for you, of course

Chun-tso Lin

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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FOR YOU, OF COURSE

A Thesis Presented
by

CHUN-TSO LIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
Of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ART

May 2010

Department of Art
FOR YOU, OF COURSE

A Thesis Presented

by

CHUN-TSO LIN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you, _________________ (put your name here) for everything.

Thanks for your support!
ABSTRACT

FOR YOU, OF COURSE

MAY 2010

CHUN-TSO LIN, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LA CROSSE

M.F.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Young Min Moon

For You, Of Course is a thesis paper and it functions as a thesis paper for you and for me. Therefore, for whatever reason you are reading this, I am here asking you to please keep a few things in mind when you are destined to continue reading this thesis. First, this is a thesis paper that I created for you with the intention of making this written form as a vehicle to communicate with you, because I need you to make “art.” Second, I have to write this thesis to fulfill the requirement for my MFA – Studio Art degree. Third, I am selecting my sources to support my point of view. (In this way, it makes me sound more legitimate). Therefore, my point of view is a personal point of view, and it is a fair subject to be questioned and challenged. Fourth, there is not much to learn but to know, so please try to experience this paper rather than reading it. Fifth, information and knowledge are elements/material for my practice. Sixth, the truth is I do not know what art or an artist is or is not, and I can only understand it the way I understand it. Seventh, the main body of this thesis is nine projects that examine the fact of one individual, myself, making “art” in art academia. I question and also challenge the definition of the art, the role of the artist, and the relationship between the art, artist, gallery / space / location, time, institutions and viewer in an academic environment. Eighth, art is like a
carefully designed experiment, but I am not a scientist. Ninth, what I am doing in this thesis is constructing “experiments” to collect “data” and observations, making them into a clearer picture that we then translate into my work to communicate my findings. After “art” is done, it soon becomes data, and it is here for you to use. Ten, I am not a scientist; I am a self-clamed artist who loves to do “nothing.” Finally, you should contact me rather than reading this. We can talk, and maybe make some or no “art” together! My email is yunzuolin@hotmail.com, Email me!
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CHAPTER 1
ABOUT MELANIE MCNEILL


“Not necessarily the opinion of the management.” Melanie answered with a smile and a look that suggested I should know it.

“Who is the management, and why do you have it on some of your ‘work’?” I asked again without further thinking.

‘The’ management, you know.” She answered with that “I should know it” look again.

Without further explanation from Melanie, I suddenly understood everything. It wasn’t the look she gave me or the phrase “you know” that made me understand, I understood it because I felt that I connected with her and her work right at that moment.

“What a smart work,” I said to myself without any doubt that this is an art. N.N.T.O.T.M. is just simply six letters on the signs that Melanie made, but it “functions” more than just letters. It changes the meaning of the sign and added more dimensions to the object itself.

N.N.T.O.T.M. Similar to Duchamp’s approach on his work _L.H.O.O.Q._, adding a moustache and new title _L.H.O.O.Q._ to the famous/well known image, _Mona Lisa_, it forces viewer to rethink about what we already know and have a different perspective. In Melanie’s work, the “ready made” object was replaced with (or it is) the metaphysical thing –information- and changes its meaning and perspective in both physical and metaphysical ways.
Figure 1: Marcel Duchamp, L.H.O.O.Q., post card reproduction with added moustache, goatee and title in pencil, 19.7 x 12.4 cm, 1919.

Figure 2: Melanie McNeill, N.N.T.O.O.T.M. back of UMass Food Services card with added texts in pen, 5” x 3”, 2000.

N.N.T.O.T.M. is not only just a challenge to the viewer’s perspective on what they already know, it could also be read as a critique and a gesture of understanding of power structure that relates to Foucault’s work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, and the concept of the big brother. The management is the top of the power
structure, and the sign is the opinion from someone outside the management and it is “not necessarily” what the sign says. How can I compare Melanie’s “work” to something that is culturally valued like Duchamp’s *L.H.O.O.Q.* and relate to Foucault’s work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*? In all, it is just a sign that has some information and N.N.T.O.T.M. on it by Melanie, but how couldn’t I just think about that? Is it art, and is she an artist? Why did I question that? It is because I was touched by her work and I can relate to her practice. Recognizing the “truth” art practice in her work is similar to how Jean Dubuffet recognized raw art.

> “True art always appears where we don’t expect it, where nobody thinks of it or utters its name. Art detests being recognized and greeted by its own name. It immediately flees. Art is a character infatuated by the incognito.” ¹

Two and half years of working with Melanie and having countless “non-art” talk at Franklin Dinning Common, she slowly freed up my definition of the word “art”. With all the respect and honor, I asked Melanie to be in my committee as a consultant. Of course she did not say yes to me, because she knows better. However, I did not give up asking her, because I understood how important she is for my thesis and developing my artistic practice. Finally she agreed to work with me on the date Oct. 14th 2009 during my performance *Groundbreaking*. However, on Dec. 23 2009, I received an email telling me that the Graduate school did not approve Melanie being on your committee, even as a consultant, since her degree and status were not certified to be an artist or college level faculty. I couldn’t understand why, even though I “knew” why it happened, until I read how Dubuffet writes about the concept of “art” that is based on how non understand it.

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When culture utters the word "art," it is not art that is concerned, it is the notion of art. The mind must strive to become aware of--and not to forget--the enormous difference in nature that exists, in art as in all things, between the thing and the notion of the thing…Culture knows nothing of art, except by way of works of art, which are far different things, which bring the matter into a realm that is no longer that of art… Some claim that if culture is abolished, art will cease to exist. This is a grave error. Art, it is true, will no longer have a name; it is the notion of art that will be gone, and not art, which no longer being named, will resume a healthy existence. At this time, the refraction it undergoes when it appears beneath culture's gaze will cease, as will the mechanism of denaturation. This denaturation was provoked because the production of art could not be prevented from aligning itself with culture's refracting effect, because it could not be prevented from bring about culture's intended purpose and establishing it self as its purveyor, thereby counterfeiting the true spontaneous artistic impulsion at its source.2

Now I understand why she did not agree to be on my committee at first. She was right from the beginning because she knows better than I. There was a fight that I had prepared for Melanie; however, I chose not to do it in the end because I realized it will be a fight about what art is and what it is not. Melanie and I both understand it would be pointless to fight a thing like that, like what John Cage says in “Lecture on Something”:

“If there are no questions, there are no answers. If there are questions, then, of course, there are answers, but the final answer makes the questions seem absurd, whereas the question, up until then, seem more intelligent than answers.”3

What is important for me is the fact that Melanie is very important for my practice, that’s what and how I understand, and no one can take that away from me. That’s all. Like what Melanie said, “it wasn’t before I was. It isn’t when I’m not. It is just now.”

2 Dubuffet, Jean. “Asphyxiating Culture” in Asphyxiating Culture and Other Writings. (Translated by Carol Volk. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1988.) 64.
CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

Despite being an individual who makes “art” in an academic institution and being part of the arts community, “art” is a central part of my life both inside and outside of these institutions. I emphasize the fact that art is part of my life, and perform making “art” as my art practice because I am exploring both the physical and metaphysical boundaries of these institutions of art and seek to expand them. I also question and challenge the definition of an artist and investigate what makes art “art.” In other words, I make art out of art. Therefore, the role of the artist and the relationship between the art, artist, gallery, viewer, and financial aspects of art are elements that I investigate in my practice.

Nothing is what I love to do, however in order to be able to do close to nothing; I have to do a lot of something. By doing nothing or a lot of something, I am creating and also presenting possibilities on what things can and could be, and that’s what I am doing. I am, as now, an artist; I am, as of now, political. As long as I am an “artist,” I am and will always be part of “institution.” No matter what I do, think, or say, when I create an “action,” I am both critiquing and being critiqued at the same time. Action is no longer just an action; experience is no longer just an experience, however we are the ones who are changed. The “art” that I create is a form of communication that communicates concept(s) with the people who are in tune with me. This is what I am as of now.

For You, Of Course, is a written form (using English as the language) of communication from the artist, me, communicating another form of my communication form—art. For You, Of Course’s main body are projects or what I call them “carefully
designed experiments” throughout my third year at University of Massachusetts – Amherst. What I am doing is constructing experiments to collect all the “data” and observations, making them into a clearer picture that we then translate into my work to communicate my findings. Aki Sasamoto writes about teaching art in academia in her article “Art in Academia” states:

“Art as it is taught in a big academic institution is a perfect platform for experimentation, where you can talk about anything from A to Z. And if you ever end up inside the art world in the future, you must have X to stabilize yourself within the tumult of what’s fashionable.”

I am using a science paper format that aims to describe my projects with more clarity, however, I am not a scientist and this is not a science thesis. In all, it is called “For You, Of Course,” and I want you to experience it.

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CHAPTER 3

BEFORE GROUND BREAKING

In the past one and a half years, I have been blessed to experience work in an institutional environment as my site and have developed a new body of work and practice. In many ways I was reborn. I became the child of art academia, and I was nurtured with a wealth of information, culture, and art history. During all the experimenting and playing, I soon realized that I couldn’t ever go back to my previous practice again, because we can’t un-know what is known. Using the language of Zen Buddhism philosophy, which also influenced artists like John Cage and Allan Kaprow in the late 50s.

“Before studying Zen men are men and mountains are mountains. While studying Zen, things get confused. After studying Zen men are men and mountains are mountains. No difference except that one is no longer attached.”

I came from the first stage of seeing “a mountain is a mountain; water is water,” to the second stage of seeing “a mountain is not a mountain; water is not water.” I became more critical but also self-consciously questioned my own perception of art and life. With all this knowledge and information, I was overwhelmed and uncertain, but realized this was a necessary part of the process I have to go through to get to the final stage of realizing that, “a mountain is just a mountain and water is just water.”

Mother academia taught me well and trained me to become a so-called “artist” not just by degree. With all the nurturing of information and art history, a fountain is no longer a fountain and a urinal is no longer just a urinal. Information/knowledge has

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become the key to my current practice. Using all the information and knowledge that I have been given and executing my art is as scientific as a scientist using data to do his/her experiments.

As Joseph Beuys stated at The New School for Social Research in 1974, “I feel it is important to appear with nothing now in order to get closer to people, to make contact, to take a step away from alienation towards an organic alternative…” I was amazed by how “touched” I was by Beuys works and his talk, and I find myself wanting to create works that touch people. Therefore, with a similar strategy, my art also appears with nothing or in metaphysical form, but I also understand that in order to be able to make myself seem as if I am doing nothing, it requires doing a lot of something. I “dismissed” the artist (by performing not being there) and “art” in my performances, while the viewers are invited to experience and question the relationship between themselves, gallery, and the artist/art. For the viewer, the action of going to see an art show or performance is a “lifelike art” performance; for the gallery, the action of having a show/performance in the gallery is also a “lifelike art,” because art is part of our life and we choose to have it. As how Allen Kaprow talks about the difference between artlike art and lifelike art:

Simplistically put, artlike art holds that art is separate from life and everything else, whereas lifelike art holds that art is connected to life and anything else. In other words, there is art at the service of art and art at the service of life. The maker of artlike art tends to be a specialist; the maker of lifelike art, a generalist.  

As the artist, the “sign” and “knowing the fact” is a self-reflexive nature of my practice – performing making “art.”

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During the performance, at first, there is no “performer” to see other than a sign (information) or objects and knowing the fact that they (the viewer) are in the gallery. The physical objects, such as the signs and cage, function as the “something” that I made that make me seem as though I am doing “nothing”/non-art. But, once the viewer receives the information, they become the performer and are part of the performance by performing being there. *TOO BAD I AM NOT HERE / TOO BAD YOU ARE HERE*, is a performance that challenges the definition of performance and lifelike art. Using language of “performance” and the term “lifelike art” by Kaprow. I propagated this information and knowledge and reassembled them into a “new” form and called it art and touch people by making them think or experience it.

![TOO BAD I AM NOT HERE](image)

*Figure 3: TOO BAD I AM NOT HERE / TOO BAD YOU ARE HERE, Performance, Construction paper and Life-sized hand sewn canvas outfit, 2009*

The notion of “institutional critique,” or, “the critique of institution,” recently became an interesting and important component to my current research. My practice is associated with my response to the environment that I was in (as now I am in an institutional environment) and I found that I myself had many comments on this approach
to making art. Artists such as Michael Asher, Andrea Fraser, and Hans Haacke also became important figures for my research. As artist Andrea Fraser put it in her Interdisciplinary Seminar talk “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique” at the Cooper Union School of Art:

“I understand institutional critique much more as a defense...as a defense of the institution of art in a broader sense of the field of art, as art as social field, a defense of the institution of art as a society as a site of critique.”

I share a similar point of view with Fraser and agree that critique of institution is not an attack or turn down on institutions, but it “enriches” institutions by presenting more information and new possibilities with its own institutional language – critique. As Fraser also states in her article “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institutions of Critique” in Artform September 2005:

“It’s not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It’s a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we are to? institutionalize, what form of practice we reward, and what kinds of aspirations? we aspire to.”

Therefore, the information and knowledge are important elements of institutional critique, and I found myself still desiring more of this knowledge and experience. With all the information, knowledge and experience, I am preparing myself for groundbreaking.

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7 SMAC Scribemedia Art Culture “Andrea Fraser ‘From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique’ ”http://www.smac.us/2009/08/14/fraser/
8 Fraser, Andrea. “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,” Artfrom 44, no.1 September 2005. 105
CHAPTER 4
GROUNDBREAKING

Background

When there is a beginning, there is an end. Talking about beginning and ending is like talking about something and nothing. As John Cage said in his lecture, Lecture on Something, “This is a talk about something and naturally also a talk about nothing. About how something and nothing are not opposed to each other but need each other to keep it going.” However, I am not here to talk about a beginning and ending or something and nothing, I am here making a “beginning” for you, but not talking about a beginning to you.

As a child of art academia, I had a lot of access to get information and resources to build a thesis that relates to my practice. I could easily pick a beginning (a topic, an entry point, or a point of time) to start my thesis, but I understand that simply picking up a beginning is not the way I want to begin my thesis. Because I want you to experience my thesis rather than reading about me talk about my thesis. I am not interested in finding a beginning because I felt everything is interconnected to each other and there is no ending for a beginning, and no beginning for an ending. If I need to have a beginning for my thesis, why not make a “beginning” and let “beginning” itself be a beginning. Let the beginning begin, and let’s begin Groundbreaking!

Objectives

Groundbreaking is a project and performance about groundbreaking and doing the action of groundbreaking. The definition of groundbreaking:

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ground·break·ing [ground-breɪ-king]  
n. The act or ceremony of breaking ground to begin a construction project;  
adj. Of, relating to, or being a ceremony of breaking ground.  
Characterized by originality and innovation: a groundbreaking  
technology.  

By knowing the definition of the word groundbreaking, I am exploring both the physical  
and metaphysical boundaries of what it means when I do a performance that is called  

*Groundbreaking.*  

**Methods**  
To be able to create a cultural event like “Groundbreaking,” I need to have all the  
requisite elements that viewers can connect with, even the groundbreaking. The needed  
elements are shovels, molded dirt, people who are doing the action of groundbreaking,  
and people who are witnessing this event. To draw more attention and make the  
performance more real (to the degree that most people associate with it) and legitimate, I  
purposefully painted the shovels and the molded dirt with gold paint, and of course, with  
gold glitter dust on the top. I will be wearing something that is formal to the event with a  
short opening talk, and there will be someone there to take pictures for *Groundbreaking.*  

The action that needs to be happening is the action of groundbreaking, which is  
also the heart of the performance. It is very important that my committee and myself are  
performing the action of groundbreaking during the performance, and I will be dressed  
very formal and stylish for this performance. The committee will also be signing the *For  
You, Of Course* (at that time, it was called *Opening*) thesis Proposal cover page before the  
groundbreaking action starts. The performance of *Groundbreaking* was advertised in the  

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10 "Groundbreaking." The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language,  
email form through Lisa, the department secretary. On the promotion email, it states the location of the performance (outside Herter Art Gallery, originally planned inside the gallery) and time for the performance.

Results

Groundbreaking was originally planned to perform inside Herter Art Gallery at University of Massachusetts Amherst, but due to an objection with the gallery director Trevor Richardson, I changed to the back-up plan location – outside of the Herter Art Gallery. During the date of the performance, due to a transportation related mishap, the molded golden glitter groundbreaking dirt fell on the way to the Herter Art Gallery. We had no choice other than to remold the ground that was to be broken and perform Groundbreaking right on that spot.

Groundbreaking finally happened on Tuesday October 14th 2009, at 4:30 pm Eastern Time on the sidewalk to Herter Art Gallery. With the help of my committee members, Young Min Moon, Mario Ontiveros, and Melanie McNeill (at that time, Melanie was still on my committee), were performing Groundbreaking with me. Committee member Jerry Kearns was missing due to the fact that he lives in New York City. Also with the help from two of my colleagues, Michelle Dickson and Michele Lauriat, they were helping me getting ready, addressing people to the new location, and taking pictures. And, of course I should mention the presence of the viewers, without which the performance could not have happened. It was a cloudy and cold day, and there was no seating for the viewer. The whole performance was about twenty minutes long.

A few reactions were recorded from the viewers suggesting that they did not know what was going on or what the performance is about, however, there were no
questions from the audience. Most people left the site after I announced “Thank you so much for coming.”

Discussion

In the manner that Joseph Kosuth talks about this work “One and the Three Chairs” during the interview with Jeanne Siegel, which was broadcast, on WBAI on April 7, 1970:

“I used common, functional objects - such as a chair - and to the left of the object would be a full-scale photograph of it and to the right of the object would be a photostat of a definition of the object from the dictionary. Everything you saw when you looked at the object had to be the same that you saw in the photograph, so each time the work was exhibited the new installation necessitated a new photograph. I liked that the work itself was something other than simply what you saw. By changing the location, the object, the photograph and still having it remain the same work was very interesting. It meant you could have an art work which was that idea of an art work, and its formal components weren't important.”

Figure 4: Joseph Kosuth, One and Three Chairs. Wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and photographic enlargement of a dictionary definition of "chair", chair 32 3/8 x 14 7/8 x 20 7/8”, photographic panel 36 x 24 1/8” text panel 24 x 24 1/8”. 1965

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11 Siegel, Jeanne: Artwords. Discourse on the 60s and 20s. (UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor/Michigan 1985) 225
Groundbreaking is a performance, (the performance is an art language,) that performs a cultural event that is called “Groundbreaking” (Groundbreaking here refers to the adjective form of the word) with an action of groundbreaking (the noun form, or action of breaking the ground), that could also apply to its definition and function such as characterized by originality and innovation and being a ceremony of breaking ground. No matter which definition or language viewers want to use/think in this performance, the fact is it is groundbreaking. Similar to Kosuth’s approach on One and Three Chairs, Groundbreaking also has the same character that itself was something other than simply what the viewer saw, but it is that still what it is –groundbreaking. I understand it is what we call “conceptual art” but I am more interested in the fact that it makes me question or do the action of questioning, and for me that’s what’s important for my art practice. To have the power/ability to make people think and question is like making a crack on a rock. Once you have a crack you have a greater “possibility” to break the rock into two halves.

Other than being an “idea” of art, Groundbreaking also brings the language “performance” into the mix and creates another level of complexity to the work itself. The idea of the work is still groundbreaking, but it also brought out the question of the difference between the performance, which is a live action, and the photo of the performance, which is documentation of the work. As most performance artists believe, the document will never be the real work. Artist Tehching Hsieh, who has always well documented his yearlong (or years long) performances, states:

For me, the document is secondary. It has been handled subjectively, and so it can be seen as another art piece. But the document can hardly restore art. I think art and the document should not be treated identically. Instead of approaching art through the document, we need to go back to art itself;
to feel art, we need to use our own experience and imagination. But what is closest to the origin of art, this will always be a question.  

I also agree with Hsieh’s idea that the document can never be the real work, however *Groundbreaking* gave me an opportunity to question this idea that I truly believe. The photographs of the performance *Groundbreaking* are functioning as the “definition” of groundbreaking, which is just another element that presents the idea of groundbreaking. Every single definition is different, and the same idea of being different is still groundbreaking and also applies to the physical objects of the work, the photographs, make it also become the work. An easier way to think about it is:

2. (Concept / Idea) + (Experience / Action) = Concept with an Experience
3. (Concept of *Groundbreaking*) + (Performance of *Groundbreaking*)
   = *Groundbreaking*

Note: I believe that performance is both physical (performer and the action) and metaphysical (the concept/idea of the performance) at the same time when the performance is performing. When the performance is over, only the metaphysical part of work stays behind. But it stays in the brain as something that is physical (and the brain itself is also physical.)

The time before, now, and aftermath of work are equally important for my viewer. Therefore, in order to talk about my work; I need to talk all of the viewers to make the works work.

The idea and action of *Groundbreaking* stays the same; the only difference is how you experience it (in both concept and performance.)

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Figure 5: GROUNDBREAKING, Image of Groundbreaking performance with my thesis committee, Shovels, dirt, gold paint and glitter. 2009
CHAPTER 5

NO ART TODAY DUE TO THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

Background

According to a discussion among three top economists Roubini, Rogoff and Behravesh, during the CERAWeek® 2009 with CERA Chairman Daniel, they all agreed that 2009 is the worst financial crisis since Great Depression. The topic of economic crisis is everywhere from TV news to our daily life. It seems as though talking about the economic crisis is part of our life. There is no escape, no matter where you go; most likely you will hear someone, or even yourself, talk about it.

“You don't know what you’ve got until you lose it. You gave me your love but I misused it. I never knew how lonely loneliness could be And now I need you, dear, as you once needed me.” A late fifties’ classic tunes from Ral Donner’s hit single “You Don’t Know What You Got (until You Lose It)” describes how I felt about this economic downturn. Living through this economic downturn, it highlights the relationship between every single one of us and the economy/ money and gives us an opportunity to rethink this relationship. There is no escape; the economic crisis also hit the art world like a Tsunami. I knew it was bad, but I finally realized how bad it is for the art world when I saw how many galleries are closing at Chelsea, NY, and by how much the art budget got cut at school.

So, what is the future for art? And the most important question is what is my future going to be as an artist? The economic downturn is a fact, therefore what’s

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important is what we, as artists, are going to do. I am interested in the relationship that art has with money, and I truly believe this is another good opportunity and beginning for a “new” art happening.

Objectives

*No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn* is a project that examines and questions the “value” of the art and at the same time it also challenges the definition of art. A little bit different than the performance of *Groundbreaking*, *No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn* is less focused on the “art people,” and the main viewer will most likely be people who come to the Open House. I am interested in what the reaction of “non-art people” to my performance will be, which is art (and I am going to convince you it is art during this discussion), even though I am performing not doing art because of the economic downturn. Using the term “economic downturn” here functions as information that connects with the viewer with their current life and also forced them to think about the relationship between art and the economy. My performance might create some discomfort to the viewer (due to my choice of outfit, which are my PJs), but the goal is still trying to make them think and rethink about what they seeing and what they understand. After all, I am Performing/ doing my work like any other student or faculty in the building. I am making “art” and you are part of my work.

Methods

The performance *No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn* is formed with two main components; a performer who is performing not making art, and a sign stating the information “No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn.” The performance is
ideally designed for a location such as an educational institution, and with a mix of viewers from both inside and outside of the institution.

To execute the performance, I use University of Massachusetts Amherst art department letterhead and print a line “No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn” in the middle of the letter, and put it on the sign stand that I have constructed. I am planning to place the sign with the stand in front of sofa in the common area that is located at the second level at the Studio Art Building during the University of Massachusetts Amherst Studio Art Buildings open house event. The performance of *No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn* was not advertised.

Since the performance is not doing art, as the performer, I am not thinking too much about what’s going to happen and wait until the day/time to come, and perform not doing “art” during the open house.

**Results**

*No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn* happened on Saturday October 17th 2009, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm located at the second level, common area, at the Studio Art Building. As designed in the experimental plan, the University of Massachusetts Amherst Studio Art Building also had its open house event during my performance.

I changed from my daily outfit to a more comfortable outfit, also known as pajamas (PJs), and pulled out my computer and started surfing the web and drinking my coffee. With the help of my colleague, Steve Snell, some pictures were taken in the beginning of the performance, there are some images of what was I doing in the beginning of *No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn*. People that are coming for the open house start showing up and sitting in the common area at approximately 1:30
pm. There was free food and free coffee for the open house, and I decided to take advantage and have some of free food. After all, we are in an economic crisis. I try not to think too much, but there are a lot of people, and I can’t really just relax and do nothing. I realize that people (people from school and outside of school) are aware of my presence in the middle of sofa with my computer. However no one says anything to me or sits next to me. Occasionally eye contact was made, but they quickly looked away, perhaps reminded too of this difficult time. I realize I shouldn’t think too much, because I am performing not making art here. But isn’t that doing nothing and thinking about things part of my practice?

Finally, an outside observer stated something to me, “This is what I am talking about, that’s art! That’s funny!” I smiled, because I do not know what to do at that moment. There were no more words for that person, and I have more questions about what is art for him? Is it the sign or myself? He was the only one who talked to me. At 3:00 pm, after all the people left, I ended my performance.

Discussion

Having “No Art” in the work gave me an opportunity to do nothing in my work and observe how it happens. But can I really make something that reminds people of nothing? As how Cage describes in his “Lecture on Something”:

“But since everything’s changing, art’s now going in and it is of the utmost important not to make a thing but rather to make nothing. And how is this done? Done by making something which goes in and remind us of nothing. It is im-portant that is something be just something, finitely something; then very simply it goes in and becomes infinitely nothing. It seems we are living. Understanding of what is nourishing is changing. Of course, it is always changing, but now it is very clearly changing, so that
the people either agree or they don’t and the differences of opinion are clearer."  

This is a great example of Zen Buddhism philosophy thinking and ideally it will work if everyone is on longer attached. However, myself included are still on the stage of confusion and still attached, and that’s why I have the sign to take the attention away from myself as the performer. The sign creates two questions to the viewer and changes the definition of me as a performer. First if there is art, unlike what the sign says, then what is art? Second, if there is no art, like what the sign says, then can the sign itself become art? If there is no question created from the sign, then the sign and myself finally become something, which goes in, and reminds viewer of nothing. No matter which question the viewer had or did not have, the fact is I was performing not doing art as part of my performance No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn. But is it possible to not making art as art? According to Kaprow, the most famous un-artist, it is possible.

“Art in the West has a long history of secularizing tendencies, going back at least as far as the Hellenistic period. By the late 1950s and 1960s this lifelike impulse dominated the vanguard. Art shifted away from the specialized object in the gallery to the real urban environment; to the real body and mind; to communications technology; and to remote natural regions of the ocean, sky, and desert. Thus the relationship of the act of toothbrushing to recent art is clear and cannot be bypassed. This is where the paradox lies; and artist concerned with lifelike are is an artist who does and does not make art… But ordinary life performed as art/not art can changer the everyday with metaphoric power.”

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Similar to my earlier work *T*OO *B*AD *I* AM *N*OT *H*ERE / *T*OO *B*AD *Y*OU *A*RE *H*ERE, *N*o *A*rt *T*oday *D*ue to the *E*conomic *D*ownturn also had a text on the sign that was giving out the information and concept of the performance. This time, I am more focused on what kind of information that I want to give out to my viewer. The objective of this project and performance is to question the “value” of the art and its relationship with money, at the same time it also challenges the definition of art.

I only need to have a single line of information that works as information but also just enough information for my viewer to think and question the work. I use a cost-effective structure that opens the sentence with a negative turn. In this way, the sentence contains the information of the “economic downturn” that caused “No Art,” which is negative in the structural way, to happen. Having the negative turn of “No Art” that draws more attention on there is “no” which also reminds the viewer the “there is.” The single line of information (text) here functions as information that connects with the viewer with their current life and also forced them to think the relationship between art
the economy. It is Similar to Joseph Beuys approach to his performance *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird Überbewertet* (*The Silence Of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated*). As how Jan Mieszkowski discusses *The Silence Of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated* in his essay Ready, Set, Made!

“Even read with a sympathetic eye, there is much in Beuys’s pronouncements that may strike us as anachronistic and out of step with the agernfas of contemporary culture. At the same time, we should not assume that the liberator potential of his project has been fully understood, either by Beyus or his most stalwart supporters. To make a case for the progressive elements of his art will require considerably more some assertions about the originality or beauty of his work. In the end, the following essay seeks to recast the Beuys Debate by focusing on one of most popular and controversial facets of his polemical agenda: his attack on Marcel Duchamp. Although the prevailing view is that Beuys Profoundly misunderstood Duchamp’s innovation, we will argue that this radicalizes his predecessor’s insights into the nature of the aesthetic act, thereby revealing a new understanding of art as a political praxis.”

Out of all the reading on Beuys’s work *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird Überbewertet* (*The Silence Of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated*) that I have read, I pick Mieszkowski’s because I am more in tune with his mode of thinking. I am not here to argue what is performance *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird Überbewertet* (*The Silence Of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated*), more or less, I am drawing a connection between Beyus and myself (like I said before, in this way, it makes me more legitimate.)

I already missed the performance, and there is no way I can find out what the work is about. All I can study is what’s left behind – the object and other’s interpretation of the work in the written form, I find it is more interesting in this “aftermath” effects that *Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird Überbewertet* (*The Silence Of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated*).

Overrated) creates. After all, Beuys’s work did touch people, as what he said about his work,

“My art touches people who are in tune with my mode of thinking. But it is clear that people can’t not understand my art by intellectual processes alone, because no art can be experienced this way. I say to experience, because this is not equivalent to thinking: it’s a great deal more complex: it involves being moved subconsciously. Either they say, ‘Yes, I’m interested,’ or they react angrily and destroy my work and curse it. In any event I feel I am successful, because people have been affected by my art. I touch people, and this is important. In our times, thinking has become so positivist that people only appreciate what can be controlled by reason, what can be used, what can further your career. The need for questions that go beyond that had pretty much died out of our culture.” 17

And, that’s how I want with my works as well – creates work that touch people.

Without knowing what No Art Today Due to the Economic Downturn is about. I am trying to touch people by my performance and the sign with something that we all can relate to, the economic downturn.

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**Figure 7: Joseph Beuys, Das Schweigen von Marcel Duchamp wird Überbewertet (The Silence Of Marcel Duchamp Is Overrated), oil, paper, ink, felt, chocolate, photographs. 1964**

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CHAPTER 6
SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTION

Background

The University Gallery at University of Massachusetts – Amherst is an established museum on campus that serves as a peer to the Five-College Museums (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges,) and it is focused on contemporary national and international art. For the MFA- Studio art grad students, the University Gallery is a place to see some well-known artist(s) exhibitions two or three times per year. From my understanding and knowledge, there is no grad student(s) that has had an exhibition while still in school. Because of that, it means something to a young developing artist like myself to have a line “the University Gallery in my CV, however I am more interested in what I can do as a grad student and use the gallery as the site and make something out that if I am lucky enough to have a chance.

Luckily, Santa must have known I am such a good boy, my chance occured during my last year at University of Massachusetts – Amherst. In the Fall semester of 2009, the University Gallery had an Andy Warhol’s Polaroids exhibition called “The Minox and the Big Shot Andy Warhol’s Photography,” to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Andy Warhol Foundation. At the same time, the University Gallery also invited artist Tom Friedman, Ellen Gallagher, Vik Muniz, and Rob Pritt who explore them and the ideas central to Andy Warhol’s artistic practice, to have a group show called “Connecting the Dots…The Warhol Legacy.”

According to Loretta Yarlow, Gallery Director, and Eva Fierst, Curator of Education, during one of the grad meetings, “artist Rob Pruitt had a great idea, and vision
on what could happen in the University Gallery – a Warhol response show that connects University gallery, MFA students, and the community together, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Andy Warhol Foundation.” And they had asked us, the grad students, to have a Proposal for the Warhol responses show.

Due to some misunderstanding from both parties, the University Gallery was waiting for the proposal from the grad students, and the grad students were waiting for more information from the University Gallery, and the grad students missed the deadline. The University canceled the exhibition project with grad students a few days after the deadline in email form. When I received that email, I decided to write a proposal to make that canceled show happen, because I understand this is and will be my only chance as a grad student making art there. I can’t let my chances go away, I have to get it so I can make work at that site.

Objectives

Shameless Self-Promotion is a performance about making an exhibition, Shameless Self-Promotion, to happen in an established museum on campus - the University Gallery at University of Massachusetts Amherst. As a site for art and the critique of institution, the University Gallery is both conceptually and historically “rich,” in other worlds this performance will be a great opportunity for me to practice the critique of institution with the language of performance that shares the idea of lifelike art from Kaprow’s Happenings.

In this performance I will be examining the definition of collaboration, and challenge the relationship and definition between the viewer, the artist, and the gallery, in many ways it will be a critique. The challenges for this performance are knowledge of the
institution/ the University Gallery and how to talk about it as a “performance,” a “lifelike” performance and a time based performance, not an object. I am using the language of performance art and observing the limitation and boundaries of performance art. What is a performance? Who is/are the performer(s)?

Methods

To be able to make the exhibition happen, I am performing as a curator and am working for graduate students and employees of the University Gallery. First I have to write a proposal asking the University Gallery to give grad students the opportunity to showcase our work and reconsider it again. I am speaking on behalf of grad students, and my goal is to persuade the University Gallery to think we can make the exhibition happen.

The proposal for the exhibition is titled “Shameless Self-Promotion,” with the concept of promoting ourselves as an artist in the University Gallery. Because it is about Self-Promotion, it gave us a great flexibility to make the work that is about our own work and show it as a self-promotion. To unify the show even more, but not take away from each participating grad students’ individuality, the “limitation” or “challenge” for this project is the dimension. Each participating grad student will create a work that represents his or her work on the dimension of 4.25-by-3.375 inches, which is the Polaroid size. In this way, it should make grad students more willing to do this project.

The goal is to make it easier for the University Gallery and the grad students, at least make them feel easier. I will make and do what needs to be done for the show, and that’s my performance for Shameless Self-Promotion. However, I would like to make
more grad student work with me as much as possible, because I want to create some kind of collaboration, and stronger community.

The project started when I decided to write that proposal and it would end when the show has ended. The performance happens when I decide to write a proposal to have a show in the University Gallery, and when each grad student agrees to work with me to show their work.

Since the concept of the project is shameless self-promotion, I will perform /do anything that Shamelessly promotes this exhibition. From posting lots of posters to become a working poster, from digital format to physical format, the goal is to promote this exhibition shamelessly. Myself, as a performer will become an actual lifelike work of art as a living breathing promotion, shamelessly, of course.

Results

It took a while, and a lot of emails and deadlines for the people from the University Gallery to fully trust a graduate student could make the exhibition happen. Due to lack of time, I had to take on more control than what I originally planned to be able to keep things moving. In this way, I made most of the decisions in terms of what’s going to happen in the show, such as the format, presentation, promotion, and dates.

Most of the communication between the three parities, the University Gallery, Grad students, and myself, are through emails. In all the emails, I tried to be as professional as possible; however, writing is not my strong point. It usually took me a long time to create any written form, and most of my written forms were proofread by my sister, Pei-Yi Lin, and her husband Anson Pierce.
Other than the written communications, we also had two meetings between grad students and myself, and between the University Gallery and myself. The meeting between grad students and myself aimed to have more input from everyone, and create an active community by working collectively. However, it is not easy to work with a group of people. First, it is not easy to get everyone to meet at a time that everyone is available. Then, it is not easy to work with a group of artists, because we all have our own ideas on what things should be. Therefore, to make things happen, I had no choice but to take more control on what should happen. I realize most of the grad students understood that I am talking more control, and let me do most of the work. In some way, they might see this project as my “work,” not as a collaboration work. However, for me, my work is not the physical exhibition, it is the experience of performance “acts” of working with people for this performance and performing being artist. Different than the meeting with grad students, the meetings with the University Gallery are more formal and “business” like. It is more about how I am going to sell my idea/exhibition to them and convince them we will make it happen.

The major problem for both the University Gallery and grad students is the placement for our exhibition. The original plan is to exhibit our work in the center of the main gallery, however there is no structure, just as well, to display 2-D works. I could not believe the University Gallery agreed to work with us after they read the proposal that clearly states we are making 2-D works, and they do not have any walls to display the works. At this point, it is too late to come-up with another proposal but I also do not want to give up the site, so we have to make it work. After two meetings with all the grad students, we decided to use the entry hallway wall, which is rarely used to display art,
because that’s the only wall that is not used at that time. And luckily the University
Gallery is okay with the idea of using the entry wall.

Another problem is the deadline, and getting everyone in the same page. I have a
few deadlines for all the grad students, however, not everyone could make the deadline.
With most of the grad students help on installation, especially Steve Snell, who is also
working in the University Gallery, the exhibition *Shameless Self-Promotion* opened
Tuesday December 1st, at the University Gallery.

The *Shameless Self-Promotion* exhibition was advertised not just in the email
format, we also advertised (with an official press release which I created and proof-read
by the University Gallery staff) on the University Gallery website, UMass Art &Events,
UMass Art department web site, Museums 10, Daily Collegian, Valley Advocate, and
The Fine Arts Center Twitter site. Other than the digital format promotions, we also
created sixteen different posters, one for each artist and one group images poster, and
pasted them as a group around the studio art building and fine art center. To make our
promotion even more shameless, I also made a box suit that is full of our posters and
wore it around the campus to advertise our opening and exhibition. I even went to the
faculty meet, which is also the opening day, to promote our exhibition, and put some
pressure for them to come.

Wednesday December 1st at 5 pm, fifteen Participating Artists: Katie Baker,
Courtney Cullen, Michelle Dickson, Ryan Feeney, Joshua Field, Kerry O’Grady, Michele
Lauriat, Chun-Tso Lin, Camila Molestina, Sarah Purnell, Hannah Richards, Chad Seelig,
Karla Stingerstein, Jieun Shin, and Steve Snell, alone with the viewer and gallery stuffs
performed *Shameless Self-Promotion* at the University gallery. It was a good turn out,
however, we are a little bit despondent with respect to the turnout. Especially with all the
shameless things I had done, and the fact it is free to the public, we should have had a
little more viewers, which are also the “performer,” who performed as a viewer for my
performance Shameless Self-Promotion. Shameless Self-Promotion performance ended
after its opening reception, and I chose not to shamelessly promote Shameless Self-
Promotion after its opening.

Discussion

The slogan for Shameless Self-Promotion’s press releases is “Art needs an artist, a
gallery, and a viewer in order to be ‘art.’ You as the viewer are invited to come and be
part of the ‘art making.’ Let us be known; let us be seen, and let us shine.” After all, it is
Shameless Self-Promotion, ” and it is also the main concept for the performance.

Shameless Self-Promotion questions and examines the “physical” and “moral”
relationship between the Museum/Gallery and the artwork makes the artwork. In many
ways it is also a critique of the institution of the museum/gallery. As Daniel Buren put it
in “The Function of the Museum” in 1973,

“We can once again declare that the Museum makes its ‘mark,’ imposes
its ‘frame’ (physical and moral) on everything that is exhibited in it, in a
deep and indelible way. It does this all the more easily since everything
that the Museum shows is only considered and produced in view of being
set in it”.18

It was clear to me that most of the participating artists and the University Gallery
“understand” “the function of the Museum/Gallery” and the relationship between the
artist, art, and the Museum/Gallery. The notion of participating with the understanding
that it is a show about Shameless Self-Promotion, show that Buren was right on the target

18 Buren, Daniel. “The Function of the Museum” 1970, Theories of Contemporary Art,
that we, the institution, understand that the Museum/Gallery is the “place of promotion.” Buren makes a clear distinction between an artwork's “place of origin” and its “place of promotion” in his text “The Function of the Studio,”

“Analysis of the art system must inevitably be carried on in term of the studio as the unique space of production and the museum as the unique space of exposition. Both must be investigated as customs, the ossifying customs of art.” 19

Therefore, what we were performing/doing is nothing other than literally promoting ourselves (shamelessly,) because we understand the function of the Museum/Gallery, this is also why I have to framed Shameless Self-Promotion as a performance not a project or just putting a show together. As Fraser put in when she talks about Michael Asher’s work,

“Asher demonstrated that the institutionalization of art as art depends not on its location in the physical frame of an institution, but in conceptual or perceptual frames.” 20

The performance is the form of art that I understand has the possibility to be both physical and metaphysical at the same time and it will give us the language that we need to become “an intuition of critique.” 21

Shameless Self-Promotion is the longest performance that I have done so far; it is about a month of performing to make an exhibition happen and shamelessly promoting myself by completely selling myself to the University Gallery, and all the promotions.

The most common question that I have when I talk about this performance is why and

20 Fraser, Andrea. “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,” Artform 44, no.1 September 2005. 103
21 Ibid. 105
how *Shameless Self-Promotion* is a performance. I understand it could easily be read as a project, work, or life, however as the artist for this work, I called it a performance. It is very important for me to talk about this experience as a performance, and using the language of performance and the critique of institution to further investigate and explain the work.

*Shameless Self-Promotion* is a performance as I am focused on exploring both the physical and metaphysical boundaries of performance. As how I discuss earlier on the note that says I believe performance is both physical and metaphysical. Here are two stages how performance works.

Before Performance:
1. (Artist “I” $\rightarrow$ Concept / Idea) $\rightarrow$ (Action / Happening) $= \text{Performance}$
   (Space + Time)

2. {Physical (Creates) $\rightarrow$ Metaphysical / Metaphysical }$\rightarrow$ (Metaphysical / Metaphysical)
   (Physical + Metaphysical)
   $= \text{Performance}$

After Performance:
1. Performance $\rightarrow$ Viewer “I” $\rightarrow$ Experience/Concept $\rightarrow$ Storage to the Brain$\rightarrow$ Memory
2. Performance $\rightarrow$ Physical $\rightarrow$ Metaphysical/ Metaphysical $\rightarrow$ Physical$\rightarrow$ Metaphysical

Note: $\rightarrow = \text{transmit}$

“I” and Performance $= \text{transmitter}$

Using this equation or this mode of thinking, I am also agreeing with the term of conceptual art. I am using performance as transmitter to transmit my concept.

It is easier to talk about something that is physical and tangible, but having something that is physical and tangible also most likely limits the viewer what to think about the work. There is nothing wrong with making something that is physical and tangible as art,
it is just another way of art making, however, it is not what I am interested in at this time.

“To call” *Shameless Self-Promotion* as a performance forced the viewer to think about the work in a broader sense because there is nothing tangible to be fulfilled. It also gave me more flexibility to play with due to its nature of being both physical and metaphysical and having “lack of clarity definition”. Similar to how Beuys describes his work in the term of sculpture,

“It (the photo of “The Chief,” 1964) is a transmitter, and I am also a transmitter. Both are sculptural elements. That is a very important concept for me. If I produce something, I transmit a message to someone else. The origin of the flow of information comes not from matter, but from the “I,” from an idea. Here is the borderline between physics and metaphysics: this is what interests me about this theory of sculpture.”

The difference is I am using the language of performance art to package my work *Shameless Self-Promotion*, but I find *Shameless Self-Promotion* could also work as a sculpture like how Beuys describe. *Shameless Self-Promotion* is a performance about shamelessly self-promoting myself, and I am transmitting this idea to the viewer, ideally to make them think about things.

By framing *Shameless Self-Promotion* as a performance, I am drawing a connection with Kaprow’s *Happenings* to make a stronger and more interesting statement about performance. In many ways, it is a lifelike art performance that I performed, but the difference between my “lifelike” than Kaprow’s “lifelike” is “making” art, in a broader sense, are my routines because I am the child of art academia. As what Kaprow said, “What is interesting to art, though, is that everyday routines could be used as real

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offstage performance. As artist would then be engaged in performing a ‘performance.’”

More or less, I am using his word, like what I have been doing throughout this paper, as my basic element/ information and seeing how I can challenge their words. Therefore, I am here using Kaprow’s idea on his “lifelike” performance, and using it, to my advantage to create my kind of “lifelike” performance – making art is part of my life. The best part is understood that art is not about doing things “right” or “wrong.” Performing Shameless Self-Promotion makes me realize my roles and the life that I am living in. It also draws closer attention to Tehching Hsieh’s year(s) long performance, but without clear written physical rules and restrictions. The rule and restrictions I had faced to make this exhibition happen and working with all the people are invisible, but I knew it is there because I experience it. I did a lot of things to fight against the rules and restrictions, some of are successful, some of are not, but more important is to make things happen so people can experience it. That’s the work.

I have to say that I was inexperienced to perform with people. The term of collaboration and ownership start to appear when people work with others, and it raises some questions. At that time, I have to do what I need to do to make thing happen, as how Kaprow say about Happening,

“…Happening has no plot, no obvious ‘philosophy,’ and is materialized in an improvisatory fashion, like jazz, and like much contemporary painting, where we do not know exactly what is going to happen next. The action itself any way it wishes, and the artist controls it only the degree that it keeps on ‘shaking’ right.”

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I was trying to do only the degree that it keeps on “shaking’ right,” however, in another degree, I am also dictating what is going to happen. Along with all the experience that I create, I also create some other questions such as collaboration and politics that I want to explore more.

Figure 8: Shameless Self-Promotion (poster #16), Color-pints. 2009

Figure 9: Shameless Self-Promotion performance, posters and cereal box suite. 2009
CHAPTER 7

NO ART TODAY DUE TO THE FIRE CODE

Background

University of Massachusetts Amherst Studio Art Department moved to their new Studio Art Building at beginning of school year in Fall 2008. As I have been told, one main reason for us to move to a new building is to make everyone together, however as what I understand now, I felt we, the art department, are more apart from each other than before. The new Studio Art Building might bring us physically together, but due to the fact that it is a new building with its new rules, it creates a bigger gap especially between faculty and students.

Most of the problems between faculties and students are around the topic of the new rules applied to working in the new building. As a grad student who has a studio in the building, there are many rules that I have to follow to be able to work in this building. For the most part I understand why we need to have it, even though these rules might make it harder to work in the new studio art building. There is always some kind of tension between grad students and some faculty members, but none take any “actions” to work on this issue. In the past year, we have learned to keep things “under the table,” and “break” some of the rules that we have a problem with. We, the grad students, learn how to create a system living under the rules, rather than do something to change the rules.

The system worked until the fall semester 2009, due to some arguments that happened between some grad students and some faculty members. I am always interested in this kind of “drama,” but one thing that makes me decide to get involved and take
action to this drama is when some faculty members try to make some new rules on top of existing rules that might further limit what students can and can’t do in their art practice. The responses from some of the faculty members about this issue include: “this is a new building, and it has new rules,” “most of the rules are about safety, and we need to follow the fire code,” and “We do not want to get fined by EH&S like what happened to RISD.” I understand their position, but one thing I can’t get over with is, some faculty members do not want to work with us together with this issue. Therefore, I decided to make a performance that involves department politics and policy, and observe how much does it take for us to work together.

After Shameless Self-Promotion, I felt this could be a great opportunity for me to explore more in terms of collaboration and politics and observe how it functions on a larger scale.

Objectives

I am addressing the problem and issue to both grad students and faculty members by focusing on the term of “No Art” and “Fire Code.” Questioning is it really the “fire code” that makes it harder for us to make art or there is something else? Or is there some other factor that we are not addressing?

More or less, I am getting into the politics of art. It is an area that I haven’t been really exposed to yet: thinking about art as more of a social term than an individual term. Most important is it is the means to understand it rather than an attack or anti-institution, and I have to make that clear to my viewer. The challenge I will be facing is how to do it so that it makes my performance seem less like an attack? And how can I get their attention, or how can I touch people with my performance?
Methods

For this performance, I am going to do anything that will draw attention to myself about this current issue that we have, understanding the fact that I could just not say anything and still do what I want to do. To start this performance, I am going to make a sign that has “No Art Today Due To The Fire Code” on the UMass art department letterhead, on my sign stands. Using the sign as an invitation, that invites people talk to me or simply just talk about this issue and face the issue.

It will be an ongoing performance until I can’t do it anymore. I have to be the one who cares about this issue, and want to have some action. I will need to be more active than what I am comfortable with in terms of performance, because my action is the tool for me to get their (both students and faculty members) reaction. If no one cares, I have to make an “invitation,” or create situations that invite people to talk to me so I can perform.

Results

During the first week of December, shortly after the Michelle Dickson incident, I had my sign up “ No Art Today Due To The Fire Code” as a common invitation. However, after a week there was no response from any faculty. The sign did not bring me any action with the faculty, but the action of making the sign did declare my position for my colleague that I am in this “fight.”

To speed things up, Michelle Dickson, Michele Lauriat, and myself decided to go to Ombuds office on Dec. 8th 2009. We explained our issue with Catharine Porter, Ombudsperson, and she made us feel we might work this thing out; at least we felt it is a start. However, few days later, we all got an email from Catharine Porter, and telling us that our department is just doing their job, and we should understand their position. And
there was no further meeting with Ombuds or the department. However, according to the
department, there was a meeting for this issue, but none of us are notified. As my
performance goes, it seems like I can’t get any attention from the department, and soon
the winter break started.

Monday, January 18th 2010, a few days before the spring semester started, I
decided to finish *No Art Today Due To The Fire Code* performance by forcing the
department to have a meeting with me so I can address all the issues that I want to
address. I emailed Shona Macdonald, the Director of Graduate Program, and let her know
that I am having problem with my TA assignments, before I send an email to Bill Oedel,
the Department Chair, to have a meeting. It was a big shock for the department to know
that I felt unfair about my TA assignments, but they agreed to have a meeting with me on
Thursday, January 20th 2010, morning, which is also the time I “teach” and it is also a
short notice. I understand this is my last chance to make it happen, so I agree to meet with
them (Professor Shona Macdonald, Professor Bill Oedel, and Professor Michael Coblyn)
on the spot, five minutes before the meeting.

At the meeting, I finally get a chance to talk about all the issues that I have with
the department. However, they do not know my intention is to talk to them and I was
using my “unfair TA assignment” as an entry point, so they spend a lot of time to figure
out why I am having problem with my TA assignment (even thought they knew the
process is unfair.) During the meeting, they keep asking me why am I doing this, but I did
not tell them what they want to hear. I realized they are not interested in all the issues that
I address to them, but want to make me “happy” about what I get. Everything went sour
when Professor Michael Coblyn said that I should be happy and “honor” to having this
TA assignments, and I answered, “how’s about if I do not want to have this TA assignments? Is the class still running without me? How’s about the fire code? How’s about student’s right? Do you care? Unfair is unfair, and we all know the problems are still there, but are you going to do something?” I guess they felt something from me finally, I can’t tell what they felt, but what I can see was I finally got their attention. This is the end of *No Art Today Due To The Fire Code*, and nothing “happened” after all.

**Discussion**

*No Art Today Due To The Fire Code* is the hardest performance that I had done so far, because it is something that I do not know what to do and how to talk about it. However, it is a performance that has a concept, and “I do not know what I am doing; I do know what I am not doing” is not the concept of the performance. In some way I felt the performance is not successful as what I want it to be because it is one of the performances that is hard for me to maintain, but I also can argue that it is successful to some degree. I was on the edge of taking this performance out of this thesis project list, but as of now, I am keeping it here. I believe there is something in this not so successful performance that I can’t describe in words, but you might be able to “experience” it, and I for sure did experience something from it.

As how Beuys talks about politics and art during a public dialogue in New York City, 1974,

“I Think art is the only political power, the only revolutionary power, the only evolutionary power, the only power to free humankind from all repression. I say not that art has already realized this, on the contrary, and
because it has not, it has to be developed as a weapon, at first there are radical levels, then you can speak about special details.”  

Beuys was trying to develop a new discipline of art that he called “social sculpture.”

“THINKING FORMS – how we mold our thoughts or
TALKING FORMS – how we shape our thought into words or
SOCIAL SCULPTURE – how we mold and shape the world in which we live: SCULPTURE AS AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS; EVERY-ONE AN ARTIST.”

I find myself, and my idea of art and performance could easily be in tune with Beuys’s concept of social sculpture, but the realization and understanding came after the No Art Today Due To The Fire Code performance. Rethinking about the performance, I was too focused on the surface of “performance” and “politics” and missed the broader sense of what the work could be. Thinking outside the term of “performance” and more closely to the term of “social sculpture” is “a means of suggesting and effecting change beyond restricted art concept.” From what I understood after all the reading from Beuys, I felt connected with his idea of art. Beuys was using “sculpture” to explore both the physical and metaphysical boundaries of art and seek to expand them, on the other hand, I am trying to use “performance” to explore both the physical and metaphysical boundaries of art and seek to expand them as well. “Sculpture” or “performance” is just the term that we choose to “talk” about our concept, what is more important is still the “concept” itself.

And that’s something I forgot and got lost during my *No Art Today Due To The Fire Code* performance. Perhaps the social sculpture that I molded was grotesque, misshapen or malformed because I didn’t have a good understanding of the practice, much in the same way a beginner might botch a 3D sculpture.

*Figure 10: No Art Today Due To The Fire Code. 2010*
CHAPTER 8
APRIL 16\textsuperscript{TH} rd, APRIL 22\textsuperscript{ND}, AND APRIL 26\textsuperscript{TH} TO APRIL 30\textsuperscript{TH}

Background

From my limited knowledge and understanding about the UMass – MFA studio art program, Herter Art Gallery has a tradition of being the host and the gallery for the MFA – Studio Art thesis exhibitions. Unless the Gallery is over booked or the artist want to use other sites for their exhibition. Herter Art Gallery is like many other galleries; a white cube with track lights, there is nothing “special” about it. In the beginning of my third year in the program, like all the former grads, the third year grad students, Ryan Feeney, Camila Molestina, Sarah Purnell, and I, had been offered to use Herter Gallery to exhibit our thesis exhibition.

Originally, I had no desire to use Herter Art Gallery for my thesis exhibition because building a thesis exhibition is not my thesis. My thesis, as you are reading right now, does not require an exhibition to sum up my research, in fact that’s how I construct my thesis. I had been executing most of my performance that are informed by artists like John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Teching Hsieh, and Joseph Beuys, which I strongly believe these works might not need institutions to make them art. However, the more I think about it, I felt I am limiting myself on what kind of work I am making. If I believe what I said about what I am doing, which is “I emphasize the fact that art is part of my life, and perform making “art” as my art practice because I enjoy exploring both the physical and metaphysical boundaries of these institutions of art and seek to expand them,” then I should be more open. Especially since I am also interested in the critique of institution, of course I will not let this chance pass. So, I decided to use Herther Art Gallery, a tradition,
a gallery in an institution, and a free space, as a site to execute my “final” performance at
my third year in the MFA – Studio Art program.

I believe there is no “right” or “wrong” way to make art; there is just a way(s) that is/are in tune with you, and I am finding the way that is in tune with me and execute myself by using the facts as my advantage. I was scheduled to have both East and West Gallery on April 16th and East gallery from April 17th to April 30th, 2010 at Herter Art Gallery. During these times, I will be performing Opening on April 16th 5pm to 7 pm, Thanks For Your Support on April 22nd from 5pm to 7 pm, and New, Work From 26th to 30th from 2 pm to 4pm.

Opening

Objectives

Similar to Groundbreaking, Opening also plays on the word “opening” and its definition on multiple functions. Opening is a performance about opening by performing the action of opening in art content, social content, and personal content in an institutional art gallery setting. Opening explores both the physical and metaphysical boundaries of opening: opening as physical as an institutional art social event, and opening as metaphysical as a personal physiological opening experience. Performing Opening in an institutional gallery sitting and understand by most of viewer as a “thesis show” (due to its timing it seems a thesis show, however the promotion poster did not have any information that inform this performance is a MFA Thesis show) gave me a great set up for the critique of institution that I am interesting in my research.

Opening is aim to facilitate all the performers to experience “opening” in both physical and metaphysical form. Three different environments, light gallery with food on
pedestals, dark gallery with music and disco ball, and myself standing behind a red ribbon between two galleries, and many different performers create many different possibility of opening, and that’s the goal of the performance. Although performer might leave the performance with more question than before the *Opening* performance, but this notion of experience/feeling is also part of “opening.” Therefore, the timing, location, people, action, reaction, experience, and function(s) are the key elements for the performance of *Opening*.

*Opening* is like a party, and it is an opening for you and me.

Methods

Creating an opening event/performance in East, West, and Center Galleries in Herter Art Gallery on Friday, 16th May from 5 pm to 7 pm. I need to talk to Ryan Feeney and Camila Molestina, who have had the show before me, to take down their show before my performance *Opening* so I can have both east and west gallery. There will be two different lightings in East and West gallery - East gallery is the dark gallery, and the West gallery is the light gallery. In the east gallery, there will be only dark with “party” lighting, disco ball and a DJ that I hire for this event. In the West gallery, there will be “normal” gallery lighting spot on pizza, food and drinks that are displayed on the pedestals. I will be in the Center Gallery behind a red ribbon and performing *Opening* the whole two hours. There will also be a sign-up book for all the performers to “become” the performer for *Opening* because everyone, including myself coming for this performance are all “performer” and part of performance no matter what they/I do or which gallery they/I go. I will have to address that everyone is performer for *Opening* in the beginning of *Opening*, and asking everyone perform opening with me. I will be
dressed in the stylish look that has color of red, black and white for this opening performance.

The viewer is one of the most important elements for this performance, so the promotion is very important for this performance. Therefore, I will be making larger sized posters and doing some social networking (and file research, such as going to parties) that attracts more people to come and perform with me. It will be advertised as an opening performance, a performance about opening with the date, location and my image on the poster. There will be lines like “Free food, free drink, and free art,” “Opening is like a Party,” that aims to attract more people to come perform with me. The performances will also be promoted in the email form through Lisa, the department secretary.

Results

Two hours before *Opening* performance starts, I received an email from the department chair Bill Oedel, that informs all my committee members and the gallery director Trevor Richardson, and it states:

Colleagues:

As you know, Jo Jo has scheduled a portion of his MFA thesis show in Herter this evening from 5:00 to 7:00. You may not know, however, that the show presents several unusual challenges; I want you to be aware of these.

Jo Jo did not consult with Trevor about his thesis show. Indeed, Trevor discovered only yesterday that the show is performance-based and involves music, and that Jo Jo's poster lists food and drink as refreshments.

I assume that since Jo Jo's thesis is performance-based, you as members of his committee will want to attend the entire performance from 5:00 to 7:00. Herter will close at 7:00.
Please note that alcoholic beverages are not allowed.

Please note that the capacity of the gallery set aside for Jo Jo's thesis show is 125 people (50 with tables), and that we are bound by the fire code to abide by that limit.

Please note, too, that the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures is hosting a scholarly conference in the Herter auditorium directly above the Gallery from 4:30 to 10:00, and that a student organization has reserved the other large auditorium for an event from 4:00 to 9:00. Noise, then, must be kept at normal levels.

I know you will do all can to ensure the integrity of Jo Jo's creative activity while remaining mindful of the Department's role as a good citizen within the University community.

Many thanks.

Best,
Bill

The fact that I received this email two hours before my performance that shows two other facts and also a problem within the department – the facts are my poster works and lack of communication. There were too many assumption from both sides of the parties (myself to Bill and Trevor), and I was taking an advantage of this notion of behavior. Poster is a form of communication, and it functions as I did talk to Trevor, the gallery director, beginning of the school year about my Opening performance, and he told me, “just do what you need to do, it is your show,” and I took full advantage from his words. I was fallowing all the “rules” that I needed to follow, because being an artist it is my duty to make sure my work was executed in the perfection that is true to my concept and it is also my responsibility for all the actions of my work. I understand the action why Bill needed to write this email, however, what I did not understand is why not just talk to me?

After reading the email, I decide not to think about it anymore, and getting ready for my performance. I could ask people to help me pickup all the foods so I can get
myself ready for the performance on time, however, I want to do it all by myself. I was about fifteen minutes late to Opening performance however, as what the poster says, Opening performance starts at five o’clock. The door is open, the DJ is playing, and the viewer/performer is performing. Opening is happening. As much as I want to do it all, I realized that I have to let it go and let people to perform “helping” me. I had Camila Molestina, Ryan Feeney, and Michele Lauriat help me to display foods on the pedestals. Michelle Dickson is the person who takes picture for this performance while performing as well.

Opening was performed by Chun-Tso Lin, DJ Nott Sizzle (Chris Snyder), Camila Molestina L., Sarah Nicole Purnell, Michele Lauriat, Wade Austin Benicer-Ritchey, Michelle Dickson, Nicholas Sullivan, Scott Monaghan, Ryan Feeney, Kerry O’Grady, Courtney Culleny, Nate Riley, Kelly Seyfarth, Nate Canty, Jameson Harper, Jerry Kearns, Young Min Moon, Jaime Wing, Lisa Baker, Jose Cotto, Howard Feibuscott, Charlic Chan Nga Lee, Daiki Okamoto, Allyson Frauenfelder, Tom Lynch, Alex Sachs, Steve Snell, Chan Seelig, Emily Andersson, Ryan MacDonald, Katie Baker, Brent Whitney, Evan Durant, Matthew Lenke, Sen McNeill, Neil McNeill, Hannah McNeill, Maia McNeill, The McNeill (Melanie McNeill), Eriko Stronach, Jacob Grush, Sato Yuri, Hannah Richards, Samantha Jean, Mario Ontiveros, Danielle Dickey, Thinley B. Wangchuk, and Gregory Kline on Friday 16th April 2010 from 5 pm to 7 pm at Herter Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

Opening ended the moment I cut the red ribbon in the center gallery and said, “it is an opening for you, and it is an opening for me.” At 7 pm, DJ Nott Sizzle stopped the
music and started packing-up, performers started leaving, and the Herter Art Gallery was officially closed.

Discussion

“Where is the Art?” is the most common question that my “performer” ask me during Opening, even thought I performed explaining what Opening is about in the beginning of the performance, and asking the viewer to become the performer. To answer that question, “Where is the Art?” I simply answer back, “You are the art, and your also thinking, looking and talking to the art.” As how Fraser states in “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,”

“Art is art when it exists for discourses and practices that recognize it as art, value and evaluate it as art, and consume it as art, whether as object, gesture, representation, or only idea.” 28

Opening is like a party, and it can easily be mistaken with being just a party and not an art/performance, but it is not a party. Because I understand that as long as I am the “artist” I can never escape being the institution of art. However, what about the viewer who does not think he or she is the art/artist/performer, is he or she outside the institution? Are they or can they be the performer for Opening? Can they become the artist and Art at the same time at the moment they perform? Is my “performer” free to be what they want to be or am I taking their “freedom” away from them without their notice and agreement? Am I free to control everything during Opening because I am the “artist?” As of this writing, I do not have an answer for all these questions, but it does not mean I do not know what I am doing because I understand why I can’t just have an

28 Fraser, Andrea. “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,” Artform 44, no.1 September 2005. 103
answer for all these question. *Opening* is a performance that requires viewers to become the performer and performing “opening” as all the possibilities what it means and functions. When a work that requires other person(s) to complete, I am communicating with others, when there is a communication, there will be a discourse and it can never be synchronized but “in tune” with each other. Due to the different levels of in tuning, each individual “performer” will perform in any way it wishes (as what I talk about in the end of *Shameless Self-Promotion*’s discussion part), and my function as the artist is to “control it only to the degree that it keeps ‘shaking’ right.” ²⁹ No matter what action the performer is having, the fact coming in to *Opening*, he or she is already performing *Opening* because *Opening* is opening and that’s the “Art.”

Similar to *Groundbreaking*, *Opening* is also a conceptual performance art and it can be and has to be discussed in both physical and metaphysical ways, and back and forth because *Opening* is not tangible. The disadvantages to have a work that is not tangible are it requires the experience, it requires the action of questioning and thinking, and it is less “clear.” On the other hand, the disadvantages are also its advantages. The lack of tangibility gives the work more possibility and having the action of thinking and questioning also add another important layer for the work – the critique of institution. As Fraser states in “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,”

“it is this self-questioning—more than a thematic like ‘the Institution,’ no matter how broadly conceived—that defines instructional critique as a practice.” ³⁰

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³⁰ Ibid. 105
Of course, I am and will also question *Opening* and my work to be read as “the critique of institution,” because I am and wanting to be opening.

*Opening* is like a party, a social and cultural event/platform that full of possibility of experiences and connections. It can be fun, but also can be scary; it can be comfortable, but it also can be awkward. It is a performance that we all have a degree of freedom to control what our experience will be. It is an opening for you, and it an opening for me.

*Figure 11: Opening poster, 24” X 36”, Color-pints, 2010.*
Figure 12: Opening, Gallery floor plan. 2010.

Figure 13: Opening, Image of performance (West Gallery) at Herter Art Gallery, UMass- Amherst, 2010.
Figure 14: Opening Image of performance (East Gallery) at Herter Art Gallery, UMass- Amherst, 2010. (Note: this image was shot with flash due to lack of light in the gallery.)

Figure 15: Opening Image of performance (Center Gallery) at Herter Art Gallery, UMass- Amherst, 2010.
Thanks For Your Support

Objectives

Thanks for Your Support is a performance that I am performing thanking each individual at a time for his or her support. The concept of Thanks for Your Support is to create “something (a situation), and virtually nothing (actions, words)” 31 to aim at changing or at least questioning our perception and belief.

Thanks for Your Support is also the most institutionalized performance that I am going to perform; in other words, it is a performance of a “performance.” And what’s more interesting for Thanks for Your Support is not what I do, but what I did not do.

Methods

20th May 2010 for 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm I will be in the east gallery at Herter Art Gallery performing Thanks for Your Support. There will be a clear statement that tells each performer what to do during their performance,

April 22nd, 2010

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

WORDS FROM ME TO YOU

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT is a performance that will be performed by you and Chun-Tso Lin on Thursday, April 22nd 2010, from 5pm to 7pm at Herther Art Gallery. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

Here are few things that I would like to ask you to do before you come in to the gallery:

1. Please take one “Thank You” package (one package per person) from the pedestal. Only take one if you are coming in to perform.

2. Please follow the order of your package, and wait in the line for your time.
3. Only one person can come in and perform THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT at a time.
4. Please respect others’ experience of performing, double check before you come in.
5. Please turn the sign to “I Am Performing” before you come in to the gallery.
6. After you leave the gallery, please turn the sign to “I Have Been Thanked.”
7. The “Thank You” package is yours to keep, and you will officially become one of the performers for THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT, and will own your part of performance.
8. Thanks for your support.

Chun-Tso Lin

During the performance inside the gallery, I will be asking each individual their name and will put it down on the thanks package for them, and I will thank him/her for whatever I am going to thank them for. After each individual has been thanked, they can take the package of thanks with them and leave the gallery, and the next performer can come in to perform with me. Two video cameras will be placed both inside and outside of gallery for documentation purposes.

Thanks for Your Support will be advertised with the date, location and my image on the poster. The performances will not be promoted in the email form through Lisa, the department secretary.

Results

Forty-Nine performers performed Thanks for Your Support with me on Thursday, April 22nd 2010, from 5pm to 7pm at Herther Art Gallery. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. (Note: there are only two faculties that came to perform with me, and both of them are members of my thesis committee.)
There were a few expected “errors” such as not waiting on the line, cutting in line, missing the order, and don’t know what to do, occurred during the performance. Most of the “errors” were caused by the action of not reading the statement/information about the performance. The presence of the documentary devices, video cameras, also had a noticeable effect on most of the performers both inside and outside of gallery. Therefore, the documentary video is not going to be part of the work, and I will be making a sample video and sample images for this work. The sample video and images will be done outside the performance, and it will only function as a sample for the performance. The sample video and images will be done by artist Camila Molestina and myself.

Discussion

The year of 2009 and 2010 is an “interesting” time to do performance art, because performance art is like a “reaction” to the economic crises, and most of the time it cost “less” to make (and harder to sell.) As what Marina Abramovic says in an interview with Laurie Anderson for Modern Painters,

“I always believe economic crises and performance are connected: The more economic crises, the more performance. It’s a reaction.”  

It says a lot without saying too much about how important money is for art. I could be connecting two points together, but having two solo “performance” exhibitions in two art Museums in New York City, Tino Sehgal at the Guggenheim and Marina Abramovic at the MOMA, this year already, I believe it says more than anything. For someone who claims “performance”, “conceptual art”, and “instructional critique” as his practice, of

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course I am using Tino Sehgal and Marina Abramovic to my advantage to make *Thanks for Your Support* legitimate, because they are famous and I am not. I might be joking when I say that “they are famous” (I kind of mean it a little bit,) but I do love their work. In fact because they are famous, using them as my example and comparing their practice to my practice makes my work legitimate.

Tino Sehgal might be the perfect example for me to use as my defense (for this thesis paper and my oral’s) for my practice. What I love about Tino Sehgal is not much of what he did; I am more interested in what he “did not” do. As the art critic Holland Cotter talks about Tino Sehgal’s recent solo exhibitions at Guggenheim Museum in his review “In the Naked Museum: Talking, Thinking, Encountering” in The New York Times,

“His art is a response to these perceived realities as they play out microcosmically in the context of the art industry. His goal is to create a counter-model: to make something (a situation) from virtually nothing (actions, words) and then let that something disappear, leaving no potentially marketable physical trace.”

*Thanks for Your Support* shares a similar approach with Sehgal’s work, and that makes it easier for me to draw a connection between my work and his work. I could break down what is the something (a situation) and virtually nothing (actions, words) that I created for *Thanks for Your Support*, however our work will never be the “same” kind of work, because I am not Tino Sehgal. Although we are not making the “same” kind of work, but we can be “understood” in a

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similar way, because now we are talking about communication. As art critic Holland Cotter discuss about how innovative Sehgal’s work is,

“It stands on the shoulders of a constellation of influences, from Allan Kaprow, Fluxus and the Judson Dance Theater in the 1960s and ’70s to Andrea Fraser and Felix Gonzalez-Torres in the 1980s and ’90s. (Mr. Sehgal is young; so is much of his audience, which is unlikely to recognize when new is recycled old. The one form of transience the art industry depends on is the transience of memory.)”

There is something that we all can’t escape from it is our “history” because we use what we have “known” to understand what we do not know. Sehgal’s work might be influenced by or can be drawn in connection with Allan Kaprow, Fluxus, the Judson Dance Theater, Andrea Fraser and Felix Gonzalez-Torres… but Sehgal is still Sehgal. We could take Sehgal’s word on what his work is about when he answered one audience member’s question “So I guess you’re saying your ambition is to change perception, is that correct?” during a discussion for the Guggenheim piece,

“That’s a very simple way of saying what I’m doing,” he said. “For the last two or three hundred years in human society, we have been very focused on the earth. We have been transforming the materials of the earth, and the museum has developed also over the last two or three hundred years as a temple of objects made from the earth. I’m the guy who comes in and says: ‘I’m bored with that. I don’t think it’s that interesting, and it’s not sustainable.’ Inside this temple of objects, I refocus attention to human relations.”

Even if we fully believe Sehgal’s words we are still not going to fully understand what is the work as long as we want an answer. This is what art is, lack of


definition of what it is. As how art critic Holland Cotter ended his review on Sehgal’s recent solo exhibition at Guggenheim Museum,

“Still, at the end, after Bob had disappeared, I felt stirred up, but light and refreshed, the way I sometimes — but not that often — do when I feel that I’ve met art in some very bare-bones way. It really is about life. It really is about communication. It really does have no answers. And it really is addictive. I was primed to go back for more.” 36

For me, that is why Sehgal’s work is “powerful ” because he understands what he is doing and what he is doing it for. Information and knowledge is like power, the more you know the more powerful you (could be) are. Especially if I claim to be an “artist” I have to know “what I am doing.” As how Fraser puts it,

“All of my work is about what we want from art, what collectors want, what artists want from collectors, what museum audiences want,” Fraser explained. “By that, I mean what we want not only economically, but in more personal, psychological and affective terms.” 37

This is what I am doing, I am communicating with you. I am using information and knowledge as the tool/transmitter to communicating with you. In other words, I am using what I know and what you know to communicate, because it is art and it is for you, of course.

36 Ibid.
Figure 16: Thanks For Your Support poster, 24” X 36”, Color-pints. 2010.

Figure 17: Thanks For Your Support, Sample image of performance (Outside of East Gallery) at Herter Art Gallery, UMass- Amherst, 2010.
Figure 18: Thanks For Your Support, Sample images of performance (East Gallery) at Herter Art Gallery, UMass- Amherst, 2010.
New, Work

From Aril 26th to Aril 30th from 2 pm to 4pm at Herter Art Galley (East Gallery) I will be performing New, Work. I do not know what is going to happen and who will come perform with me, but I know I will be there. There will not be any promotion and document for this performance. That is and will be New, Work. It is for you, of course.

New, Work was announced by myself during the performance of Opening.
CHAPTER 9

BYE BYE / 再見

再見 (zài – jiàn) is how we say goodbye in Mandarin Chinese. 再 is pronounced “zài,” and literally it means again; 见 is pronounced “jiàn” and literally it means see. Putting two characters together, 再見 (zài – jiàn) literally means see (you) again. There is other ways to say goodbye that imply you might not see that person ever again, however 再見, is still the most common words to say for goodbye. I have never questioned what doest it mean when I say 再見, it is almost like a natural reaction for me and many other native Mandarin Chinese speakers to say it when we leave or someone leaves. It is “just” something you say for the action, emotion, and experience of goodbye that communicate with other party with the concept of goodbye. It does not matter whether you want to see that person again or not, 再見 means “再見,” and I am here to say 再見.

I am here to say 再見 to you, and when I say 再見 I mean 再見 as all the possibilities of what it means, because you will be the one who completes the performance by experiencing it. 再見 could mean that I will never see you again, I am for sure that I will see you again, I might/might not see you again, or it is just something polite to say to fill the silence when one leave. With all that understanding, I am here to say 再見 to you. I am here to communicate with you with the concept of 再見 and the words of 再見, and hoping you will/could in tune with my way of thinking, if not 再見 is still going to be 再見. By saying 再見 to you, you soon become the performer of 再見, because it is a performance of performing 再見, and it is for you and me.
Saying “再見” is like a performance that both parties (giver and receiver) become performer and the experience from the performance vary from person to person. The performance works when both parties in tune with the concept of 再見 in their way of experiencing. However, 再見 is never going to change what it is, but what could be change or already changed are we. The concept of “goodbye” is something that close to universal for human sociality, but its meaning still varies from person to person and experience to experience, and that’s where I find the beauty of the work and experience performing 再見. No matter what I say, if I am challenged by what others believe, it is and will always be a form of critique, a critique that is hoping to present more information and possibilities what things might and could be. This is what I am doing, saying 再見 to you.

Action is like the “light” that proves or simply shows me my own existences / present and others existences / present. Packaging action into an art from - performance, it became political. Action and experience is no longer just action and experience, I am, as now, an artist. This 再見 is for you, of course.

This is how I say 再見.
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PHOTO OF THE ARTIST AT WORK