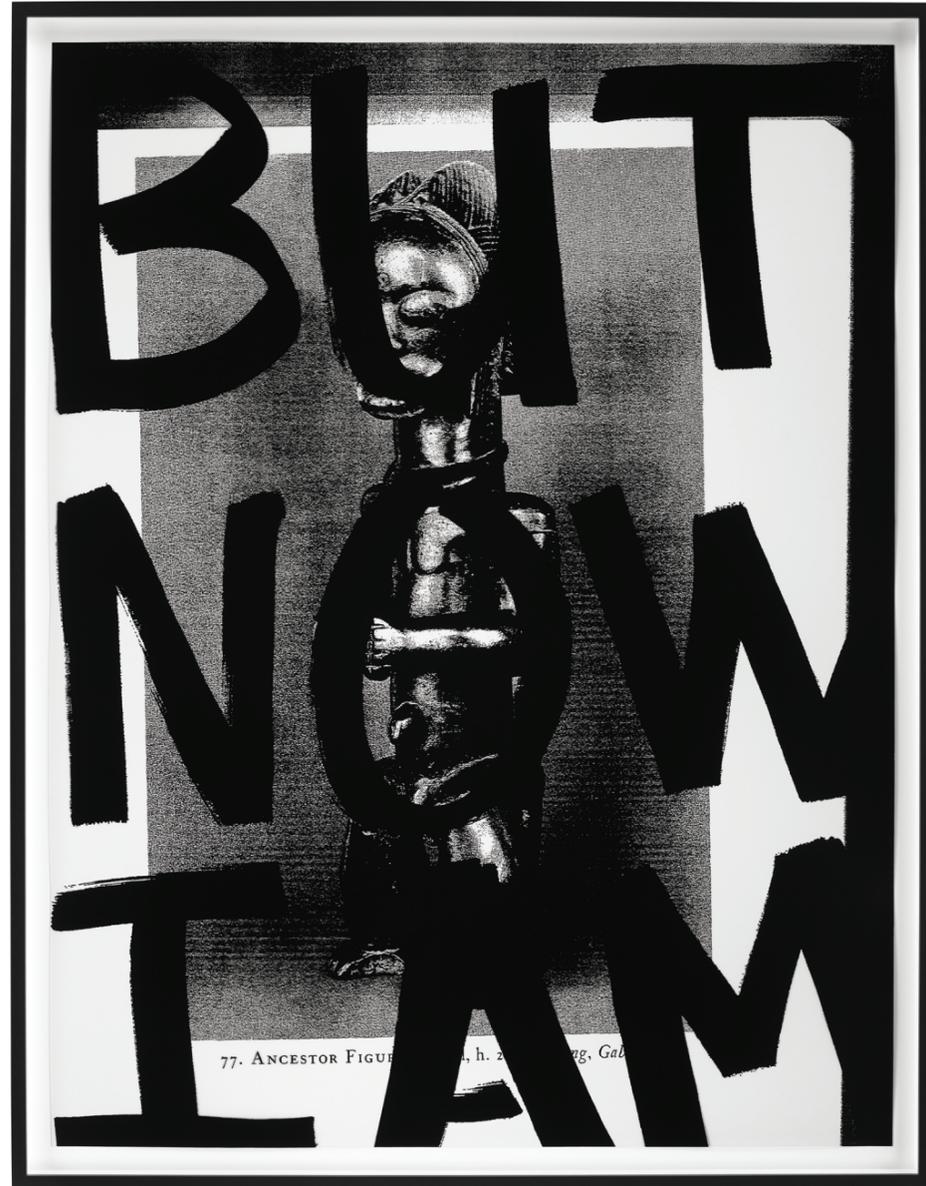


PACE



Adam Pendleton

These Elements of Me

November 21, 2019 - January 25, 2020

Seoul

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These Elements of Me © Adam Pendleton. Courtesy of the Artist. Image: Andy Romer Photography.

BOMB CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN ARTISTS, WRITERS, MUSICIANS, PERFORMERS, DIRECTORS—SINCE 1981

BOMB



Seth Price
 Jacolby Satterwhite
 Bruce Pearson
 Daniel Kehlmann
 Cathy Park Hong
 Christiane Jatahy
 Anthony Roth Costanzo

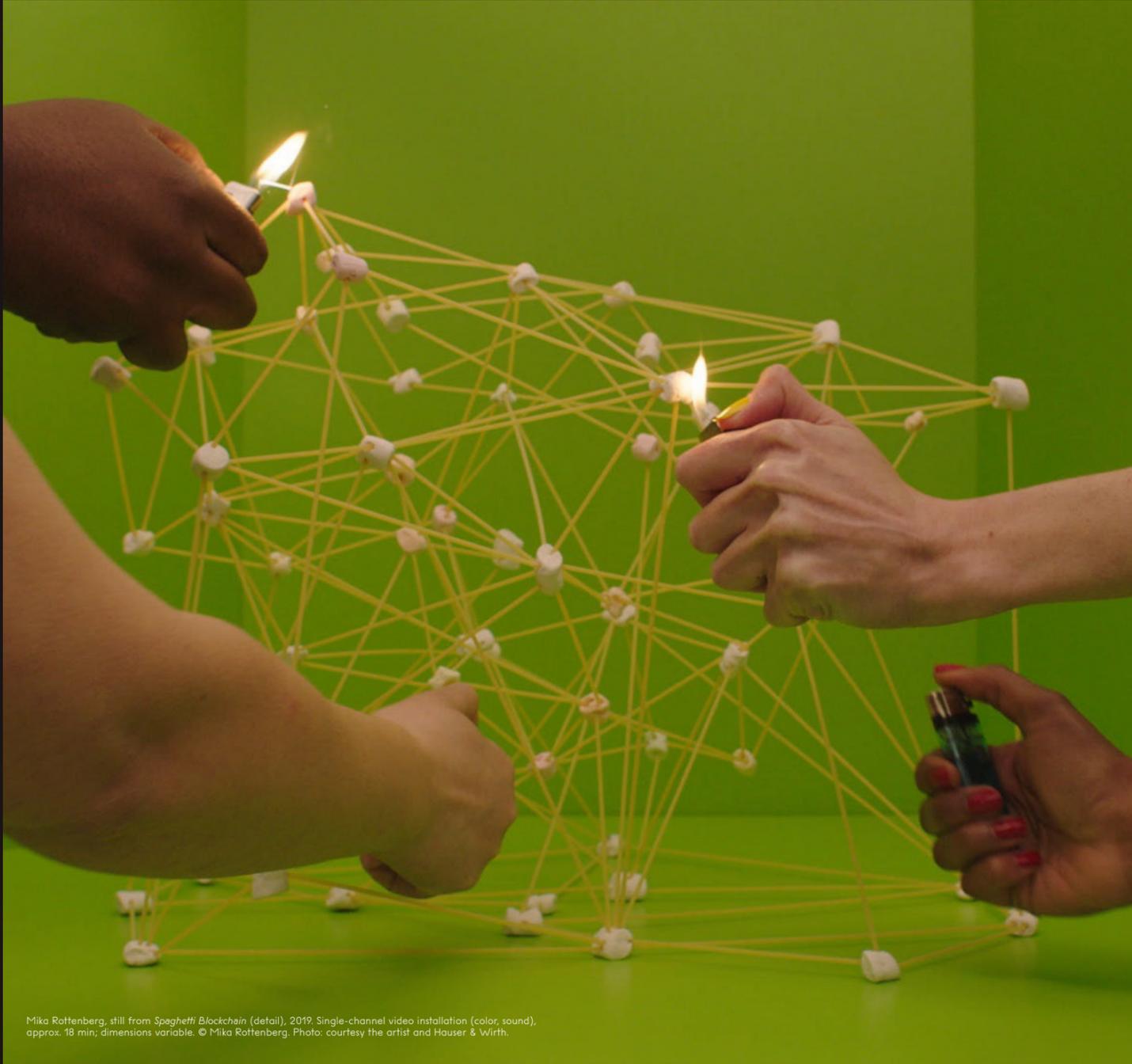
\$12 US / \$14 CANADA
FILE UNDER ART AND CULTURE
DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 15, 2020



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Issue 150 / Winter 2019-2020

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Mika Rottenberg, still from *Spaghetti Blockchain* (detail), 2019. Single-channel video installation (color, sound), approx. 18 min; dimensions variable. © Mika Rottenberg. Photo: courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



**Nicolas
Moufarrege**

**Recognize
My Sign**

**Oct 6
2019**

**Feb 16
2020**

MCA

MIKA ROTTENBERG: EASYPEICES
OCT 1, 2019–MAR 8, 2020

QUEENS MUSEUM

Still from *Redistribution*,
2007–present, single-
channel video, color,
sounds, length
variable, installation
dimensions variable.
Images courtesy of
the artist and Petzel,
New York.

Seth Price by Kim Gordon



Performance, digital animation, music, fashion design, video, writing, along with painting, drawing, and sculpture—they are all part of Seth Price’s distinctive and tenacious creative practice, in which he examines the making of narrative and meaning and the conventions of interpreting art.

Like many artists working today, he found himself more and more frequently invited to deliver artist talks to “explain” his works. In 2007, Price filmed his lecture-performance at the Guggenheim Museum and made it the base for *Redistribution*, an ongoing video project, now in its eighth iteration. Price continues to re-edit and update the original lecture footage, adding examples from recent works (among them his 2012 DOCUMENTA fashion show) and obliquely related material lifted from the Internet (including snippets of suggestive documentaries on plastic production intercut with web images of violence and gore). The nonlinear and frantically paced collage also includes digital animations of warped, snaking pencils and cartoon characters, as well as staged TED Talk-y bits and commentary by Price (who keenly avoids discussing content but rather focuses on process).

Redistribution’s current version, an eighty-two-minute video, had its theatrical release this fall at New York’s Metrograph. The musician and artist Kim Gordon attended one of the screenings and later got on the phone with Price to record this conversation.

SETH PRICE: We are on. Are you in Los Angeles?

KIM GORDON: Yeah, I’m at home. I’m afraid to be outside too much because of the fires going on. Today it doesn’t smell as bad in my neighborhood as it did yesterday. The smoke is all blowing west.

SP: Thank you for sending me your new album [*No Home Record*, 2019]. We’ve been listening to it in the

studio. It sounds really good. The less “rock”-y tracks were especially exciting for me.

KG: Oh, cool. It was fun getting to work with Loretta Fahrenholz on the music videos. There’s a really good one for the song “Earthquake” that I think you’ll like especially. It’s about surveillance.

SP: So you just got through crazy PR for the album?

KG: Yeah. I feel like I should ask you some of the horrible questions I get asked.

SP: Alright. Yeah, sure.

KG: You know, for example, “What’s it like to be an icon?”

SP: That’s you. Last week somebody interviewing me asked, “How does it feel to be heavily googled?” That’s about as close as I get to that question.

KG: I noticed you incorporated some narrative into your film, *Redistribution*.

SP: Yeah, well it started as an artist talk, so that’s kind of the narrative.

KG: Would you ever go more fully in that direction—you know, just throw in some narrative lines about crushing the narrative?

SP: I feel like whenever I start to hold onto a narrative, my hand gets too hot and I have to drop it. John Kelsey has been looking at this project since 2007 and he said, “You know, it’s really at the point of falling apart now. It’s barely containing itself.” I felt like that was true.

KG: Well, I don’t mean literally a narrative, but just interjecting more shit into the spread, so to speak.

SP: Oh, yeah. Interjecting more shit is my MO. The film’s supposed to be a box I can put anything in. I’ve been editing it without considering the structure, and that’s why I think it’s starting to fall apart a little. Which I like. I like artworks that are constantly

in a process of becoming and then falling apart, over and over.

KG: Why?

SP: Maybe that’s how I feel as a person. (*laughter*) You know, becoming and falling apart and getting yourself back together again and dissolving.

KG: I like it when I see bands do that. I’m always hoping something will go wrong. (*laughter*)

SP: Or when talks or interviews go horribly wrong and you’re in the audience going, Yes! This is fantastic.

KG: I feel like it’s hard to achieve this in an installation because it always ends up kind of looking good. In my own work, I find that to be a problem.

SP: You mean when things are falling apart, they’re also kind of pulling themselves together and shining?

KG: Yeah. If it’s falling apart too much, it looks premeditated. It’s really hard to achieve the falling apart thing.

SP: Yeah. You want to look at a painting and feel a do-not-care spirit. That’s part of what makes it exciting. But you can’t forge that. Though if you could forge it, that would be amazing.

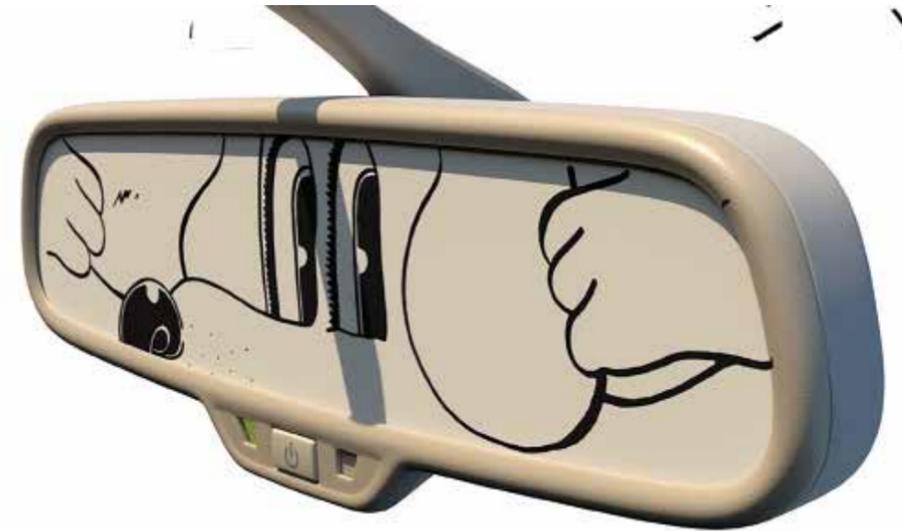
KG: I’ve been reading Ben Lerner’s book *The Topeka School*—I don’t know if you’ve read it. I’d never heard that term he uses, *the spread*. It’s a debating technique where you throw everything at the opponent. Your film is almost a visual version of that.

SP: I’ve read some reviews. Do you like the book?

KG: I do. It’s a lot to process. Do you ever think about white male anger?

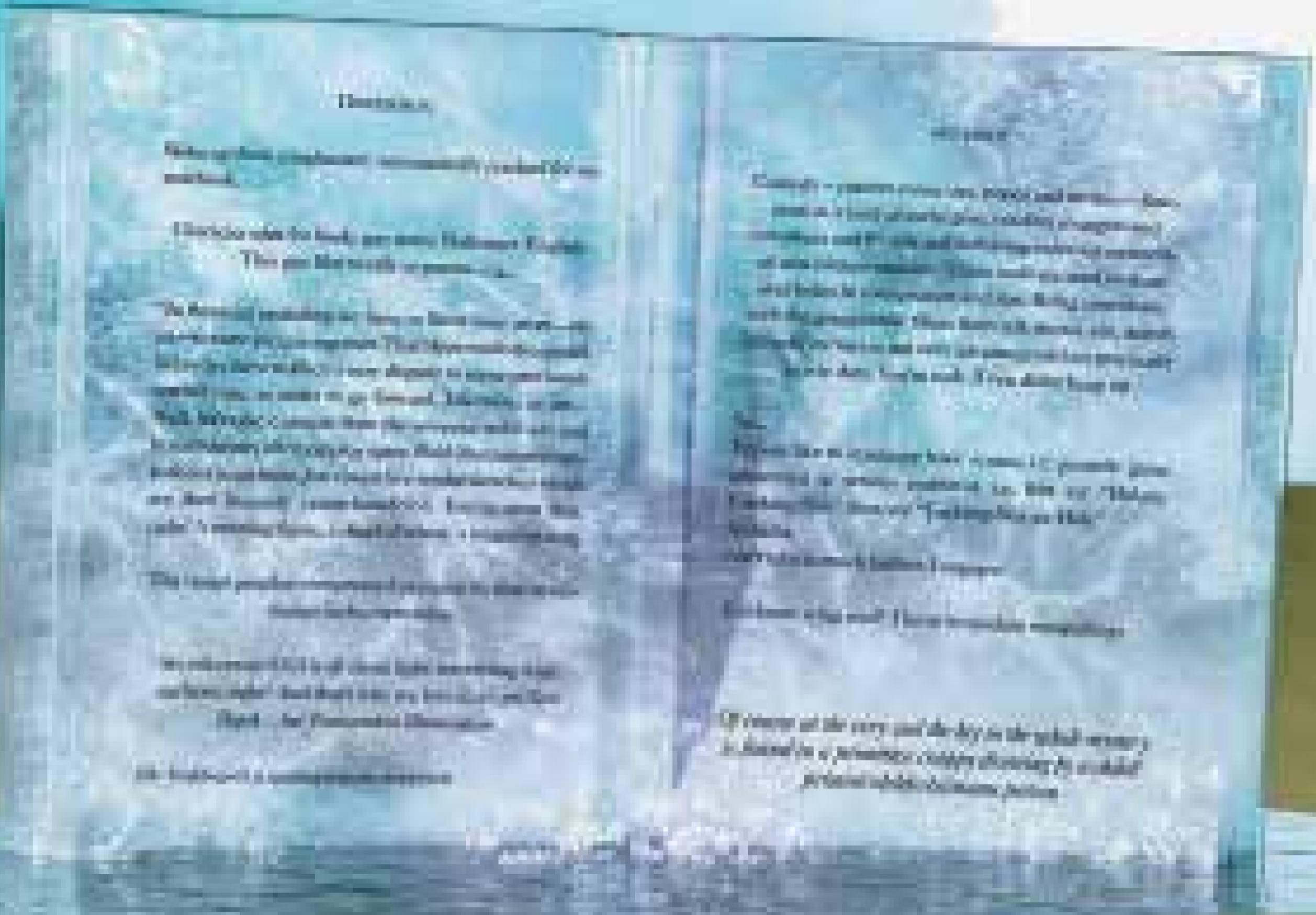
SP: I don’t think I’ve addressed it in the way that it sounds like Lerner’s addressing it. It seems to be something you can address in a more or less direct way in writing, but it might be harder for me to articulate that in

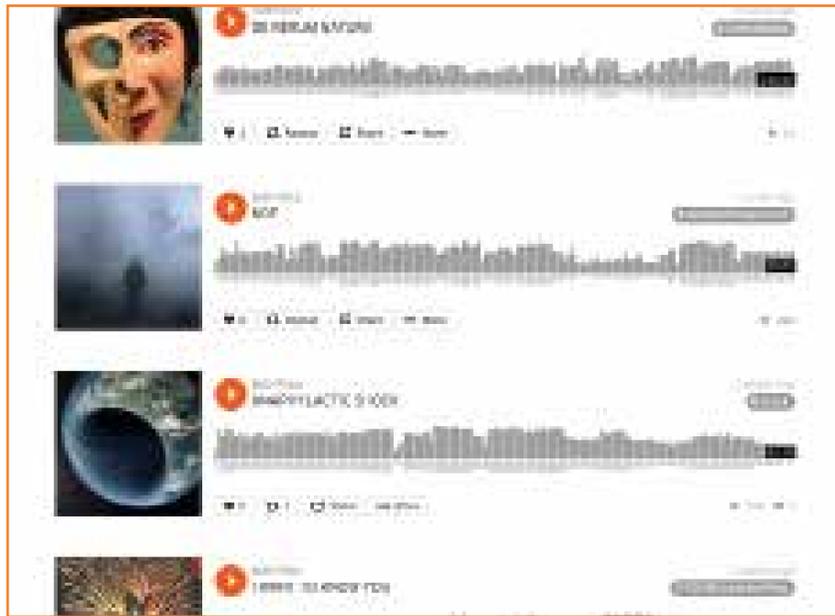
Still from *Redistribution*, 2007–present, single-channel video, color, sounds, length variable, installation dimensions variable.



MIRROR REVELATION: WHOSE EAR — WHOSE FACE?

Spread from *Seth Price: WROK, FMAILY, FREIDNS*, published by Ooga Booga, 2016, softcover, staple bound, 9.75 x 13 inches, 40 pages, edition of 750.





visual art, at least in a way that isn't insanely corny.

KG: One could say your book *Fuck Seth Price* touches on the subject, but it's not really about that.

SP: No. I made these light boxes showing patches of skin. They were a way for me to think about whiteness, but they weren't about white male anger.

KG: How does performance enter into your work? I feel like it's there.

SP: It's performance at a remove, maybe. I'm experimenting with a lot of different media and materials and approaches, which means different roles. As an artist you have to project yourself into those things in order to be there, in the moment. You have to put away the fear that maybe you're not a sculptor or a fashion designer or a filmmaker. It's good in those scenarios to forget about the idea of professional versus amateur, or all the names and titles.

KG: You do work in different mediums, and I hate to use the term *performance artist* or *conceptual artist* or *post-conceptual artist*, but then you're doing a fashion show, writing books, now making this film. I mean, people ask me all the time if my painting is like my music.

Price's SoundCloud page with original tracks by the artist.

SP: Right. "Can you please identify yourself?"

KG: It's like, Do I have to? (*laughter*)

SP: Yeah, and then you're being evasive.

KG: You also did that work trying to erase yourself from the Internet.

SP: Oh, I never really called it a work. I just thought I would try it. I guess that was an interesting gesture.

KG: I thought it was cool.

SP: I mean, it was also futile. I persuaded *Vogue* and *Interview* and other places to remove some profiles—that's no victory.

KG: What about the playlists you make?

SP: Oh, the stuff on SoundCloud? *Soundtracks For Artists*?

KG: Yeah, you just do that as you're procrastinating in your studio, right?

SP: Exactly.

KG: But it's performative in a way.

SP: When you share it with somebody, yeah, it is. I probably love music more than any other art form. But music's so easy to consume now, and the value approaches zero when there's no packaging and you can play anything. That's a crisis for people who grew up with a different way of being with music. I feel like a lot of people my age just give up. The SoundCloud mixes became a way for me to be with music, to open the floodgates to all this material streaming through me, and try to be with it by using it: editing it, cutting it up, slowing it down, layering it, and putting these mixes back out there for other people. I feel like there's some word from the world of canal construction for a device that allows the floods in and redirects them. That's probably an approximation of how I make all my work.

KG: Why do you think music is so...? It's like it goes right into your brain, and it doesn't need any architecture. It makes its own environment.

SP: It really doesn't care about the issues you talked about before—you know, Is this conceptual art? Is it a gesture? Is it performance? Music has no use for that.

KG: Do you care that musicians are now all called artists? When did that start happening?

SP: No. I like it. Though I know what you mean—when everybody's a curator and everybody's an artist, it's this moment of cringe, like, We should recapture the territory. But in the end, I feel like, Fuck it, why not? People can call themselves whatever they want. I don't want to defend some idea of expertise.

KG: But it's interesting because there are musicians who think of themselves as musicians, and others who think of themselves as artists, or entertainers, I guess. Maybe that follows the line from vaudeville or—

SP: Lana Del Rey? Or who do you mean?

KG: Big, mainstream acts, like Beyoncé. Pretty much all pop singers, I guess. And just the idea of a big show. It gets so elevated. I mean, I don't watch the Grammys, but when I've watched them, it always felt like Las Vegas-style entertainment to me. It's not about the music anymore. Well, it hasn't been just about music since MTV started.

SP: Was it ever? Music is such a big tent, to use this cinema word. It's the music, but also the performance. It's what you wear and the subculture you plug into, the attitude—

KG: It was the record cover before it was the video—

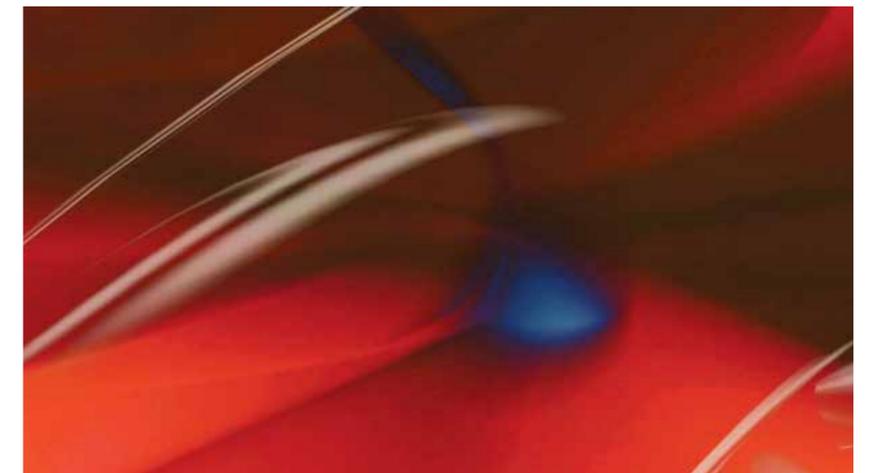
SP: The design on the cover. The dance that goes with the music. It's so many things.

KG: Do you think that sense of popular culture has affected the art world?

SP: Yes. Totally.

KG: Like artists now are expected to do more interviews, and I sense, to a certain extent, you're having fun with that.

SP: Sometimes. There were some years when I wasn't having fun with it and tried to turn my back on it. But I guess I can just operate in one or zero, so I went back to embracing it. But yeah, the culture has changed. An artist in the '70s, like Carl Andre,



Stills from *Redistribution*, 2007–present, single-channel video, color, sounds, length variable, installation dimensions variable.

could have done a MoMA show and the catalog might have been a forty-page, staple-bound picture book. Now, catalogs are huge. There's pressure to make sure we assign value, not just monetary, but also in terms of historical or critical value, or even just eyeballs. Things are supposed to be easily consumed and quantified. So there's pressure to reproduce what exists. I don't want to entirely condemn it, though. I don't think it's either/or; it's more like and/and. You keep adding on and adding on, and hopefully it dissolves again.

KG: Right—like the spread. (*laughter*) It's a way for things to collide. But even Carl Andre wore those overalls to show what a Marxist he was. That's a kind of showmanship, I guess.

SP: Yeah, all those guys who were like, We identify as laborers... You and me, we're laboring at this.



Untitled, 2019, dye-sublimation print on synthetic fabric, aluminum, LED, 115 × 60 × 4 inches.



Grew up in a box marked
Freedom, 2018, inkjet,
acrylic polymer, acrylic
paint, glue, plastic, wood,
and metal, 56.25 x 41.75
inches.



KG: It's true. We're doing an interview. But it's just a necessary evil, I guess. There's more and more stuff out there in the world. It's just getting people to take notice.

SP: Or you can rely on a small group. I see myself as making work for my friends, and I have a hard time envisioning much beyond that. I've purposefully shut down a little by getting off social media and trying to insulate myself. I mean, you must deal with that a thousandfold.

KG: Yes. People had so much more interest in this record than I thought they would. After I put out my book [*Girl in a Band: A Memoir*, 2015], I kind of leapt up to another level of visibility.

SP: Do you think that's because of the written word and the way it propagates versus these other forms?

KG: I don't know. I just didn't realize what a big deal books were.

SP: Yeah, and it's not just any book. You wrote a memoir.

KG: I actually thought memoir was so over.

SP: That's exactly the moment to pick it up again, I guess.

KG: I don't know. Maybe I won't do any more interviews after the record is done.

SP: For real?

KG: I mean, it would be good to say that... (*laughter*) I sometimes feel a weird obligation. It's so stupid.

SP: Yeah, I know what you mean. You want to play ball. You are part of the machine, and you want to honor that.

KG: Exactly. So when you watch *Redistribution* with other people, do you see it differently?

SP: You know, I can't watch it. I didn't watch it during its theatrical run at the Metrograph in New York.

KG: I'm sure you must be sick of watching it. But when you go back in and work on it, you literally don't watch it again? How do you add on to it? Do you insert things more randomly?

SP: I was adding to it here and there over the years, and it was growing by accretion. I wasn't really thinking about overall composition. I think it's more like a coral. I'll give you an example. There's a passage in it that we shot a few years ago in a studio where I made some metal furniture sculptures. Earlier this year, a curator named Raquel Cayre put together a show of chairs by artists and designers for a furniture store in Tribeca. She wanted to include these chairs she'd seen in the film. I said yes partly because I had this idea to hire a videographer to go to the opening and shoot footage of the art in that setting and include it in the next version of *Redistribution*. I thought it might be cool as a way to jump outside the film, to break it, and refract what it's saying in terms of this other world of fashion and design. So I'll put that into the film. I'm going to do a kind of surgical strike and not pay attention to what's around it.

KG: I like that. It makes sense. I'm obsessed with looking at Airbnbs online because of that relationship between design and art and how it creates these interior landscapes.

SP: And self-presentation, even if you're taking yourself out of it.

KG: Yeah. They're like art to me. I keep trying to figure out how to transform it into something for a gallery show.

SP: That's a tough one.

KG: But something about taking that art-as-decoration, and putting it back, refurbishing it somehow.

SP: I love that. I did a music video some years ago where it's all interior design shots; each one is less than a second. It was for a song I made—"Feeling In The Eyes."

KG: You should write some lyrics.

SP: Well, it does need lyrics; it's an instrumental. So, if you know any singers out there...

KG: I think it's interesting and weird how everything has become so convenient. Everything is about convenience now. There are playlists on Spotify that just have titles describing moods.

SP: Mood shopping?

KG: Yeah, you know, "Chill Work Vibes." A lot of them are just "Chill."

SP: Do you actually check out those chill vibes?

KG: Um, I haven't. But this music writer, Liz Pelly, wrote a great article about Spotify ["The Problem with Muzak," 2017]. She talks about how you might suddenly be advertising for, say Nike, because if your music's on Spotify, they're allowed to make a playlist using your music, if it makes them look cool or something.

SP: You've got stuff streaming on Spotify, right?

KG: Yeah, I do. I'm such a hypocrite about it now. For a long time I really hated it. I resisted. And then I got Sonos in my house, which is even dumber because no one can listen to music on it unless they download an app. So then you have to use a streaming service, but you can also play records. I have my record player plugged into it.

SP: Yeah, I'm not into streaming. Amazon had a disagreement with a publisher a few years back and stopped working with them, and then they reached out and deleted copies of the publisher's books right off people's Kindles. People had been taking notes on these books and treating them as part of their life, and they just vanished. That's when I realized the whole streaming and subscription model is a kind of disenfranchisement, and I started stockpiling tracks. With streaming, I couldn't make the mixes I'm making.

I don't want a book I can't write in and give to someone else.

KG: Occasionally, I'll go on Spotify to check out someone I don't know, or someone who was mentioned to me, but I don't use it regularly. But that's interesting, owning files like cassettes.

SP: Though files aren't sexy at all.

KG: They're invisible, without a body—

SP: Yeah, if somebody deleted a whole bunch of my files, I probably wouldn't even notice.

KG: Pretty soon they'll be eliminating thoughts.

SP: I'd be happy.

KG: I already have my own memory loss system. *(laughter)*

SP: Are you going to have your head down for a minute in LA or are you back out again?

KG: I'm going to London, and then I'm doing a couple of dance performances in Paris.

SP: Hold on, you're doing dance performances? No music?

KG: Yeah. I'm doing them with Dimitri Chamblas, a dancer-choreographer. It's based on contact improvisation. I have my guitar and I'm making sounds and noises but then interacting with him, like he'll pick me up with my guitar. It's the weirdest thing ever.

SP: Oh, "weirdest thing ever" sounds fantastic.

KG: It's just thirty minutes, which is a long time to improvise, for a dancer especially.

SP: Is this a whole new thing for you?

KG: We've only done it a couple of times, but I used to be really interested in dance. I did Martha Graham

when I was a teenager, and one reason why I wanted to move to New York was because I read something in a dance magazine about Yvonne Rainer and I was like, How is film a dance? I was just curious about that whole scene, and eventually I did a contact improvisation workshop with Steve Paxton. I've done a few things with dance. I have a niece who's a dancer, and we did a performance in Berlin together. Basically there were two amps and two guitars, and we both wore these Rodarte dresses, and I told her to move without dancing and make sound without trying to play the guitar. It was a kind of cacophony.

SP: It's funny how negative instructions can produce the best results.

KG: Totally.

SP: I once taught an Intro to Video class. They were first-year art students, and there were all kinds of hang-ups about even getting to the level of making anything at all. I didn't know what to assign, so I asked them to make a "bad video." Everybody turned in their absolute best work ever. *(laughter)*

KG: There's something about setting the bar low that helps me. I remember the first time my band Body/Head played in New York, I posted, "Hey, lower your expectations." It made me feel so much better.

SP: It goes back to this question of performance we were talking about. You project yourself into something new and feel liberated because it's outside your authority or your taste or your style. You're like, Well then, who gives a shit? I'm just going to have fun.

KG: Right. I did this other film recently with Manuela Dalle, who's a documentary filmmaker. I always had this idea to take my guitar to downtown LA and use corporate buildings and railings as slides for the guitar. So we made this video, and I think I'm going to show it in my exhibition at 303 Gallery in New York in January.

It turned out much better than I thought it would. The sound came out amazing. It was kind of inspired by Dogtown skaters. There is something about how movement, electricity, and using your body changes the sound that really interests me. But not in any evolved way.

SP: God, no. We don't want to get evolved. *(laughter)* That would be the end of making stuff.

Untitled, 2018, inkjet, paper, acrylic polymer, glue, aluminum, wood, 52.5 x 84.75 inches.

