

Pisces Midheaven

excerpts from the Lenore Herb Cassette Archive

Casey Wei & Elisa Ferrari

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by Elisa Ferrari and Casey Wei

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Introduction

At VIVO, Elisa Ferrari worked as Events & Exhibitions Curator from 2013-2017. Casey Wei has worked at VIVO since May 2017, as Video Out Distribution & Outreach Manager. Karen Knights has worked on-and-off at VIVO since 1984 in various roles, and is currently the Archives Manager.

EF: Over the past five years, Lenore's archive has touched me in different ways, each time presenting a distinct set of questions... questions about the strengths (and flaws) of artist-run culture, natal birth charts, the complexities of cultural activism, the precarious lives of art workers and cultural producers, the discontent/anger/disgust in us all. ... As Dermot puts it in the Psycho-Sexual Power Game tape, "Living on the edge, working on the edge, dealing with everyone else, who is on the edge."

edge

1)-the outside ledge

2)-the outside limit of an object, area, or surface; a place or part farthest away from the center of something

CW: On my first day at VIVO, almost a year and a half ago, our archive manager Karen Knights gave me a tour of the space. As we walked through the archive, we passed by a wall of storage boxes marked "Lenore Herb." "Do you know Lenore Herb?" Karen asked me. No. "Oh, you will. She was a punk, activist, artist, did a lot of work back in the 70s and 80s with Metro Media. Very important, and very controversial."

EF: In 2015-2016, Karen and I moved the Lenore Herb Archive to VIVO over successive trips from Gibsons, where Saphira, Lenore's daughter, lived. These archival visits involved careful calculations of the number of boxes that one could fit into a Toyota's Prius, and the corresponding amount in square footage that the same boxes would take up in VIVO's archive. Each return trip, on the ferry from Langdale to Horseshoe bay and across the Lions Gate Bridge, was also a renewal of intention and a commitment to the materials, to Lenore, and to her adamant archival mind.

CW: It wasn't until this summer that I came to know Lenore. I stepped back into the archive to ask Karen something and found her going through a box of Lenore's cassettes; two boxes marked "Lenore Herb Audio Cassette

Archive” contained an unsorted collection of 100+ cassettes of various lengths and contents, containing everything from pop hits, personal mixes, concert bootlegs, interviews, discussions, jams, CBC recordings, field recordings, and various other ephemera that made up not just Lenore’s life, but a cross-section of Vancouver’s arts community in the time of a developing artist-run centre and government funding model. The first two cassettes I grabbed out of curiosity were “Cramps live ‘78” and “Lenore Herb’s Chart.” When I began transcribing her astrological chart, a conversation between her and a close friend named Brian, I did not know that it would take 12 hours and result in a 28-page document. I did not know that Lenore was, like myself, a late Virgo.

EF: I’ve gotten to know many Lenores, through the Metro Media files, her Canada Council reports, her letters of complaints, her punk and poetry video tapes, her conversations with bill bissett, Dermot, Angela, Gloria and others, her diaries, her coloured xeroxs, her self-portraits and the meticulous copies of copies of copies of correspondence sent and received.

Researching the unsorted archive of a person you never met is a delicate and uncanny process. How do you ask for permission to look, to read, to sense, to connect? How do you account for what is no longer retrievable through this speculative exercise? How do you approach the slippages between the collected documents and the accounts of those who are still alive? I know that archivists have protocols to mend these inconsistencies, but what I learned from Lenore’s archive is that each fragment, each configuration must continue to exist in multiple expandable dimensions of meaning, and take up different formats. It must instigate, not resolve.

CW: Our similarities are superficial: we’re both Virgos who live(d) and work(ed) in the Vancouver arts and music scene. But in getting to know Lenore through the documents she left behind, I do feel some kismet energy between us. As Brian tells her, “the Virgo, as I said before, classifies, analyzes, discriminates, and picks people apart. And picks themselves apart! Continually. They just have to do that, it’s just in their make-up. They fuss about how people do things, Virgos in themselves, are striving to achieve a certain perfection, a certain natural state of affairs where things are healthy. Where they’re healthy and the people around them are healthy, and things get done beautifully.” I find myself nodding along, agreeing that, *yes, this is*

so me. What's more—transcribing someone's chart is a very personal task, and there is something about the task of typing out a man (albeit a man very close to Lenore) telling her how it is, that really gave me the context to understand what she was up against, what she, in her own clear, expressive, urgent voice, never could never fully articulate on tape.

EF: The process of transcribing, typing out in a tedious (at times comforting, at times painful) ritual of back-and-forths was an exercise in intimacy. Between me and Lenore and Casey and you. Slowly re-recording pauses, utterances, overlaps, figures of speech, intonations, meowing cats, tape cuts, squeaking doors, local news, short silences, long silences, all the hesitations....

I've often wondered if Lenore and I would get along. Are Virgos and Capricorns compatible, after all? Virgo is a mutable sign, and Capricorn is a cardinal sign. Virgo are flexible, and can get accustomed to any situation. They form a good team with Capricorn, as long as they have clearly established role in the partnership. Capricorn likes Virgo's devotion to their friendship. The goat is good at initiating plans, and the virgin will later carry these plans further.

CW: Karen saw a spark in how Elisa and I both were drawn to Lenore, and suggested we meet to see if there could be any overlap, and a potential collaborative project for VIAW. Elisa has a deep understanding of Lenore's involvement with Metro Media, the challenges they faced with the Canada Council, their tensions within the community, as well as details of her personal life that I, in my first encounters, could not see. We decided to digitize and transcribes all her tapes (an ongoing process), and present our findings thus far for VIAW in the form of a mixtape, this publication, and a poster of her collection. Pisces Midheaven is a curated selection of audio, transcribed text, and art from Lenore Herb's archive. Its contents reflect Lenore's dedication to music and performance art, to her relationships, to her community, to document everything, but for what purpose? That is a question left for us to contemplate, and these excerpts offer our understanding of what motivated her, as we uncover more about this legendary punk, activist, artist. Very important, very controversial.

EF: As I paste the results of my perfunctory google search "Virgo Capricorn

compatibility,” a bouquet of red roses appears in my facebook feed to remind me that Lenore Reputation Herb passed exactly eight years ago, on Sunday October 24, 2010. How did I overlook this? Is Lenore resisting my writing? Or is the Virgo demanding that the plans be carried on accordingly?

We invite you to read these scripts OUT LOUD.

-Oct 31, 2018



Valentine to you...

Feb. 12, 1975

roses are red
my fingers are blue
and chopped up
yecch.

So much for haiku. etc.

↑
Someone just told me this was a
pathetic poem.
well, they may be rite.

love more

Lenore Herb's Chart (Side A)

Featuring: Lenore Herb (L), Brian (B), Davey Longman (D), Saphira Coutts (S)

Synopsis: Brian reads Lenore's astrological chart, and the two have a very involved and personal conversation about Lenore's life. Sounds like it's summer and they're outside (birds chirping, planes, cars, dogs in the background). A steady click of a metronome runs throughout. Near the end of the tape, they are greeted by Davey Longman and Saphira.

B: Ok. The idea of a chart being that it's unique, nobody else could have this chart. It's just strictly your blueprint, and it represents kind of a really beautiful way to get into your life because for one thing, it's accessible from your point of view, that's the reason why astrology is a nice objective way to access your trip. Ok, read off your planets by sign and house position. Got a Sun Venus conjunction in Virgo here, late Virgo in the 4th house. Then, a very close Neptune Mercury conjunction in the first part of Libra, within one degree, and that's quite a burden to bear in some ways. Gives you certain strengths and talents, but also gives you other tendencies, I'll analyze that later. And they're pretty well on the 5th house cusp, your 5th house by Placidus house system is 12, Libra. And Neptune is 9, Mercury is 10, so you might as well call them a 5th house placement, they're back down there. Got Moon in 22 Scorpio, and it was just two hours away from conjuncting planet Jupiter when you were born. So it's a very close Moon Jupiter conjunction, and again this is almost on the 6th house cusp. It's in the 5th, but it's almost on the 6th, and uh there's a lot of Scorpio things you have to go through. So, I'm gonna read that as a 6th house placement. Got a Pisces Midheaven. Got Uranus in the 12th house in Gemini—
L: Pisces Midheaven—

B: Yeah—

L: Don—Michael was a Pisces (indistinct)—

3:53

B: Yeah, 8 degrees of Pisces. It's—the Midheaven is a pretty meaningful point in your life, it represents the highest spiritual thing you can attain to in your life, and in some ways, your definite duties in life. Things you have to continually grab hold of and do for the sake of society at large. Represents the point of ambition, normally, it's what people aspire to be, try to climb

to. Also represents a theme in their life they always have to deal with. It's a tendency in their life, in Pisces, as you can imagine, eh? It just even relates to the work that you do around film eh?

L: Mhm.

B: Dealing with people who are in some way looking for the meaning... being able to play in the art forms through film... find new meanings, new directions.

L: Mhm.

B: It's the Virgo dilemma in some ways too, being drawn to the—[tape cuts out and back in]—Mine is much better. Ok, we're gonna recapture for the sake of the tape, because you know it's important to have a continuum of what we're developing. I'm just going to hit the high points of what was missed. Um, I had just finished talking about your Pisces Midheaven, so we're going to have to go back to that point and recap just the essential things. At that point I would have been moving on to say that you have the Uranus in Gemini, I don't think I would have even talked about the aspects. But I have to tabulate them again because normally that's what I do, I just put them on tape: Uranus and Gemini in the 12th, Cancer rising, Mars coming up in the first house in Cancer, would have conjuncted the Midheaven about—or uh conjuncted the ascendant and risen in the east about an hour and a half after you were born. Uh, so we've got the Pluto Saturn conjunction in Leo, and again the major aspects are: Sun in Venus and square with Uranus, Moon in Jupiter and square with Saturn and Pluto... Uh... then we've got the Mercury Neptune conjunct in sextile to the Pluto Saturn conjunction. We've got of course the Moon Jupiter conjunct and in sextile to the Venus Sun conjunction, and Venus Sun also sextiles the Mars in Cancer. And Moon Jupiter triumphs that Mars in Cancer. We're running okay now. Alright... now, there's a Mars Uranus conjunction going on in the skies right now and that's making for some pretty crazy things, I'll tell ya right now, but uh.... It's an interesting time to do a reading for you because transiting Venus, my planet, because I'm a Libra, is sitting right in the same degree as your moon, 22 Scorpio. Very special time for you to be organizing your feelings and emotions, regarding home, family, and those you would take care

4:43
4:45

6:06

of. Good time to discriminate and analyze. Just exactly how you give love, and how you're receiving it. And whether or not you're getting a fair shake, or even allowing yourself to get a fair shake.

L: Mhm.

B: There's trips. I can see very clearly. Ok, getting back to the beginning again, Virgo. And you know this already, so I'll just hit the high points: the 6th sign of the Zodiac is a mutable earth sign represented by the Virgin. And that sheath of wheat that she's bringing and offering to mankind represents not just pure food, which quite often is one of Virgo's interests, is good clean food, healthy nutrition for human beings, right? Keeping their bodies in shape in sort of a natural healthiness, keeping them... their mind in good shape because of the nutrition they take in. Now, that Virgo thing applies to the Virgo part of the body that Virgo rules, the intestines, where food is actually absorbed into the bloodstream, and there's actually been some research by Japanese scientists to suggest that red blood cells are created in the small intestine.

L: Whoa.

B: It used to be thought that they were only created in the marrow, but there's some indication that they're created in the intestinal area as well. So, uh but Virgo is here in some way to bring that nutrition into human life that's not just the nutrition of the body, but of the mind. And this is where the Virgo, as I said before, classifies, analyzes, discriminates, and picks people apart. And picks themselves apart! Continually. They just have to do that, it's just in their make-up. They fuss about how people do things, Virgos in themselves, are striving to achieve a certain perfection, a certain natural state of affairs where things are healthy. Where they're healthy and the people around them are healthy, and things get done beautifully. And you get that natural state of vigor and health say, in a farming community eh? Where people are kinda breathing fresh air, eating good food, taking care of animals, and you know, the smell of manure constantly, but usually they have fewer health problems—

8:40

L: Mhm.

B: —and certainly fewer mental health problems than most

other people.

L: Right.

B: So, uh that's what Virgos are trying to restore in society. Now, Virgo's strength is discrimination, intellectual qualities, they're observant, detail conscious, uh perfectionists. Their weaknesses: their tendency to look for a cause, to look for somebody to save, to almost look for illness, and sometimes in a rather symbiotic way, leech onto it and grab ahold of it, and become so involved with the person or the situation they're trying to cure that they become part of the problem—

L: Mhm.

B: Virgo can in some way almost feed illness by becoming the sole support, and sole, you know, pillar of strength for those who would not get busy with their own lives in order. And they choose Piscean types to do this with, eh? Because Pisces, your opposite sign is the type of man or uh, even human beings that you would choose to complete yourself with. The opposite sign in some ways represents the people you don't understand that confuse you and upset you, but the only sign through who you can only really, totally complete yourself, in the concept of polarities. In the opposite signs of the Zodiac.



Psycho-Sexual Power Game (I)

Featuring: Lenore Herb (L), Dermot Foley (D), unidentified male voice (X)

Synopsis: Lenore and Dermot in conversation about government funding and its implications on artists' work/life/values.

D: —so the State in supporting an art worker, what it *does* is, it... it makes you different than the regular people, right? It makes you... the artist... it makes the artist a privileged individual, in a sense it does, right? Because he is asking for direct subsidy to get his work done. We all know the value of cultural work. Cultural work is the work which creates not quite entertainment 1:03
but *identity* within the context of society. It creates an identity through culture. The worker who makes culture—in a sense it is the art worker who makes culture and not the culture being recorded by the art worker. The creation of that culture is a job and the State should, in a sense, recognize it as a job, the creation of culture is a job. Traditional culture, which is the 1:38
ongoing evolution of the society, and you have... What could be called 'modern culture' or—I hate the word '*modern*'—new culture, live culture, living culture as opposed to traditional culture, right, so you have an evolution of the traditional culture plus you have the growth of the new culture. The new culture lives with the old culture, so there is constant intermingling of society with the art workers. Society pays taxes and the government distributes those taxes so... the art worker is already getting subsidized through traditional culture for his work but he needs a direct subsidy to live on, as opposed to the university professors who are teaching the old culture and living of the old 2:27
culture more than the art worker who is alive today and working as opposed to university professor who spends 8 of his hours dissecting traditional culture and presenting it to next years' art workers and university professors—
L: That's why you don't think Canada Council grants should go to university professors?
D: That is part of the reason, that's probably the main reason.
[He sighs.] 3:26
See, you gotta think in terms of.... They are both working for a living! They are both working for a living and the university

professor artist is... taking from the artist who is working in culture, I mean that living artist who's working is supporting the university professor already by giving him subject matter.

L: Right!

D: So, in a sense the university professors have the best of both worlds, they have the old culture, which they can teach, the traditional culture and they have the new culture which starving artists make. The point is that, if people were given... if art workers were given a chance to stop worrying about their security, and whether or not their environment is safe to work in, we would see probably less psychological art form. We would get away from the idea of art as a symbolic representation of the evolution of problem-solving in the society.

4:22

[TV in the background.]

5:12

I mean, we might get to a point where art would grow outside of the psychological milieu... Ooooh... I don't know if it is relevant or not whether or not art is growing outside of the insecurity that you get forced into as a result of not having support for your work. I know that the lack of support puts you on an edge which is what is called the *avant-garde*, the edge, living on the edge of the safe world. That's sort of where we see the real development of art forms... so it sort of... it really is a sado-masochistic tradition, this forcing of artists out onto the edge. Because we have the urge to create, you have that intensity, you have that energy, and if it can't be channelled, it has to be channelled into your work, it has nowhere else to go. So your work is... becomes... that's probably why there's so much new expressionism... because there are so many people on that edge, trying to cope with channelling the energy they have, their creative forces into work. You see, you may end up with a society like the Platonic. The Greek society which had an art form which was the Ideal, which was outside like in Plato, right—

7:20

L (nodding): —uhumm, uhumm—

D: —where artists were totally subsidized by the State. And they were able to— or, you know, States through patriots...

[D pauses... continues.]

So, what you have is two: classical art and expressionistic art as two extremes, right?

7:35

L: Uhummm, uhummm—

D: That's why the person who writes the sonnets gets a grant, whereas the person who writes the concrete and sound poetry doesn't get the grant. They are less likely to subsidize the avant-garde because then you wouldn't see the development, so there is some sort of insane sado-masochistic manipulation going on which is part of the... Psycho-Sexual Power Game that goes on all the time, and how overt that manipulation is I haven't even begun to think about, because it is another can of worms, so to speak. Like... are all people basically evil? 9:12

L: Why do you want to stick your hand into a can of worms though? In case you get some money.... Why, you know—

D: Well... it's not that you wanna to stick your hand into the can of worms. The can of worms is... what is it? 5:12

L: You have to stick your hands into the can of worms to get the money! Right?

D: Well, like I said, the money is strictly... that's the game, that's the power, that's the whole thing, that's the underlying power that is part of that whole Psycho-Sexual Game of manipulation. And you see, as long as they are giving the person who is work— 9:55

L: —if it doesn't matter... [X coughs in the background]... if it doesn't matter, why are you afraid to write letters?

X (coughing): That's good pot! 10:05

D: I am not afraid—

L: —to say anything, then?

D: I am not afraid to say anything—

X: I think we should go on strike... 10:15

L: Why don't you say anything?

X: Lenore, do you wanna help me? We'll go strangle (indistinct)—

D: —but I *do* say things. I am trying to, hopefully, say things through the work that we are doing, hopefully.

L: **Ooooooh FUCK!** You can do that but do you think it is gonna make any difference? You are gonna treat the work the same way you're gonna treat— 10:33

D: —it's going to make any difference!

[They are now talking over each other.]

L: Yeah, do you think it is going to do anything?

D: Yes I do! Yes, I seriously and honestly do because if I didn't,

I wouldn't be able to get up out of bed in the morning.

L: You really think it's gonna make a difference?

D: Yeah, I do.

L: Oh yeah? So, when are we gonna do this great and wonderful work that's gonna change the world?

10:59

D: Influence, not change.

L: So, when are we gonna do this great and wonderful work that's gonna *influence* the world? And do you think those people... eh-eh-ehhh-are ever gonna, a) if they ever even fucking watch it, or look at it, or read it, or hear it? Do you think they'll ever fucking get it?

11:06

D: What do you mean, "*those people*"?

L: The people that are manipulating, the manipulators, do you think the manipulators... Do you think it will ever affect the manipulators?

D: Oh yeah, eventually!

L: 'Eventually' in about fifty years, maybe?

D: Who knows, maybe in 5 000 years—

L: **Oh fuuuck.**

D: But you're certainly not gonna do it tomorrow, you're not just gonna get out there—

X: Oh yeah, the revolution... Onward revolution.

D: Yeah, because that doesn't do anything, that just rearranges the fucking game, puts another set of assholes in power.

X: Now...

[They talk over each other.]

12:00

L: —I'm not saying tomorrow.

D: Well, the next day! The next month?

L: I'm just saying... I'm just talking—

X: —action, direct action!—

D: —(indistinct) rearranges it!

L (distressed): I'm just talking about words, I am not talking about physical action!

12:08

[They talk over each other.]

D: I'm not either! I'm not either—

L: I am just talking about words, not talking about physical action! I am just talking about writing letters, direct communication, actually, instead of building a whole thing around it like a videotape and sound tape that maybe in a hundred thousand

years, you know, people will slowly synch into the unconscious. I am talking about writing an actual letter to people with, actually, directly coming out and saying in lines—

D: —the problem—

L: —in actual English, what you think. That's what I am talking about!

X: (speaking to neither L nor D): How does this work?

D: What you are talking about is more in terms of... [pause] 12:50
...it's along the lines of... instigation... that's what it is!

L: Instigating.... [She laughs quietly to herself.]

D: Yeah, it is instigating but... the only problem is that when you instigate change, you don't necessarily have the next step there... I don't think that—

L: Well, who doesn't have the next step? 13:22

X: Where is the on button...

[Faint TV noises in background.] 13:33

D: So, when you think of solutions to problems... It's easy to point out problems, right? But thinking of solutions to problems is a little bit more difficult... it's a bit more tricky! 13:47

L: Well, a lot of the time—

D: You see, if I could think of a proper parallel—

L: A lot of the time, people don't even know that there is a problem.

D: I think that most people do know that there are problems but they tend to want to ignore them because they don't have solutions, and that's why they try to work *around* the problem. Because when you get bogged down in unsolvable problems, it's like being stuck in the fucking mud!

L: Yeah! That's right! 14:14

D: You know—

L: —it sure is—

D: —so that's why people go *around* the problems, you know, that's why! 'Cuz they don't want to get *bogged down* in them!

L: But a lot of the time you get bogged down into the problem without even trying...

D: That's... Yeah, right, but when that happens then you have to deal with it but until that point, you're creating your own conflict until you get to the point where, you know, the problem comes to you, you know, but before that you're creating it! You

see, the problems aren't really there, you create them!

L (flatly): Really? 15:01

D: They become yours!

L: Problems like paying the rent and stuff like that aren't really there, did we just create those?

D [exhales]: Paying the rent aren't prob—that's not a problem! 15:08

L:Ah, okay! Getting enough to eat? Well, getting enough money, so that—

D: Those aren't problems! Those aren't, what I call '*problems*'!

L: Well, I think they are some people's problems—

D: Those are real! That's life!

L: They're problems for me! Maybe they're not problems for you, but they are problems for me!

D (growing exasperated): *Uhhh*—getting enough to eat and paying the rent? That's existence, you know! That's not a *problem*. Existence *isn't* a problem, you know. Being alive is not a problem, and paying the rent and having a place to live and food to eat is part of being alive. I don't see those as problems. 15:30

L: That depends on what sort of level you're maintaining, you know, what kind of level of lifestyle you've got...

D: No! That's your own problem if you pick a lifestyle that you have to work so fucking hard to achieve, then it may be a problem. In a sense, you have to... have enough... time, money, and power... to reach a certain lifestyle! I mean those are the things you have to have. You can't just get it and... 16:30

L: Well... I don't know, see, there is certain self-maintaining, you know, levels that you can reach, you know. If you can eliminate things that stand in the way of your being able to produce a product and market it, which is basically what we are talking about... um, you know, producing a product is one thing and then marketing it is another thing.

[TV noises in the background.] 17:19

L: I guess what I am trying to deal with is that fact that, you know, I don't see any, um... 17:30

[Another long pause, TV noises.]

L: I don't see any marketing solution. I see a lot of...

D: —art product! Art products! 17:46

L: Yeah. I see a lot of problems in it and they're all very political.

D: With avant-garde art or traditional art?

L: With avant-garde art!

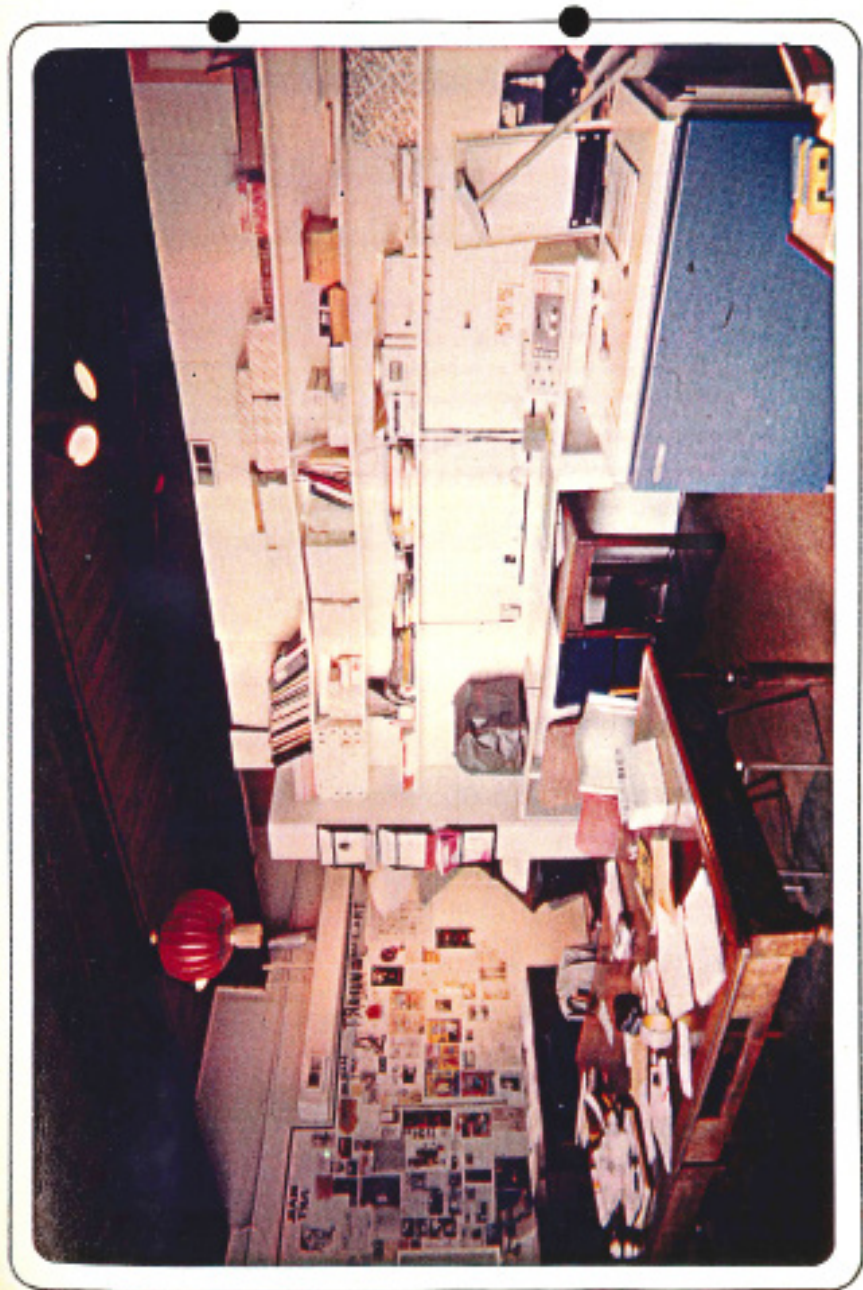
D: Living on the edge, working on the edge, dealing with every-one else who is on the edge—

18:21

L: —yeah—

D: —making it back to the mainstream as a product—

L: —so that people who live on the edge can survive.



Mark Diamond at Metro Media

Featuring: Lenore Herb (L), Angela Kaija (A), Mark Diamond (M)

Synopsis: Lenore video tapes and audio records an interview with Mark Diamond, moderated by Angela. Mark comes from a theatre background, and is a director and a writer. They try to 'get to the point,' that is: what is performance art versus theatre.

A: Hi, Mark.

M: Hello, Angela.

A: So, why don't you tell us a little bit about what you do.

M: Uh... I don't want to talk about that, let's talk about something else.

A: Ok...?

L: Let's try to get directly to the point, then. Let's uh...

[A laughs.]

0:57

M: Yeah! That's—

L: —what we're doing—

M: —who's out there?

L: We'd like to know—

A: —that's Lenore—

M: —hi.

L: —Lenore. Hi, Mark. My name's Lenore.

M: I, well, you know, I do theatre work and I do some writing...

Hi Lenore.

L: Hi.

A: Mhm.

M: And, I do some directing. That's what I—

A: Right, right.

[L laughs.]

1:13

A: So you do 'theatre,' this is what you'd call 'Theatre.'

M: I do mainly theatre, but I also write short stories.

A: Ahh....

M: Yeah... What you'd say, Lenore?

L: 'Kay, what I wanted to do was to get directly to the point.

M: What is the—

L: It is—it is good to get a little bit of your background—

M: Alright...

L: —that is relative to what we're doing.

A: Let's get straight to the point.

L: So, Mark is in theatre, we got that sorted—

M: Well...

A: And writes.

L: And writes.

M: Yeah.

L: So, he has an idea... a very good idea, a very evolved opinion of what theatre is anyway.

M: I'm evolving, all the time.

L: Evolving, and evolve with it.

[Silence.]

L: Good!

A (giggling): So, what was your question—

L: —no—

M: Let's get to the point!

[Laughter.]

1:55

M: Alright.

L: Ok. The point is! What we want to know is... do you have a definite opinion on the difference between theatre performance as in acting or performing in theatre, and performance art as in... the...

M (speaking along with her during her pauses): ...in theatre... oh...

2:19

L: ...popular genre of pop performance art... that's now being... developed these days.

M: Yeah, I guess I do. Theatre seems to take place in certain conventions and once you go beyond those conventions people stop calling it theatre. Uh, they don't necessarily call it performance art, but they used to call it 'happenings' in the 60s, right? When people went out and did street theatre—[car screeches by outside]—or 'street things.' And... as far as the difference between performance art and theatre, I think you can have performance art with almost no theatrical elements but I don't think ...see if we can turn this around... I don't think you can have theatre with just art elements. You know what I'm talkin' about?

2:29

2:44

A: Mhm.

M: Uh, so...

A: There's—it's the word 'performance' then, there's a sense of—there's a difference between art, and theatre, and performing

art.

M: Yeah. Now some performance doesn't take much performance skill, but is conceptually interesting. Uh... some performance art, in my opinion, tends toward theatre and doesn't work because the artists, who have the concepts... are not good performers. In my opinion, there's a lack of real performance skills in a lot of the performance art that I've seen. Now, I don't mean they have to be actors, or dancers, or acrobats, but they have to have some facility of performance if they're going to get in front of an audience. Because as soon as you get in front of an audience, things happen, and that dynamic of relating to live human beings there, changes things, and it's always a surprise to the person who's performing in one way or another. Things don't go the way you plan them to go, so it's not enough to have a concept, you have to behave in front of an audience, I think. Or you have to, somehow, in some way, take that performer-audience dynamic into account as you're evolving your performance concept, or your art concept...

L&A: Mhm.

M: I mean, even to get in front of an audience to unroll a roll of toilet paper, you know... It's a lot harder to do it in front of an audience than it is to do it... at home, or at the studio. You know?

A: Mhm.

M: And I notice performance artists like to work with toilet paper, have you noticed that? 4:44

L&A: Mhm, mmhmm!

L: Quite often, yes, it seems to be one of their..

M: It's a motif. Now, I'm not suggesting this means anything—
[A holds back laughter.] 4:54

L: No, but—

M: Or it's a metaphor. I'm not suggesting it's a metaphor.

L: No... [laughs.]

M: No, nothing like that! Don't get me wrong.

[L laughs a sustained laugh.]

M: But, there is a lot of toilet paper in art—

[L&A burst out laughing.] 5:04

L: No, ahem. True... uh...

M: Fuckin' right it's true! 5:12

[More laughter.]

M: Sorry.

[Everyone pauses and resets.]

A: Do you think that performance art and theatre have things to learn from each other?

5:23

M: Yes.

A [laughs]: —What?

M: Take structuralism for example.

A: Yes.

M: In theatre, one thing that is starting to be used in theatre that is taken from performance art is structuralist techniques. So that you'll actually, for example get a gesture score—a score of different gestures. This might be one—[gestures]—this might be two—[gestures]—a phrase like, “How are you today?” might be three—and you actually give those numbers a structure, you might build them into a geometrical form, so that you would have them all built in to a performance structure—

L&M: Mhm.

M: —and I think that's something particularly in Europe, not so much here—but we've been using it in our work—can be integrated from performance art into theatre... The other way around [chair squeaks], I don't know [sighs lightly], I think... a lot... of conceptual artists have a certain contempt for the theatre and they really think that we're *theatrical*. Theatricalization begins art, and so, I really think there's a feeling about that. And I think... I think it's kinda silly. I think there's a lot of hypocrisy... and... *snobbery*... and... *pseudo-definition* around performance art. Everybody has a definition of what it is and what it isn't.

A: Mhmm, mhm, yeah—

M: You go to performance art, and let's say you go to a performance art thing... Ok, so the audience is made up of 100 performance artists and there's this one guy doing his performing art, or this one gal doing her performing art out there. So, 99 of them say, “Well, that's not really performance art...” Right?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah—

M: And I say, well you know, to paraphrase Marshall McLuhan... well, the only thing I can remember of what he's ever said, was, “Performance art is what you can get away with.”

A: Mhm...

M: Uh... what was the question?

7:13



Auditions

Featuring: Lenore Herb (L), Valeeta (V), Angela Kaija (A), unidentified woman (X), Dermot Foley (D).

Synopsis: Lenore tapes Valeeta's monologue from the play, *Big and Little* by Botho Strauß (1978) with a small audience of Angela and 4. Angela asks Valeeta questions about Theatre vs. Performance Art, and Valeeta tries to answer them, but is unable and the conversation quickly stales. X revives the conversation with Valeeta as Lenore leaves to do something. Lenore is sneezing and coughing a lot, seems she has a cold, and returns with Dermot, who turns the conversation into a critique of the Canada Council.

V: —go head it's up to you.

L: Let me get you in the camera...

V: I was going to stand up.

L: Okay, go ahead, yes. Do whatever you'd like... whatever you feel the most comfortable with.

[Sounds of adjusting, shifting.]

0:25

V (speaking lines, in an affected, emphatic delivery): Of course. No one will be turned. It's a figure of speech.... All this time. Not one.... How could they?!... Going is going.... I'm going.... Things are dissolving.... We know that from science!... Or if you like, the guest book!... Book.... Losing script.... Mouth losing rouge.... Things are dissolving.... The soil is losing its seed.... Death is losing its dead.... Things that belong together are sick of each other and fly apart! Just like cosmos in general, it's exploding, slowly, endlessly, outward! Oh we don't fall as we often dreamed, we fly—upward, and—away!... From each other.... Seeing like this.... things now for the first time take on their actual weight. Cosmos... as super cosmos... upward and away. Why take a stand against the turn of events?...

0:40

[Pauses, indistinct voices of people far away, maybe in another room or outside.]

2:30

...LISTEN CHAIR, WAKE UP YOU LAZY OLD THING. (Voice wavering in intensity) Just you and me.... We're sitting here tight. You're on the ground, I'm on you.... Oh, the turn of events have just rolled over us, you say? That's no reason to let

2:34

yourself go, you! A person has to always want something. The clock... has to strike something! Ding! Dong! Gloria.... Oh! The beautiful sky! Unique each time—and clouds! Wet bellies... air shows!... Ding! Dong! Gloria!

[She gasps.]

Today, heaven lies around us like a cave... a womb... a garden, and soon we the little earth will come into the woods. Ding... dong... Gloria...

—Doesn't Lottie know what Lottie's saying?

—No. Gracious lord, all your bribed, your misbeloved doesn't know anymore.

—Ahh you call yourself my bride—(adopts a damsel voice) oh, I say, totally out of courtesy oh mighty father, I didn't know you're so... closeby.

—He makes me feel... so... little! I can see it coming, he'll get me to where I'm nothing. To send... everyone away, and then... start in... on me... to send everyone away, and then slowly start... his witchwork on me. Oh...

[5:11]

[She stops.]

....That's it.

[5:28]

A: Thank you. Great.

[A claps.]



Scott Watson at Metro Media (Side B)

Featuring: Scott Watson (S), Dermot Foley (D), Lenore Herb (L), unidentified woman (X)

Synopsis: An interview with Scott Watson on performance art: what it is, what it should be, what the group thinks it should be, how it compares to other art forms, etc. Not a very engaged conversation, but some valuable insights are recorded.

L: Uh... theatre performances have often been described as something that takes a performer, where all you really need, to have—um to do theatre, you just need is one performer and one member of the audience. Um... do you have any basic formula for performance art, like that?

18:30

S: No.

L: No?

S: No, and there couldn't be one because as we've been discussing, it includes pieces of Joseph Beuys, that are done privately with no particular audience—

L: —that's right—

S: —and, pieces like Robert Wilson's that are done in theatres, and in many ways resemble an opera—and go on night after night—

L: —and require a massive audience—

S: —yeah—

L: —to appreciate—

S: —yeah.

D: Do you think that it all requires documentation, just in order to exist? That's the only real prerequisite for performance art to exist? Just like Terry Fox, and those people in California who are doing things like brushing their teeth and then writing it down as performance. Right? Afterwards—it wasn't, you know—

19:25

S: A lot of performance art, which, its entire purpose is the document that is produced.

D: Definitely.

S: And that document then becomes a piece of art, goes on the walls of museums.

D: Mhm. Right. Art books.

S: Art books. Um, I don't mind that stuff, but I'm always a little wary of it.

D: Yeah, the motives.

S: Well, not the motives. Just... um, it seems self-defeating....
Like Hans Haacke's art seems very self-defeating.

20:30

X: ...What does he do?

S: Uh... he's not a performance artist. Well, I guess he has done performance pieces. He was asked by the Metropolitan Museum to do a piece, so he did a piece where he found out what all the board of directors did for a living—[everyone laughs]—and of course they all had their fingers in numerous bloody parts, and he just made big plaques what the companies were, and where these companies operated—

20:53

D: And what they do...

S: And what they did. Um...

D: Sounds great!

L: Why do you find that self-defeating?

S: Oh, well the Metropolitan never showed the piece.

L: They never did!

S: No.

X: But in the sense of his own integrity, maybe it wasn't self-defeating, or something.

[Pause.]

21:25

S: ...No, I guess it wasn't. Um..

L: But it did get written about. It did get documented—

S: Oh it got written about a lot, yeah. It was a theoretical piece. Ok, I take it back, it wasn't self-defeating.

[Polite laughter.]

21:50

D: That's pretty good.

L: Yeah it goes right up there with the coyote piece. Well, um! I'm—

S: —we're not resolving this are we?

L: I think we're covering a lot of interesting areas, we get to touch more on and.. and explore....

S: The interesting thing to me is Artaud's place in all this. To me, Artaud is such a... an astounding theoretician, and a lot of performance artists—what they're doing—I keep wanting them to read more Artaud—

D&L: Mhm, mhm..

S: —because it seems to me that's where, if there is really a possibility of performance art really appearing on the horizon of

culture as its own event, that it would be through Artaud, and understanding what he was up to.

L: Mhm.

S: And he wanted to bring back ritual, um... he wanted the audience to be totally convulsed by what was going on... and he wanted to erase the proscenium, [someone gets up to leave] the difference between the performance space and the audience space..

23:25

D: He wanted to redesign theatre completely, physically redesign it...experimental theatre.

S: And he wasn't —his idea of theatre wasn't just, you know, a series of buildings that presented works of literature. He hated that. His idea was much more all-encompassing, and he saw no difference between theatre and life—

D: Mhm—

S: —and his main attack was on life, not on theatre... and that's what performance art seems to be struggling to do. It's a.... Once it gets codified as some sort of art and categorized into various kinds of performance art there exists, and the kind of art it is, and the kind of art issues it addresses or can address, then it's effectively dead.

D: Mhm.

S: For what it really seems to be aiming for, and...

D: What do you think it's aiming for?

[Silence.]

24:42

D: You've probably already answered this question...

S: Well... no I haven't. Um.. a new world?

24:57

D: Mhm. Socially... or otherwise?

S: Yeah... a new human universe.

D: Yeah?

S: It seemed to be quite revolutionary.... Although, a lot of performance artists aren't conscious of that potential in what they're doing.

D: Does that mean like new morality? That's being progressed through performance art?

S: Is there a new morality that is being proposed through performance art?

D: Uh... I tend to think so yeah.

S: What is it? Can you say?

D: Uh, conservative.

S: Really?

D: Yeah, yeah.

S: More repression?

D: I tend to think so yeah.

L: Just because the form is dead? Or?

[Footsteps, door closes.]

25:48

D: No, I just see it as being uh... just present in sub-conscious is the repression of consciousness—

S: Repression of consciousness...

D: Yeah. That's my own personal view, I see in accordance—

S: Oh! Well I don't think that's conservative, I think consciousness is the villain of the piece.

D: You think so?

S: And so did Artaud.

D: Yeah. Well I'm not saying... that's what I see, in mostly the censorship issues coming out nowadays through art. The... sort of confusion that you get in—when artists do get, to use the word 'overtly' political ... and they... well, I suppose they're expressing humanity. And desire for humanity. So, I can't really see it as being a new world that they're aiming for, you know—you say that subconsciously they're doing this.

S: Well I didn't say that—that sounds very idealistic, and utopian, and 19th century.

D: Yeah [chuckles]—

27:05

S: Performance art is most effective—the more subversive it is the more effective it is.

D: Mhm.

S: And um, I don't see much performance art that is truly subversive.

D: Mhm.

S: And if they read more Artaud then maybe they would become more subversive.

L: Well, let's face it. You can't have subversive art when art is being, um, financed by the government, hehe. To the tune of millions of dollars. I mean, let's face it, it's state art, what we produce. The majority of art that is produced in Canada... uh

the majority of artists who are able to live and survive as artists are surviving because they are government funded and... supported.

S: Mhm.

L: And what they produce is safe.

S: Mhm.

L: Um, you know—non-subversive, non-political, um... dull, dead art.

S: So, if performance art was really to survive, or flourish, or grow, it would have to find another patron, other than the state.

28:16

L: That's right.

S: And, in theory that patron would have to be the people.

L: That's right.

S: So it would have to have an audience.

L: That's right.... And that's what we have to develop...is an audience, and—

S: —and in order for it to have an audience, it has to become more and more like entertainment.

28:48

D: Well maybe has to become a marriage between theatre—

S: —is that the next step in that logic?

L: Well, yeah—that's why I've been trying to—I'm trying to find out whether or not it's possible for performance art to survive intrinsically, rather than as—rather than have performance artists or performance art survive because it's, uh you know, something from the entertainment corporation. And, uh... if it takes a portion of time for it to become entertainment in order to gain an audience, and then start to develop an audience's taste, I don't know... That's something I'm trying to find out if that's what in fact is happening. Or if anyone can see that—

S: Mhm.

L: —as a possibility.

S: I don't think that is happening.

L: You don't think that it's happening? You think it's just dying a slow death?

S: Well it's a possibility—but if you really want to do that, if you really wanted to do performance art that was aimed at the general public, you would have to drop modernism. Because the general public is not clued in—

L: Modernism?

30:17

S: Well, if you do something that looks irrational for the sake of irrationality, that's an idea that's well established if you're in an art situation, that people watching will know what you're doing, why you're doing it. If you're doing it for, a general audience, they won't. Things like that—I'm trying to think of—Randy and Berenicci did their pageants for a general audience. Um...

L: Do you think it lost a lot because of that?

S: No, I'm trying to think if they did...

L: Mm.

S: It seems to me that they could work up to that. But at this stage, their work is full of references to art. Art is not a general concern.

L: Right, so the average person can't understand.

S: Art is not a general concern.

D: No.

31:22



Metro Media Extraordinary Meeting, May 1982

Featuring: Unidentified Man/Facilitator (1), Dermot Foley (DF), Lenore Herb (LH), GX Jupiter-Larsen (GX), Steve Lowther (SL), Jordan MacDonald (JM), Tim Miner (TM), Don Xaliman (DX)

Synopsis: An extraordinary meeting is called to discuss a letter of complaint by Peter Lipskis (PL), producer and curator of film programs at Metro Media (MM). In the letter, Peter criticizes the direction of the centre and suggests that the position of coordinator and office manager, at that time held by Lenore, be transferred to another individual. The conversation brings to the group's attention MM's organizational flaws, the lack of support for the coordinator, and the overall challenges of running a multidisciplinary centre with limited funds.

1: —that's what we are trying to effectively do here, keep proper minutes. Do you think it's important and we should clarify who is here and present? 26:39

LH: Okay let's do the role call. You start!

DF: Dermot Foley, a member of Metro Media (MM)...and a volunteer worker.

TM: Tim Miner, member of MM, sometimes volunteer.

SL: Steve Lowther.

1&LH (simultaneously): Why are you here? 27:13

SL: I don't know! Someone invited me.

LH: Yeah but are you member of MM?

SL: No.

LH: Well then, you're just an observer.

1: Are you even interested in what is going on here, I mean?

SL: To an extent. Yeah. I'm just listening.

1: Okay.

LH: Are you... you are interested as a potential performer, perhaps?

SL: Perhaps so.

LH: Lenore Coutts¹, director of MM, and also coordinator. 27:36

JM: Jordan MacDonald! I don't think I am a member.

LH: Yes you are!

JM: Oh, I am.

DX: Don Xaliman and also a member of MM.

JL: Jupiter-Larsen, director.

LH: —and you work here.

JP: And I work here.

28:08

1: Okay, so we're past that now... What is the issue of this meeting?

DF: —to discuss the letter which he wrote—

LH: —which PL brought—

DF: —in lieu of attending the meeting.

1: Okay. If they all at one time designated members of this board had been together for a meeting, was there any plan issued for today's meeting?

DF: No.

LH: Well, the issue that I think that PL wanted to discuss was the direction. Doesn't he say that in the letter?

1: Yeah.

28:53

LH: —the direction of MM— [the others murmur, pages shuffle] —well, he gets really personal—

1: Yeah. Well, do you want me to read that out?

LH: I don't think there is a relation to this—

1: I didn't really think it was relevant.

LH: I don't think it should be discussed. I think it is a very personal opinion and if there is a problem... if there actually is a problem, then uh—

29:20

1: Well, I find the way he ended the letter kind of vague, imbalanced, not too coherent: "There are only a few of the reasons that I suggest the position of MM's coordinator and office manager be transferred to another individual who is capable of doing the job in an orderly and even-tempered manner." He has not supplied any actual platform of *who* would be that individual. His supposed interest here in the letter, which he outlined very clearly as his interest for the future of MM, seems to be a bit vague also because he is not here to clarify any further. Most of these points are quite general.

30:09

LH: I think his interest in the future of MM is to find another coordinator.

1: Would he be a good coordinator? You know, would he fulfill the role? I mean he is saying that someone is not carrying out the rule properly or effectively.

LH: No. He stated several times he's not interested in the functioning of MM at all. The only thing he was interested in doing was curating the film program *if* the Canada Council funded it.

1: Is anyone who has been critical of the functioning coordinator—

LH: —they're even here, the set of complaints—

1: — no, I just wanna go further on with that...

LH: Ah, okay.

1: Anyone who has complained about MM's coordinator/functioning, etcetera, have they ever expressed an interest in becoming a coordinator of MM? Taking on the responsibility?

31:07

LH: No.

1: What about offers for programming of things going on at MM?

DF: Could you be more specific?

1: Well, ideas for putting on shows and performances, suggested, i.e. carried out successfully, continued involvement in volunteering time, on that basis? Do you understand what I am saying?

31:37

DF: ...Not fully. I sort of understand that you are saying... You want examples of—

1: —other than a few key individuals mentioned so far doing the posters or the functioning, putting up ideas for performances and shows and then carrying them out and seeing them out to fruition—

DF: — mhm —

1: —has anyone else spent that much time involved at MM? Like, the other members of the board, or anyone for that fact, who would seem like a good candidate to become coordinator because they have shown their aptitude to do a job in an “orderly and even-tempered manner.”

32:20

DF: Other than the core workers who specifically come here and put in hours, no!

1: So that somewhat unrealistic—

DF: —to say that there should be another director?

1: Right. And, yeah.

DF: Unless he's implying that myself or Gerald or Don...

LH: Well, can I say something?

1: Mhm.

LH: What is....Have I not fulfilled my duties as a coordinator?

1: Okay, in that context we should maybe outline what you feel your duties are and how you have been taking care of them.

LH: Okay.

32:57

1: Assuming that this is on tape and in the minutes.

L: Okay. So my duties, as a coordinator—

1: —actually, have they ever been outlined by the board of directors?

LH: No they have never been outlined and I have spoken to two other coordinators in the city. One is the coordinator for Women In Focus, and one was the coordinator for Cineworks, and we both expressed opinions to the fact that all the members of the board of directors expect *us* to be responsible for everything down to the last detail, for things that we are not responsible for. Our main responsibility is to facilitate other people, other committees to do what it is, you know, to coordinate the other committees that are supposed to do the jobs that are here. Um, what we end up doing is *everything* because people just don't seem to be able to finish or complete the jobs that, you know, they are assigned to in committees, and so we end up taking the main responsibility for them and we have to be ultimately responsible...

34:36

1: Okay could you outline that? The basic functions?

LH: The basic functions?

1: What you take care of, what you oversee.

LH: What I take care? Okay what I do is, I make sure that posters for an event are done and go out on time—

1: —press distributor.

LH: Press distributor. Um, I see that all the communications with government agencies— I take major responsibility for communicating with the funding agencies. I write the grants. I am the main coordinator for grant applications—

1: —hold it, hold it—

LH: —I make sure that they are done and sent out on time.

1: How did all this come about? Like, you just ended up doing it? Was it ever decided it?

LH: I was— I was elected to do that from the old board of directors. The old board of directors elected me to continue as the main coordinator. I have been the main coordinator at MM for two years now.

35:26

1: Uhhuh. Has the recent board of directors ever contested this

35:49

37:23

1: —so, so far no one has backed up their criticism with any sort of valid ideas to replace the way MM is functioning at this time?

LH: I have difficulty, you know, knowing exactly what my duties are because so far I have been doing everything—

1: —do you think it would be effective if that was outlined, the job of the coordinator, more defined?

38:17

LH: Well the problem, you see, we are running a media centre here that everyday, there are new things to do and there are new people that walk in and want to do different things. We are not, uh, we don't have a strict policy of what we do and what we don't do, we have a very open structure, so that we're adaptable, so that whatever the needs of the community are that come up we can adapt to those needs. The community does not have to adapt to us. We adapt ourselves to the needs of the community. Is there anybody else who wants to say something about the functioning of MM?

39:05

1: Well, okay. So far what you said is that, it's not been a defined job at this point and there has been a lot of *expanding* as the demand expands for services to the general community. Do you think it would be effective if the coordinator's job was outlined in such specific terms?

LH: Um, I think—

1: —do you think it is even possible?

LH: —I think, I think—

DF: —realistic—

LH: —well, realistic. I think... does that mean that if my job is defined and something comes up that my job does not define, does it mean I am not supposed to do that?

39:54

1: Good question! Who would be around to do that, if you didn't do that?

LH: No one.

1: Uh-huh—

LH: —and that seems to be the main board of contention is that when things do come up, I am not supposed to do them, and because that seems to be what he means by, “does what she wants.” It is less a matter of me doing what I want. It's me doing what I have to do at the time in order to make MM a viable

41:00

41:13

42:23

to set up the equipment.

I: Is there anything in coordination right now, with few more members being trained?

LH: I've tried— I've— I... People have asked me to train them. I've trained them when they've come in to do workshops. Now, they don't remember things from the time I showed them to the next time because they don't bother to practice it themselves on their own. They don't bother to come in and—

GX: —and utilize the equipment that they have access to.

LH: —and utilized the equipment and do that. So I end up having to tell people maybe two or three times the same things. 43:14

I: Yeah.

DF: Also, in regard to the fact that the board of directors, each person considers themselves to be multidisciplinary, they each feel they have the right to criticize each event as it is brought up since we are so multidisciplinary, as to be great achievers in every field we offer astute criticism of every event, and this leads to stagnation because, usually, the criticism does not suggest an alternative, it rather suggests that we *not* do something rather than do something else! 44:00

DX: Do people often get turned down for suggestions as to events to put on? I mean, criticize before it even happens that way.

DF: Yes, there is usually a lot of criticism in regards to each event, such as the idea of having a Super8 film festival. This received a fair amount of discussion at the board of directors meeting and after approximately 20 minutes to a half-hour, everyone seems to come to the conclusion it was a good idea. As regards to events being turned down as a result of this criticism we each seem to have... people who have put on events or wish to put on events... seem to have enough willpower to stand up to the criticism because there are no alternative things suggested or discussed.

LH: In other words, what you are saying is that the people who are criticizing the events have no alternatives to offer themselves in replacements for those events—

D: —therefore, we ahead and do what we—

L: —well, there is one thing in particular...um, I 'd like to get



Lenore Herb's Chart (Side B)

Featuring: Lenore Herb (L), Brian (B), Davey Longman (D), Saphira Coutts (S)

Synopsis: Brian reads Lenore's astrological chart, and the two have a very involved and personal conversation about Lenore's life. Sounds like they are outdoors and it's summer time (birds chirping, planes, cars, dogs in the background). A steady click of a metronome runs throughout. Near the end of the tape, they are greeted by Davey and Saphira.

B: Exactly. And the point is Lenore, for you to get more mature and more comfortable in your need for a home, your role as a mother, your role as a woman able to run her own affairs, you've got to in some way, take the burden of power in the family, and in some ways, run their affairs. Now I started to do this with my family, I won't take any shit about what they think about what they're doing. I don't butt in where I'm not wanted, but I don't let them dictate in anyway what I'm doing to do or not do. And it took it upon myself to take over this role, and I've taken on a role in the family where I'm protecting them, I'm sort of starting to manage their affairs, and sort of help them with what they need to do. [Birds chirp.] Now, at a certain point, there's gotta be some middle ground, there's got to be some kind of declaration of independence from you [chirp]. There's got to be some good honest fights and battles, so they know who you are and where you're coming from, and I'll again say that you are capable of folding sometimes and being wishy-washy. Neptune in Libra—

33:25

L: Well that's because —right—

B: —trying to get along with them, but not fighting—

L: Both of my —my mother and my father are both Sagittarius. Both very dominant people.

B: Jupiter, their planet. Moon conjunct Jupiter, sure—

L: Right? And they dominate me my whole life. Like, I had to run away from home at 18—

B: Yeah—

L: I was afraid to say, "I'm leaving, I'm going—"

B: Yeah—

L: I ran away in the middle of the night.

B: Yeah—

L: Because I was afraid to face them.

B: And they feel guilty about that, and that's one of the reasons they've made this adjustment.

L: I don't know whether they feel guilty— I don't know how they feel. I really don't.

B: See, part of them, Lenore—

L: —I think for one thing, they don't...

[She pauses.]

34:20

B: They're still probably, very interested in your life, because you are their product. You are what they've done in life.

L: That's the thing! I'm their *product*!

B: Yeah.

L: And I'm not a product! I'm me, you know? I didn't ask to be born, and here I am—

B: —I know—

L: —so I'm going to take charge—

B: From your point of view you're you, but from their point of view, you represent what they've built and tried to put together in life. And of course, your lifestyle threatens them enormously. You know, when I talk about dope to my parents they just *blecchgg*—their ears snap shut, you know—

L: —yeah—

B: —and they're super frightened, but I tell them exactly what it's like to be stoned. And I tell them about acid, and I tell them about people who are busy with my lifestyle, and I tell them about new movements. And I update them. And I try to point out my reality, and I won't adjust my reality for the sake of their prejudices.

L: Yeah...

B: So I'm bringing them, I'm dragging them kicking and screaming into this new world. My mother's tripped with it. She's a Scorpio, she's able to make the change. And my stepfather will really follow her lead. He's really intelligent enough to see that I'm not going to change overnight, that a lot of the things I do are very healthy. Even if he doesn't understand them. And... sure—

L: —that's the thing! I consider my life to be extremely healthy—

B: Sure!

L: My, my, my attitude—

B: —your philosophy—

L: —any my philosophy—

B: See, you're dealing with the generation gap still, very heavily. They're threatened by it. They're worried about it—and being Sagittarians, they're philosophy is quite important to them. They don't want anybody to restrict their outlook on life. They've got their own code of ethics and in large measure it'll be bigger and better, and get more higher style, lifestyle... and they're thinking, "Why is Lenore so preoccupied with you know uh, say, art, music, people's thoughts, their attitudes towards life rather than"— "Why isn't she more preoccupied with dressing nicely, and being the lady of society, and making a bunch of bucks and having a nice expensive husband, who's going to go out and make"—

L: Yeah, right. Executive husband—

B: —all kinds of bucks and go off flying here and flying there—you know, the whole ball of wax, eh!? And somewhere down the line you're going to have to tell them that, "Your morals and your ideals, my dear mother and father are corrupt, that they're fucked up, that they're creating a lot of your dilemma and pain," and that you will continue to be your person, and they'd better adjust to the reality. [Plane passes loudly.] It's hard! It's going to be difficult for you, but it's your way of finding yourself. Now! Let's move on. See other things. Because I've got a Mercury Neptune conjunction like you do, and bloody well I'm going to talk to you about that one.

36:33

[L chuckles.]

36:51

B: Because I've made some of the mistakes you have... Start through the planets. Mercury in your chart's in Libra. Now, with the Mercury in Libra, you'll have quite a sense of balance, of rapport with people, of the intellectual dance of trying to achieve some middle ground. A need for intellectual justice and fairness. An urge for people to be sensitive to each other, to relate to each other. That's part of dope— you get stoned... anything you do is transparent, it hangs out, if you're uptight it shows! If you're being an asshole, it shows! And when you get stoned with a group of people, you sort of obtain a mutual sense of closeness and sharing, and you nurture those who are fucked

up along, and you help them gain strength and energy, and you know uh, you sort of, uh, tone down those who are being sort of abrupt, or too crazy, and you enter a rapport into the group soul. 37:40
Now, in your chart you've got a Mercury Neptune conjunction, Neptune rules drugs. Rules music, rules film by the way—

L: —mmm—

B: —rules art history, rules imagination. And you've got Mercury, ruler of Virgo, conjunction of Neptune, ruler of your opposite sign, and the Midheaven, Pisces. Now, you've got quite a burden in life, with that Mercury Neptune conjunction because you'll be very often the person that interprets other people's mute needs to express themselves, or explain themselves. You'll be the one almost who tells them what you assess them as, and how you can see their dreams and their fantasies. You'll be the one that helps interpret it to them, helps organize their life. 37:58

L: I can see visually. As far as my visions... my inner ideas and conceptions of things—

B: Mhm, your intuition?

L: —are very pure, I see—

B: —very pure —very pure. Very pure. Your intuition, your telepathic abilities, your clairvoyance, all very strong. Your psychic life. Thoughts you have about somebody who comes into your head. You know, trip with that. Use that, indulge in your daydreams and do work in that psychic world because it's very much a real work of the world, it's not bullshit! 38:52

L: I know.

B: The subconscious, is you know —

L: —is the real conscious—

B: —yeah, really the real consciousness eh?! 38:58



The Haters



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.08



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Are You (A) Punk?

Featuring: Angela Dodwell (A), Lenore Herb (L), with initial intrusions by Dermot Foley (D)

Synopsis: A conversation about what is punk. Angela is preparing to host an interview with punk rock band D.O.A. on co-op radio. Lenore and Dermot advise Angela on how to approach the task. Lenore provides a spirited rundown of what she believes punk is.

D: —first of all, you ask them if they're punk, right? 17:29

A: Yeah.

D: If they say "no," then you just go and interview someone else—

A: —if they say "no," right? I've asked several people. and they say, "No, no," all "No."

D: If they say, "Yes," then you ask them *why* they think they are punk and, "What is a punk?"

A: Yeah. Yeah.

D: You know?

A: Right.

D: That's what you ask them! And that should be all you need there because most of them will do all the talk for 20 minutes—

A: —if they are a punk?

D: Yeah.

A: Well, I don't want to ask them questions where I'm going to have too much tape.

D: Where are you going to be doing this?

A: That's what I wanna help with.

D: Where are you going to be doing this?

A: That's also what I wanted to ask you, where is a good place to go?

D: I don't know. Walk down Granville Street. 18:12

A: Yeah. Yeah. I was thinking about a specific place—

D: —"Are you a punk?" If they say, "Yes," then you take them out for a beer. and they'll talk all day and drink all the beer they can.

[They laugh.] 18:25

A: What do you think of that, Lenore? Is that a good idea?

L: No...

A: Do you want to come too?

L (in a very listless/disengaged tone): I don't have time. No.

A: No, no.. So... that was on the questions of what to ask a punk. 18:42

D: It is really simple! First, ask them if they are punk. If they say, "Yes" then you ask them, "What is a punk?"—

A: —these are some of my questions that I have already—

D: —yeah! That's all, that's all you really have to do.

A: "Are you a punk?" Let's see, where is it? [She shuffles through papers.] 19:00

D: "What does it mean... to be a punk?"

[Pages turning.]

D: They'll have all kinds of interesting answers: "Well, fuck you if you don't know."

A: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

L: Why don't you just —

A: —"Do you see that you express a lot of negative emotions through your... through your music?" 19:15

L: That's one thing you should do. You should probably go down to Zulu Records and talk to those guys and ask them...

A: If they think they are punk?

D: No. No. Ask them about punk!

L: Ask them about punk. Yeah, and first of all, ask them if they think they are punk—

A: —oh, that's a good angle!

L: Yeah, but you should have... don't you have a tape deck to record stuff with?

A: No—

D: Oooh, that's what you need!

A: —cause I am not—

L: —well that's what you need to do! 19:37

A: Oh, I will! Oh, I will@ I am gonna get that.

L: You are gonna get that from Co-op radio!

A: Yeah—

L: They're gonna give you one that works.

D: There is a gig happening at the (indistinct) Hall... The D.O.A.— 19:43

L: —yeah, next week on the 12th! That's where you should go—

D: It's a benefit for (indistinct) the American Indian movement.

L: That's where you should go!

A: Can you get me an introduction to D.O.A.? 19:55

L: Oh, yeah! We'll be there (indistinct)—

D: —it is on the 16th... 17th!

L: No, it is on the 12th!

A (to herself): D.O.A.

20:00

D: No, it's on the 17th because the party is on the 16th—

[Tape recorder moves. Clicks off, and on again.]

20:04

L: Okay... for those of you who want to have the meaning of **punk** handed to them on a silver platter...

[Long pause.]

L: One— (to A) it's your turn... Here we are...

20:22

A: Here we are (indistinct) to do that!

L: To explain to... you, lazy people—

A: —and me—

L: —you, people who are too lazy to go out there and listen to what these people are saying in music. Then, we will try and explain it to you, so you can sit there in your secure little homes with your secure little macramé— [A laughs]— your secure little hand-made rugs, and your braids, and your little bandanas, and your bangles and your beads— [A stifles her laughter]— and all the things that we used to do that were so... wonderful... ten years ago... Right, here we go! All that stuff never did anybody any good!

20:55

21:21

A: What do you mean by that? You mean, they didn't get it through, the knowledge—

L: No! Whatever happened to it, you know? What happened to all the hippies' back then? I mean... What did they do? Half of them became capitalist pigs. They opened up their own little store on 4th avenue, you know. They are all selling *second hand* clothing or *Persian* rugs or gold and silver jewelry or they are teaching Est¹ or Zen or their Karate or whatever else they are teaching, you know. Whatever happened to the idealist— that idyllic world we were all going to create. I mean, you don't have to do that! There is a lot of revolution involved in that too!

21:53

A (softly): Yeah.

L: And now? That's what... that's what this music is about. It's about revolution. It's the young people who want to continue the revolution.

A: The revolution? Away from....capitalism—

L: —hypocrisy.

A: Consumerism...

L: Away from the fake, phoney, you know, idyllic life that everybody thinks they finally achieve. I mean... look at the world... it is a fucked up rotten mess! You tell me that anything is better than it was ten years ago? [Pause.] NO FUCKING WAY! 22:44

A: Nooo, it's getting worse.

L: Yes!

A: Right now it is getting worse—

L: Yes!

A: With the cutback with education?

L: With EVERYTHING!

A: With the hospital...

L: IT'S FUCKING HORRIBLE! Considering what we know 23:00
that we know now... Considering all of that... Considering all of those capitalist pigs are still in charge of everything, that still control everything. And you what's even worse? It's that here amongst the revolutionaries, amongst the people who are the alternative society, we can't even understand each other. You know what is the worst thing about it? It's people from the alternative society— [Cat cries in the background]— the so-called 23:32
alternative society that have to go around labeling people and things and phenomena... without really thinking what it is that they are labeling.

[Cat continues to meow.] 23:44

A: But the punks label themselves, right?

L: Well... no.

A: They call themselves “punk”?!

L: Someone else already did that for them, you know?

A: So they accept, do they?

L (yawns): Yeah, because it is a movement... [Long pause, cat continues to meow.] It's a movement in its own right. It *is* a 24:17
movement. it deserves to have a name. It has to have a name but it is not like... it's not like, “Oh, those crazy kids. Oh, those poor fucked up individuals,” you know. I mean, it's people who don't understand what is happening to society. What do they think those kids... what do they think people in their teens and their early 20s are doing? I mean, how do you think they are managing to handle it all? I mean, it is really hard on kids. I mean, it is *really hard* on kids. It's way harder than it was on us!

I mean, we didn't have to face half of the things that these kids
are having to face today... Not total world destruction the way it
is now. I mean that's what kids who go to school are conscious
of: complete annihilation of everything...the whole world. Ev-
erything. It is not just, you know, "Well put that behind the wall
and lay down and cover my head" or... "Get to the bombshelter
on time and I will be okay." No! Everything, gone... and what-
ever is left will be sorry that it is alive.

25:05

25:30

25:50

[Long pause.]

L: That's what it is all about. I mean, that's what D.O.A.'s first
song on their latest album is about:

26:00

War!

What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing!

War! Good God

What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing!

You know, and that's what these guys are labelling 'punk', these
guys are calling it 'punk.' I mean... I mean... they are punk too!
Don't they realize that, you know?

26:40

[A starts to say something, but L jumps back in.]

L: It's not just a... it is not just a movement... I mean... it is not
like music, it is not just *musical*—

A: —Nooo!

L: It is way, way more than that!

A: It uses music to say what they wanted to say—

L: —music is a vehicle for saying something!

A: Lenore, what do you think is the best format to go on co-op
radio for us? Do you think for us to dialogue or...or for me to
draw out questions?

L: I think what you should do... I think, first of all you should
make an explanation of what it's about, and I think you should
begin by saying that— [furniture squeaks loudly]— people have
gone around labelling a movement without understanding it.
They haven't bothered to listen to what these kids are saying!
They haven't bothered to empathize with what these kids today
are facing.

27:13

[Furniture squeaks again.]

27:26

A: What backing have you got for that? Like, do you hear people saying something that they are not? ...What makes you feel that they are not being interpreted, that they are not being—

L (quite livid): —*WHAT GIVES ME THAT BACKING* is the fact that a lot of people go around... “Ooooh, you are a punk!?”

A: It's in the appearance right —

L: “Oh, you are punk too, aren't you!?” You know, really— I'm realizing now that I am 35 years old, I've been a goddam beatnik and a hippy and every goddamned thing. I am probably older than they are, I've probably been a hippy longer than they were and, and you know... as soon as I saw it happening I picked up on what was happening right away and I *listened*! When I went down there, I felt like I was...I felt like I'd been REBORN again!

It was wonderful! *It was fantastic!* It was the first time in years that I've ever heard anybody with any guts get up and do anything... And here are these kids with all this energy, you know, coming up and saying “Fuck you, assholes! Look around you and see the REALITY of the situation!” They're **realist** is what they are... Those kids are **realist**. We're sitting around and fantasizing with ourselves...fooling ourselves... You know, we are pulling the wool over our eyes.

28:19

A: Well, what happened to me is that I just got confused!

28:52

L (mockingly): Well, you know, there's all these people, “We're going to move to the country and we are gonna have a family and have a garden and have some animals and it's all gonna be wonderful and we will be so happy, and we are gonna grow our own dope, and we won't have to depend on anything”... I mean, you know, they left it all behind them, you know, but what did they leave? You know, they left their own society—

29:19

A: Yeah, right, their own culture.

L: Yeah!

A: The destruction of their own culture! But it's not a culture. It's NOT a culture.

L: It is *non-culture*, that's what it is! And that's what these kids have come out of... They have come out of a *non-culture*, something that they have to pour in some meaning into life in. And, what they show you... they're mirroring what that culture is. They are mirroring the dregs and the gutters of this society. That's what it is. That's what they see. That's what they have to

come to terms with.

A: Um... what question do you think I should put to them to get to the heart of what their unrest is? 30:07

L (yawns): Mm, their 'unrest'...

A: Discontent...

L: Disgust!

A (echoing L): Disgust!

L: Not their unrest, not their discontent, THEIR DISGUST!

A (turns page): Disgust with.... "What are you disgusted with? What disgusts you about this culture?" 30:32

L: Yeah...or... "What was the main motivation for the amount of disgust you have for society?"

A: Yeah!

A: What do you think it was their motivation for that?

L: What do YOU think it is?

A: That's it! That's what I am trying to get clear in my mind! 30:56

L: What disgusts YOU? That's the point!

A: Yeah! Okay—

L: —and as soon as you figure that out, you'll figure out what theirs is! What is it? What is your disgust for the society?

A: One of them is that everybody has to be a slave to the capitalist system—

L: Right! Write that down!—

A: —which is geared mainly for the rich.

L: Yeah! There you go!

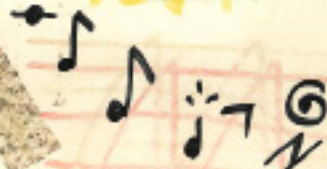
A: Uh...

L: Point a: you've hit the nail right in the head! There you go! You are turning into a punk! [A laughs.] Watch out, Angela!

¹ Editor's note: Lenore says, "Ast", perhaps a colloquialism for Asceticism.

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Mark Diamond-Metro Media (cont'd)

Featuring: Lenore Coutts (L), Angela Kaija (A), Mark Diamond (M)

Synopsis: Lenore video tapes and audio records an interview with Mark Diamond, moderated by Angela. Mark comes from a theatre background, and is a director and a writer. They try to 'get to the point,' that is: what is performance art versus theatre.

M: I think people gotta be able to do certain— they don't need to be trained actors, I'm not saying that at all. I don't care if they've never taken any theatre training at all, they've just got to figure out what it means to perform. I, uh— and the dynamics— the dynamic of the performer, and in this case the technology, or things, or stuff we're talking about, and audience— is something that has to be explored... And I don't think that's always taken into consideration. I think eventually you do, so you get someone who's very skilled, like Laurie Anderson— would you consider her a performing artist? Or would you consider her... she has performance—

[Both A and L interject.]

L: It's got elements, but she might have been a performance artist at one time—

M: Yeah?

L: But I think she's sort of evolved more into theatrical or the, uh... the entertainment arts now, (indistinct) really pure performance—

13:17

A: Well she's performing, but maybe it's the word 'art'... like, what do we see art as? What do you think art is?

L: Well, uh—

M: Who really fuckin' knows, I mean—

[They yell over each other.]

13:30

M: That's a big question!

A: THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN MARK, WHO THE FUCK KNOWS! —[She laughs.]— Excuse me.

13:34

L: Yes, but that's not what we're discussing here.

A: Well, no it is because we're talking about performance art—

M: She uses elements of performance art, that seems to be agreed on, right?

A: Mhm.

L: Right. But—

M: But you wouldn't call her a performance artist.

[L and A talk over each other.]

L: Well not any more—

A: What would you call her?

L (in a lofty tone): I'd call her an entertainer.

A: Uh huh. Ok.

L: You know? In the broadest sense of the word.

A: Mhm.

[Pause.]

M: ...Do you think as soon as someone gets popular, they're not a performance artist anymore? [He laughs.]

14:03

L: *Uuunnnn*fortunately, you'd have to... I think... once you do get that popular, you're starting to appeal to a great mass of people, know what—

M: So ah, you think performance art is elitist.

L (defensive): No, I don't. I don't think performance artists are elitist either. I'm thinking— what I'm saying right now is that the public as a whole, has not been educated to the point where they could appreciate performance art.

M: Mhm.

L: That's the problem. Not performance artists. There is some problem with the performance artists, but I think as a whole, we have a great difficulty, who en masse, know very little about both theatre art and performance art. So you're really dealing with something that's a two sided, uh... beast? Or.. something.

M (jokingly sarcastic): Well, what about Albert Speer? Was he doing performance art in WWII when he got those light—

15:00

A: Who?

M: Albert Speer, you know he was Hitler's producer—

A: Oh...

M: —theatrical producer. He used to get people in big stadiums and get them all worked up—

L: Oh, is he the one that they represented in *Mephisto*?² That

² *Mephisto* (Dir. István Szabó, 1981) was the subject of discussion on Side B of another cassette, "Psychosexual Power Game 3/4 (Side A)/ Artists ABVD Politics (Side B)," where MM compare the film's plot to Vancouver artist politics of the time.

movie, *Mephisto* —

M: I don't think that was Albert Speer, that was an actor. This was a kind of producer, he was an architect too.

L: Oh I see.

M: I mean, was that performance art?

[Pause.]

15:24

M: You know, there were these big rallies and they did a lot of nice technological stuff, and they went out and you know, did things like kick people to death and kill them.

A: Mhm.

L: Is that performance art?

M: —Can performance art be used politically?

L: Yes.

M: Well, I hope it doesn't get used like that. That's all I have to say.

L: Well it has been—

M: *Who brought this up anyway?*

A: YOU DID!

[L and A laugh.]

15:45

A: Mr. Diamond.

[Pause.]

L: ..So...

M: Ok.

A: Hmm.

M: Let's get —what —let's get to the point!

[L and A laugh. Another pause ensues.]

16:00

M: I'm ready.

A: Oh, for the point!

M: Yup.

A: The point.

L (laughing): The point. The point is we're getting to its pointed little head now...Well...

16:15

M: Alright, I'll talk for awhile. [He shifts in his chair.]

A: Yeah! Why don't you?

M: I think, any kind of event, has to be necessary in some way, ok? Do you know what I'm talking about?

A: Mhm.

M: In other words, it has to be a statement that seems— when

you see it it has to be inevitable in some ways, like, “Oh yeah, that’s right.” In some way it has to be a necessary expression of the world, or of the artist. And... it has to tap into some kind of.... [long pause] ...community of knowledge or archetype that’s beyond a totally hermetically sealed personal statement. And...I call this ‘necessary theatre’ if you want. And what I don’t like about a lot of the artwork I see is that it seems quite unnecessary and superfluous. It doesn’t connect with me in some way. And I think if this form of art is going to survive, and a lot of others, they have to make very necessary statements. What am I talking about, do you know?

16:46

A: Mhm. Yes—

M: Tell me what I’m talking about.

A: You’re talking about art as kind of, um, masturbation or just kind of like for gratuitous purposes, or art that’s real that comes from a deep inner need, and a deep inner source?

M: Right. Now, one nice thing about masturbation is that it can help you sleep.

A: Mhm.

M: But—

A: —if we want to be asleep.

M: And that’s what a lot of this art does.

A: Yes.

[L says something indistinct in the background.]

17:44

M: Yes. So, I guess what I’m asking for in any work of art is, I want it to tell... explain something about the audience to itself.

A: Mhm.

M: It has to illuminate, it has to resonate in society. It has to come from some —[phone ringing in the background]— strong point of view. It doesn’t have to be a political point of view, although I like that myself.

18:00

A: Mhm.

M: But, I’d like to see something beyond a kinky personal statement.

A: Mhm.

M: That’s why I’m starting to have trouble with all this toilet paper.... You know? [Pause.] You know what I’m talking about?

L&A: Yes, ah yes.

18:22



Theatre and Performance Discussion

Featuring: Lenore Herb (L), Angela Kaija (A), Miller (M), and an indeterminate number of audience members in the room

Synopsis: The tape starts with the end of a man speaking on theatre. He finishes, and someone named Miller steps up to answer Lenore's prompt: "Performance art. What is it?" Miller has the floor, and shares his personal anecdotes on performance art encounters.

L: ...Something strange about performance art, because it deals with time basically, is what makes it different from painting, and that's what makes it similar to things like theatre, by the way, theatre doesn't have anything to do with performance art at all, they're two totally separate things cuz theatre, is... Somebody writes a play right? And it sits around gathering dust on a shelf for a while, oh and then someone says, "Let's put on this play," and then they cast people, and then it's like, you know they have all sorts of props and sets and costumes and it's really quite complicated, and they go on tour and they sell tickets and it's quite a production, whereas I see performance art more in the context of some poor starving artist sitting in his cold garret, with his paint brushes all alone, doing this, making an object. And I think, for me performance art has to be done by one person. I'm sure that none of you have heard of Laurie Anderson but that's —

[Women erupt] A&L: Don't underestimate us!

M: I'm just kidding, I'm just kidding! I'm sure you all know Laurie Anderson, the world's foremost and finest performance artist, and I've met her too and um, she's a very warm and wonderful human being and one of my dearest and closest friends—

L: Miller, do you really think so, or is this another joke?

M: No, it's really kind of funny because the story about when I met her, she was in Minneapolis in '77 before she became a superstar, and for some reason I went to her show, I was sitting in the front row, and I was looking up at her during her set, just her standing in front of a microphone most of the time, I was just enthralled, just riveted to my seat, I just thought she was an angel or something speaking directly to me it was quite a strong experience.

[Women chuckle.]

8:42

10:44

M: Wow. I was totally blown away, cuz you know I didn't expect that, I didn't know who she was, really. So, the show's over, the house lights come up and everyone's getting up and putting on their coats and stuff and she's just standing there on the stage kind of like, "Well what do i do now right?" So, I get up and there's like 3 or 4 little steps to the stage and I just kinda went up and stuck out my hand and shook her hand and said, "Well thank you very much, that was very good," and she goes, "Oh thank you," and she told me about this workshop she was doing next Saturday and that I should come, do that so... Next Saturday I went to this workshop— I was really late, I was having trouble with the car or whatever...And, uh, I get to the—

L: —you're probably the only person in the world who has been late for a workshop with Laurie Anderson.

11:44

M: Well, I got there just in time for the last slide— [women chortle]— it was a slide presentation, and it was something like a double exposure of a bridge and a rainbow or something, and that was it. Everybody got up and, well, better late than never. So then, I go, "Hi Laurie, what's happening?" because I wanted to talk to her on a personal level cuz I had felt such a strong connection during her performance. She says, "We're going to go up to this restaurant" (which is on the top floor of the museum, Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis) "to have some lunch, why don't you come along?" And I go, "Oh ok," great you know, so I'm sort of like tagging along after, and there's a bunch of other people. And then I realize that if I went and had lunch with them I wouldn't, you know, be able to really talk to her because there were all these other people around. So we get on this elevator, we were rising up through this building, and I was talking, talking directly to Laurie saying, that uh... I had a book that she had a piece in that I had gotten in NY and she had a photograph of her in it, and anyway I wanted her autograph right? So, she gave it to me, she wrote "From, Laurie" and then I showed her the inside back cover, where I had done these drawings, like I had been hitchhiking and had gotten a ride in a semi and I was trying to draw, it was really bumpy so there were these really scratchy drawings, and it turned out one of the drawings was almost an exact likeness of the photograph of her in the book

13:09

which was just a coincidence and I was talking— and our heads were like this far apart— and the elevator was rising and i realized that as soon as those elevator doors open they'd be in the restaurant, and she'd be with all these other people and that I had her all to myself for this little while, so... She started telling me about some guy that she knew, this artist that did drawings by tying pencils to twigs, to branches of trees, and then when the wind would blow the branches, you would hold paper up to the pencils and you'd sort of draw these drawings, which I guess that one that I showed her reminded her of, and then we got to the top and the doors opened and there was a cafeteria line, and uh... you know, everyone started getting in line and at this point I realized at this point I would have to break off the conversation—

L: Because you didn't have any money to stand in line with her.

M: That could have been part of it

[Women chuckle.]

14:38

M: I wasn't too into the starving artist syndrome at that time because I was living at home and I had my grandmother to take care of me and stuff, so I was trying to get to the mystery of why I felt such a deep connection with her, and I just sort of blurted out, "By the way, when is your birthday?" and she said, "June 5th"— and I just kind of went "OH MY GOSH" just kind of, like got really dizzy and felt sort of faint and started like staggering, and she's kinda looking at me going, "What's wrong? What did I say?" right? Well as it turns out, June 5th, well it's two weeks before my birthday, which is June 19th, which means she is also a Gemini, which is like the messenger right, and it's the same as my great grandmother's birthday who was alive until I was 10 years old, my mother's mother's mother, and it's also the same birthday as the woman that I lost my virginity to, my first girlfriend for 3 years— she had her birthday on June the 5th, so... It's pretty cosmic with a capital 'K' you know, and so subsequently she went on to become, I guess, a superstar really.

16:05

L: Do you think what she is doing now would be called performance art?

horrible day

saw friends + he

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Psycho-Sexual Power Game (II)

Featuring: Dermot Foley (D), Lenore Herb (L), Unidentified Man (X)

Synopsis: An hour and a few drinks later, Dermot and Lenore continue their discussion about the Psycho-Sexual Power game, its problems and “solutions”.

[D lights a smoke.] 20:06

D: So you said, why should we live here, instead of in a better environment, a more life-supporting environment?

L: Yeah... If we are not prepared to... If we're living in a cultivated environment, which is what we are living in, then we should cultivate it. [Sound of pouring liquid.] We should add our work to others' work, to the other people's work. 20:50

D: You mean that we should become part of the game?

L: Well—

D: —you think we should become part of the game?

L: Okay. I'll just... What I am... Well, we already are, for one thing—

[D sighs.] 21:08

L: Come on! Admit it! We already are! And don't try and tell me that we are not! I'll show you a thousand ways how we are connected.

D: Do you like being connected?

L: Of course!

D: You do like it?

L: Yeah, you do like being connected?

D: No, I said to *you*.

L: You HAVE TO be connected, Dermot. You have to be connected!

D: I said, do YOU like the Psycho-Sexual Power Game?

L: *That's what I am saying!* Look, what I am saying is... I am not talking about the Psycho-Sexual Power Game—

D: —that's what I am talking about!

L: I'm talking about *surviving* in it. I am talking about having to survive in it. I am talking about... if we are gonna fucking deal with this— if we are gonna live here, we are gonna have to deal with the Psycho-Sexual Power Game! Do you understand what I am saying? If we are gonna live here, we cannot live in isolation. Do you understand that? Do you understand what I'm 21:50

saying?

D: Don't you think that our work— Well, I am saying.... What I am trying to say is that our work... involves... solutions, not pointing at the problem, because the Psycho-Sexual Power Game IS the problem— 22:39

L: —how can you *point out a solution*, without pointing out the problem?

D: ...The way to do that... you see, you have to do that, right?

L: What makes you think you have? What makes you think that your work is the solution? And what makes you think that JUST your work is gonna make the difference, if you don't say anything at the same time?

D: That's not what I said.

L: [Indistinct]— go around and talk to people— 23:27

D: —that's not what I said! Let me answer a question when you ask one. You look so ignorant! God!

L: Okay. Go ahead answer it!

D: What I am saying is that... to point out solutions... without being *part* of the problem, without pointing *at* the problem... in other words, don't include the problem in your solutions.

L: What do you mean?

D: What I mean... is—

L: —how does that apply to us?

D: Directly!

L: —directly to us?

D: Directly, that applies to us in that our work should involve solutions. The work we do should involve attempts at getting to the ideal life which is worth living. That life is a life that supports creativity and intelligence. 24:43

L: How can you do that if you're dead, from being stabbed in the back? [Pause.] I.e. bill bissett. 25:03

D: ...bill bissett, as an example, isn't dead.

L: He might as well be, some of the time.

D: bill bissett keeps on working at the ideal.

L: Right.

D: That's what keeps him alive.

L: Right. But do you think that he should be made to physically suffer the way that he does?

D: He suffers because he is part of the game.

L: Oh, well, then so are we! 25:41

D: I said, our work, OUR WORK involves solutions...“How does that relate to us?” was your question. [Cassette player clicks. Music starts playing softly in background.] Your question was “How does pointing out solutions, not problems, relate to us?” And the answer is: “It relates to us”— [Tape squeals, cassette player clicks off.] 25:52

L: Well I didn’t say that... that’s not the question I asked! [Cassette player clicks, music resumes.] 26:04

D: The question that you asked in reference to where my thought patterns are going right now is, “How does it relate to us?” and it relates to us in that our work and bill bissett’s work involves *solutions*... as a result of playing the game which you say we *have* to play...

L: No, which I am saying we are part of, whether or not we want it to be or not. We’re part— we don’t have any choice. And what I am saying is— if you are telling me that is possible for us to be *not* part of the *game* and sit here in isolation creating our creation—

D: —I’m not telling you that! I haven’t said that once—

L: —that are solutions—

D: I haven’t said that once—

L: —then you got another thing coming...

D: —I haven’t said that. You’re saying that. I haven’t said that at all! That’s not what I said! 27:12

L: What? No, but you’ve indicated that.

D: No, I haven’t!

L: No, that’s what you... No! The whole—

D: —no, no, I am talking about... no—

L: —your whole approach...you talking about, you know—

D: No!—

L: —each....day by day. Your approach is—

D: —that’s not what I said.

L: No, but that’s what your approach is.... No, you’re saying... (does a half-hearted impression of D) “So you wanna be part of the game?” That’s what you said to me. “So you wanna be part of the game?” And I said, “We **ARE** part of the game.” 27:41

D: And, so I’m saying that we must try to make our work involve solutions and not the problems. Because when you involve the

problems, you are part of the problem!

L: How are we gonna make.... how are we going to involve problems in our solutions? How are we gonna do that?

D: Involve problems in the solutions?

L: Yeah.

D: By including them in our work.

L: *I said...* What, *specifically*...how are we going to include them into our work?

[Pause.]

28:35

D: I said we're *not*—

L: —like for an example!

D: I said we're *NOT*.

L: Okay, okay, for example just tell me how we're not gonna include a problem as... give me an example of a solution and how we are not gonna include that problem in our work... Give me a specific example!

D: ...When you are dealing with pornography, you try and not to include a pornography...

29:09

[Pause.]

L: What about when you are dealing with politics?

29:19

D: Politics...*is*... the Psycho-Sexual Power Game.

L: Is it also Morality?

D: Values and Morality *are not* Politics in the Psycho-Sexual Power Game

L: They aren't?

D: They are the other things that exist.

L: Morality is not the Psycho-Sexual Power Game?

D: It isn't!

L: Politics is?

D: Yes!

L: Okay, Politics is that, is the Psycho-Sexual Power Game?

[“Standing on a Beach” by The Cure starts playing in background.]

29:57

D: Yes!

L: So... what do you do if your work is about politics, specifically art politics.

D: Your work can't be about politics, your work *is* politics.

L: Okay, okay what if your work is art politics?

D: Then you are a player in that game and you just gonna keep

the game going—

L: —but you are anyway!

D: No!

L: Yes, you are.

D: You're not going to keep the game going if you're working against it!

L: If you go ahead and send in your work... Okay, so tell me how are you not gonna keep the game going? How are you not gonna do that? How are you— by not sending away for Canada Council grants, is that what you're saying?

30:48

D: Nope, that's not what I am saying.

L: Are you saying that it is alright to send in for a Canada Council grant?

[Music gets louder.]

30:57

D: Oh, yeah—

L: Okay, so you send in your stuff to the Canada Council and you get turn down like bill bissett was...

D: Yeah?

L: ...And you tell ME that you are not part of the game? ...You tell ME that you're not a player?

[Pause. Song continues.]

31:22

D: Your work **isn't**.

L: Wait a minute... wait a minute... now you—

[Tape ends.]



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* From an envelope of Support Material addressed to the Canada Council, May 1982

