallery. People come to me directly. But galleries have a function, and museums, of educating people about what I've done. But the best things I've done, actually, have been in '85, the design for showing video.

That was my attack on these spectacular videos where you have to look up, and you're in awe, because I think everything in a museum should be horizontal. People should lie down. And for this design for showing video, it's for teenagers lying down to look at different programs holding hands, and also benches for old people.

SB: That's what I suggested. [laughing] I remember, you were very much against the benches for the old people.

DG: No, I was for the benches. No, it's for old people. No, I wanted them to be comfortable. I'm not adamant about anything. I think old folks, what I've noticed is, old people, when they're done, their kids have grown up, they're always holding hands, and great love relationships. And I think a museum is a great place to rekindle love.

SB: [laughing] Okay. Is this a good ending?

JT: Actually, I'm going to ask if we can talk about exhibitions you've seen here at MoMA over the years?

SB: Yes, you mentioned the Russian Constructivist.

JT: I was wondering if Kynaston McShine's 1970,

DG: No, Kynaston never, no, I have no relation to him. I am not a conceptual artist. I may have been in the show, but I thought it was not a very radical show at all. The best show I've seen – I haven't been in any very good shows here. The best show I've seen recently is Amsterdam Conceptualism. Also the show by Guerra? I think I'm mispronouncing his name. The schizophrenic painter from Venezuela? [Reveron?] That was an amazingly great show. I loved seeing the [Katharina Fritsch](#) in the [sculpture garden](#) because I am a great admirer of her work. I think the big problem with MoMA is, I really love futurism.

SB: Is what?

DG: I love futurism. I think it was the most important art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And this is very oriented toward cubism and French background. I don't know any museum in America that has futurism. I also love [Kazimir] [Malevich](#), and you have to go to different places to see things. But I really think the Amsterdam conceptualism

show, which has my favorite artists, all these Dutch artists who lived in Holland, it was one of the best shows I've seen here. And of course, the collection of Herman Daled, which I think the same curator was responsible for mostly, was also pretty important, because I've never been represented in this museum. So I owe a lot to getting this Daled collection.

SB: That's great. And we acquired some works, like the slide version of *Homes for America* [MoMA #13.2011], and the films and the videos, and so

DG: I hope you acquire my new New Jersey photographs, which I think are -- you see, there's a mistake I made with those early photographs: there are no people in them. Whereas all the work I do now

SB: Is about people.

DG: Is about people having fun. Maybe I like the idea of [Jeff Koons](#), that art should be fun. [laughter]

SB: Okay. Thank you very much, Dan. I think we can close here.

**END INTERVIEW**