

Transcript interview
Jacqueline Grandjean & Christian Boltanski

JG: How did your work start? How does one become a great artist?

CB: for me, I was totally stupid when I was young.. I could not go to school, I could not write and also I can't write a letter and I knew I wanted to be a big artist when I was 14, because I left school at 13, so I went home and I began to make paintings and I created so many paintings when I was young you know. Like 50 big, big paintings, very pretentious, 2 or 3 meters, and I was very ambitious.

I always say to my students, if somebody tells you you are stupid and ugly, but your last piece is good, kiss him. You know, because the rest is not important. Only one thing is important. But on the other hand, you would never know if you were a good artist or not a good artist and sometimes perhaps you can be a good artist and after it is finished. I am not religious but it is really like mystic. Sometimes you understand and it seems well and after you loose the possibility to make art. And sometimes, for me, there are three or four months that I can't make art. And I am never sure that I can make art at another time you know.

Being an artist is like being a writer, but it is really like when you can't work is not to try to work. I always say also to my students something you can do is to hope and to wait. It can arrive one day and what is important is to be inside the work. To wake up in the morning and think about the work, to go to bed at night and think about the work. It is not to work, but it is to be inside the work. It is to be waiting for the work. And sometimes it can arrive. And for me in fact it is that you work when you do nothing. And you wait and you are very depressed.. but it is so difficult to do nothing.

JG: That is like meditating

CB: Yes, it is so difficult, that is the reason I make a show with you in Amsterdam or I go to China tomorrow, it is totally amuseful, but it is to do something, to be like a normal person. To have your trainticket or be on time at the airport, just to be like everybody. But if you only stay at home and wait, which is really the best, that is very difficult.

But on the other hand, it is the only way to work.. for me, I work a lot while watching TV, lying on the bed and looking at the TV, and the more stupid the TV, the better it is for the work. What is really good, two days ago I was in a theatre play in Paris, it was not good for me, but it was very important for my work. Because you can not move for two hours and I did not want to hear, so I was only in my ideas and it was very great, because you know..you could not go anywhere and there was music that you can't hear and you can think. To go to the theatre or to lay on the bed looking at the TV, these are very good things.

JG: I remember that you told me that you already have a memory of the Oude Kerk, because you were in Amsterdam in 1987?

CB: I made a group show in a different historical place in Amsterdam and I thought it was very beautiful, but very empty. But a beautiful church. And to make a group show there was totally ridiculous, because it was beautiful, but it was totally empty. And of course it was up to me to put something inside, but the more things you put in it, the more you destroy the place, because it was so beautiful. And I remember that this place was so empty, that is my memory of that.

JG: And when you came back in 2016, what was the aspect that hit you?

CB: Find a solution, I think that.. because now I think a lot about the fact of dying was the fact that it is a cemetery. And when you arrive in a place like that, first you see problems, for instance the

fact that you can not put things on the wall, or that you have the daylight and also after is to try to think about what this place means? This place is a cemetery...

JG: Yes that is true, there are 20.000 people buried here..

CB: Yes and that's why I made this piece.

You know in Japan there are also cemeteries, but there are ashes, there are no bodies there. In a way that is a 'ready place', in Japan that might have another meaning, but yes that's a ready place. And there are all these chairs and it was Catholic or something, so it was something already full of relics. The only thing that is the same is that the show I am going to make here, is going to be destroyed after. It is a little like when you see a ballet. If you never saw Pina Bausch, you lost something. There are people who have seen Pina Bausch and people who have not seen Pina Bausch, I mean you can see it after but that is not technically the same. And in that cause it would be people who can see the show and people who did not see the show. And in the show there is some old works, but the show is one new work all together. It is like a theatre play or a concept and there are people who see this piece with new and old work melted or people are not going to see it and it is going to be destroyed because the old work is going to China and the new work is going to be destroyed.

What I mean is an experience, so what I try to do, I mean I always say for me and it is great because it is a church but when you are in self-contrary it will tell you it's pain sometimes when a door of the church is open and you go there and there is a mirror, there is some light and there is a man.. oohooooohh... and you don't understand nothing, but you know something important happened. You know that it is a place to think and you spend time in this and after you go back into the city with the cars and the shops and into your life. And for me to make a show it's a little like that.

JG: It's a moment in time..

CB: Yes it is a moment and you don't understand and you don't need to understand, but you feel something was important that you don't understand. And that is what I tried to do in your place. Because there are a lot of tourists and they say: 'What happened?' Stupid, or.. but perhaps some of them will be moved, but not understand. The worse would be if the visitor would say: 'Oh there is a show of a post-conceptual artist, oh it is terrible because it destroyed the church'. I hope that the visitor will not see it as a post-conceptual artist. Yes it is a revitalization for the church, a kind of decoration for the church...

I think if the show in Amsterdam works out well, people must imagine that it was there, or it was something that was not an art-show because it was made for some kind of religious fiesta.

JG: And there are 20.000 graves and actually underneath every grave there is a person, so it might be also something that people becoming aware of when seeing the tombs that there is this collectiveness to it, but also an individual aspect..

CB: they are or will be forgotten these people. They are already dead I mean, because most are anonymous people and they have no names, perhaps there is some known

JG: Some famous Amsterdammers in between, but most of them..

CB: ..most of them, nobody can remember who they were.

That is what I mostly try, and perhaps there are too many pieces, is to respect the space. Not to try to mix or bring in too many things.

JG: During your life you made huge installations which often become part of collections of major museums worldwide. Now you are going to make a work that will completely disappear after the show. Is that a new phase in your work?

CB: I think in life there are two or three times of creation. I think for me, but that is pretentious when I was young, and I was 13 when my brother said to me I should become an artist because I was not good at school and I was drawing all the time. I became to be an artist when I was 23 or 24. And in fact around that time, I wanted everything to be inside one work. I can still use that now, since it was there already. And after, there was another part, when my parents died and my work became more visual. And there is another part when I become very old, when I decided to make very big things, but to destroy it. And I think the time of creation is the time of life: to become **silent**, to loose your parents, to become older and to be very old. And in the meantime you can work around that, but the big times of creation are not so often.

And also in the artworld you are in a context. I sell pieces, and I love to sell pieces, but the context was so around money and the galleries would become so strong, I wanted to be a little outside of all that. I need to be outside the walls, I mean it is not against money because I think it is ridiculous to be against money, but it is not so important. You are never to ask for money, you are never to refuse money and you never wear the money, if something arrives then it is ok, but it is not important. And I am so ambitious that to win money is so easy. And it is much better to try to be a good artist, more ambitious. In any case I think also that I decided that I hate to have a show in a gallery. And I did it two years ago in Miami because she asked me and there was nothing to sell, but I don't like that anymore. Sometimes there is a gallery that asks me to work with them and I refuse. It is not my time to do that.

What we talked about before, like in Japan. It is destroyed, but I can do it again. And it is another way to survive. And now I just try to create this mythology. My next work is this big sound installation in Patagonia, to speak with the whales, and nobody is going to see that because it's a very deserted place.

Perhaps in the mythology they will forget my name, but the story would be that there was a man who tried to speak with the whales, and that is enough you know. You do not need to go to Tasmania, but you know that you are filmed here in my studio and that there is a man in Tasmania who is looking at us at this moment. That is enough you know. You can go to Tasmania and you will see me doing that and it will not be very interesting. But what is interesting is the mythology that there is a man who bought the life of another man, collecting all the moments of his life.

JG: Is that the reason why you said yes to the bet? That you think there is a strong mythology behind it?

CB: Absolutely. Like in Japan... To create stories that are stronger than the object. If you go to Japan, it is a marvelous place and there is some kind of piece there, but it's more important to know that there is an island in Japan with more than 120.000 art pieces and in Tasmania in a cave there is a man who collects the life of another man.

And the stories and the words, I mean at the same time, the object must exist because if I see objects on the moon it would be totally stupid, because I would want to do that, but it is not necessary to go there. You can go there, but it is not necessary to go there to understand the work.

Before today I tried to make another project, but it was not completed because my great parents came from Odessa by train and I wanted to go back to Odessa by train in the winter and to film 20 hours in the train, you know the landscape. But there are no more trains. It is impossible to to Odessa by train. There are buses and planes, but there are no trains.

JG: They just abandoned all the railways?

CB: Yes. That means there is no [long train?] that you sleep in the train. There is the one to China, the Trans-Siberian, but to Odessa there are no trains. But I try to find a solution. But I mean, when you have my age you only think about the last piece and I think it is not bad for the last piece to go back to where you came from. And it is also some kind of a story. Because if I succeed, I would be doing I don't know about 12 hours, the landscape with snow, it is the same. And there are some shows, like yours, who are going to be destroyed and become a collective memory and there are some events which are more like mythological stories.

JG: And the show at the Oude Kerk, would that be, for instance if in 10 or 15 years a curator is thinking, ok let's do this exactly the same, the same spot...?

CB: Yes that would be totally possible. I told you 2 years ago I sold a big piece at the Grand-Hornu in Belgium and I gave them nothing. They gave me money and I gave them nothing. Only the rights to do it again. But perhaps they are never going to do it again, because there is no art piece, but this piece belongs to them. And I am going to have a show at the Pompidou Center and I am going to put this piece at the Pompidou Center and it was the same, they lend the work, I mean they lend nothing, but they lend it from the Grand-Hornu in Belgium. And the piece was a little different because the space was a little different. But for me, after me, I play my own music now, but somebody is going to play my music after me. Because I do it differently. And it must be because if somebody played my own music, beautiful music, it is a reincarnation by the musician. And I hope it would be a piece of Boltanski, played by Jacqueline Grandjean and then people saying; oh why doesn't she play back the piece once more? And then after somebody else would be to play the piece.

JG: Yes, do it again

CB: You know if you hear it back now, it is not the same instrument, it is not the same way to play it, it is the same piece, but not the same piece. You can imagine, for me, it will be the same work and not the same work. The big 1.10 at the Grand Palais was played in Milano, was played in Japan, was played in New York and it was totally different each time and we never had to transport. We would do it again and I think the best was in Milano and the worse was in Japan, because in Japan we did it outside and it was so hot... but in any case it is the same work and not the same work.

JG: And that is because the context has changed and times change, because when you do it at the Oude Kerk exactly the same again, because time has changed it will never be the same.

CB: Absolutely. And if you see a theatre play and there is a new director, it is the same theatre play, but it is not the same.

Each time when you see in a museum a Mondriaan and a Malevic in the same room, you create a new piece. And Malevic is going to have the piece in the corner and you don't have that.. and also you know it is a Malevic and that it is so important, but when he made it nobody knew that. In any case, if you would show a real painting, the way to look at the painting is always different because you know what it is. Sometimes I play that I don't know.. that Botticelli made this painting.. and not on his idea.. but only as a pleasure to look at it. And sometimes there are people like me, some beautiful painting will be missing, haha.. or not exist.. and that is not for everybody, it is for me, but not for everybody.. it is also good to have beautiful paintings. But what is sure, if we speak about mythologies, I mean.. you know that today we can make a Van Gogh exactly the same in 5000 copies, exactly the same. It would be possible to have in all museums around, a Van Gogh. But that is not possible because it is something religious, it is a mythology.. You must go to Amsterdam and wait in the rain and you pass 2 meters and you are near the cross, you know the holy thing.. touch

it.. there is a big holy man touching this painting. And it is not because the painting is beautiful, it is about something religious, it is a mythology or something..

JG: And the people who are waiting are contemporary pilgrims..

CB: Yes. And there is a painting, but it is not important, it is about the story. And if you take a place like Bilbao.. it was a very poor city and they made this big church, they put some relics inside of Richard Serra and the whole city becomes rich because there are so many people who go to pray. It has a religious function.

JG: That is how art works nowadays, it is scaring as well..

CB: All the cities in Europe began with little bones of a holy person. And after they made big churches and people go to pray and the city becomes rich and now the museum is a new church, people go there to pray and it is ok.

I mean, a country like France does not produce anymore real industry; cars.. you know it is produced in China or somewhere else.. The only thing we can produce is; Wine, Art, bags from Vuitton, you know these kind of things. It's wears, what they call wears. It is to say the 'sac' of Vuitton is so beautiful but it is not true, it is to produce some 'salade' you know the story is a [...?] And the only thing an occidental country can do. It is a little like back in the old time, Greek and Roman, I mean Roman was really strong, but the Roman people send their sons to Greece to be close with the philosophy. And Europe is a little like that now.

JG: And that is in fact also the reason probably why you made a work made of words in Berlin, when people asked you to make a monument for Berlin then you made a work that only consisted of words...

CB: Yes, sometimes monuments are destroyed, Berlin was one of the most beautiful that was ever made, it was made by Serra you know, but sometimes monuments are so awful in a city, I believe that words are better. And also what I wanted when I thought that, was that people give something. People giving one hour of their lives to do something. To make some kind of a monument that was not made with stone, but with time of people.

JG: in one of your interviews with Hans Ulrich Obrist you also reflected on the liturgy, so the prayers said in the church..

CB: I am not religious..

JG: I know.

CB: I am very interested in religion. My idea is that there is some lock and everybody is looking for a key to open the door.. but there is no one good key, perhaps there is no good key. Because there is not one key that is better than another. But to be human is to try to find the key to open the door. And in this way we are all religious, not religion, but we are all looking for the key. And I think religions are sometimes dangerous, but we are all looking for the key. And in a way when I made this piece in Chili in the desert, I was working with a very small community and there was a man, he was a.. I don't know what he is called, he was in charge of looking for the key. And we spoke together and I understood that if I was born there, I should have the same job. I was born in Paris in the 20th century, but if I was born in the desert in this small community I should be a Shaman, I would have the same job. And if I was born in Ukraine in the 19th century I should be a Rabbi. I think it is the same job, it is asking questions about life.. perhaps the difference is that some of these people think they have found the good key. And for me, I know that there is not a good key, there

are no right answers. But I think for the Rabbi to say that there is not a good key... What I know is in the Jewish religion is a religion of question, it is not a religion of answers and the Synagog is a place to work, to try to understand. And before that, I was born in Paris and I am a painter because I use not words but I use images, but it is the same work, same job.

JG: Yes, that is true.

CB: And I am going to be pretentious.. I am always surprised, because I travel a lot, there are always people that I don't know who love me. But it is not a collector unfortunately, it is not a director of a museum, it is really people. And I believe they love me like a kind of preacher. But perhaps that is not true, perhaps I am a bad preacher, but in any case the relation I have with the public is not only an art relation. It is speaking about life. Sometimes with words and sometimes only with visual things. But in any case, it is true that there are artists who are much more important than me, but it is true that I can touch a lot of people.

I think the question asked is very simple and everybody asks this question for themselves.

I mean my work is not complex, it is very simple. I never went to school and I am not an Academic. My work is very simple because it refers to a question I ask for myself, in my life. That's all. And I think for this I can really touch people. With pleasure for me I can say.

JG: Yes, I can imagine that is a pleasure. And it does not matter in what country or culture you are? This happens everywhere?

CB: I told you the first time I was in Japan I made a big show and the Japanese people said; oh your art is so Japanese. I am very sure that they were just saying that because it was not true at all. And they said; you look a little like a Japanese, perhaps your grandfather was Japanese. And that is marvelous. I hope when I make a show in Africa people are going to say, you look like an African, your father must be African. Because as you know the one who looks at the art, made the art too. And he must recognize himself in the art you are doing. What is very beautiful in art is that you can speak only about yourself, but everybody will look at your work and will recognize himself. Sometimes I believe that when you are an artist you have a mirror in front of your face. And everybody who looks at you sees himself. And you have no face anymore, you are only the other. And if you read Proust, and you can read Proust only because he speaks about feelings that we have before, I mean all of us are jealous, all of us wait at the mother, in a room. All of us recognize ourselves. And I think we can speak only about things that the other knows already. If I tell you I have a headache, you can understand. If I tell you my pancreas hurts me, I hope you can't understand. And you don't know what it is. We can communicate only about things that the other knows already. And when you are an artist, what you do is to show something that everybody knows, but sometimes they know it, but they don't feel it. And if you show it better, in the best way, they understand better the headache. Your headache is not my headache. But if I speak about my headache, perhaps you are going to understand your headache in the best way. And that is what I think we can do. And it is always something between the more personal and the more collective. And everybody must say, yes how does he know that about me?

JG: And do you see a change? Because we are in Europe, we are losing the other. We are not able to ask the question to the other and we don't seem to find recognition. Do you see the context is changing?

CB: What can be good, that I think there are more and more people who are more free, because we are in a rich country, and who have time to go to a museum and who have time for themselves to try to understand. I mean if you are a worker in a mine you try to understand, but you are so tired and you have so many products that it is more difficult. But in any case, that's why they understand,

because they go the church on sunday. Everybody tries to understand. But it is true that now I think our countries are more open to give time to people to try to understand.

JG: Yes that is absolutely true

CB: It is sure, but on the other hand, and that is a big change, when I was a young artist, if you take something like Documenta it was only people from.. I don't know, 60 people from the States, 30 from rich countries in Europe, 10 from Japan and 10 from all the other countries. And no it is not possible to do that anymore. I mean if you make a show you have a lot of people coming from.. full of countries. And also now before I refused, I refused, I couldn't, it was difficult to leave my family, but I never go to New York, many decide to go to New York for 2 years or something, but I couldn't. But now it is no more necessary, it was necessary to go to New York for a young artist, now it is not, you can stay where you are. And computers changed so many things, for a young artist that wants to see what happens in New York, you look at the screen of the computer, that's all. You don't have to go there or to live there. You can stay in a very small city and you can have all the information that you want. I think that changed a lot and also for an artist you can touch people who are so far and you are never going to... I made an work, storage memory – people can subscribe to this online and receive my short video moments.

JG: I got that! Via christian-boltanski.com

CB: a you got that, a stupid little thing. It is very stupid and I stopped it now, we are one of the last.. My idea was to touch people who are so far and I can imagine somebody in a small village in Australia and I like the fact that he can have a connection with me. But in fact you can have that with Facebook and you don't have to pay. I have the idea of people paying this low price to be like a psycho-analyst, to be more important. If you pay it is more important. But in fact it is very controlled, as in the beginning there were about 200 people, at the end it was 2 or 3 or 5. But the idea, is to touch people who are very far and I shall never know them, but I have a relation with them and the computer gives that.

JG: Do you get feedback from these people?

CB: No. Never. I know most of the people, because I can see where they are coming from, the name of the city, they come from very small cities. Not from London or Paris, but really small cities. And I believe it is more useful for these people than for people living in big cities. In any case, it is sure that now you can stay where you want. I am working with a webcam. And now with webcam, it changed completely, if there is a museum somewhere and I am a curator I see the screen and I shall give a welcome to 120 art centers and each art center can present what they want. It costs nothing. I think the computer is something really great.

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JG: you know there were over 60 altars? No I did not tell you.. Is there a meaning in the amount of tombs?

CB: No. Only by chance.

JG: And what do you wish that the people are getting? Is it a labyrinth or an experience?

CB: You know, there will be this kind of man who is going to speak and the questions are about the fight you.. they ask people how they die. If they were already dead. It is a Vanitas. It is true that you if you see I don't know, somebody important, you can always imagine how he is going to die, he is

going to die in a hospital or he is going to be on the toilet at the same time, I don't know. And it is some kind of a Vanitas. And it is also a question how we are going to die, are we going to die lonely or more people? For me, I don't know how I am going to die and I don't know how I want to die. I think I am going to die slowly, but I don't know exactly. I think I wish not to die in one circumstance, that is a heart attack. I think that is not good to die. I mean it is good because then it is over, but I think you must have too many problems in my life.. My life is not perfect and I must try that my life, if I have time, to make my life a little more perfect. To have a little time to explain things to people.

JG: And when you know it is near, then you do that

CB: The big thing about dying is before, you die in good health. I mean Kafka [..?] in light of his death, people always say the last words. And now in fact, or we die in one second with a heart attack or we don't die really easy. I mean you die and after one week somebody decides that you are going to die and they stop the medicine. But before, you died around your family and you can speak to everybody and you can explain.. there was some kind of a ceremony around the fact of dying. But now you die in the hospital, there is nobody and after a few days the doctors say, ok we stop, that's all. I think what is terrible in our time is that we are really ashamed to speak about the fact of dying. And we refuse totally the fact of dying. Before, when I was young, if you lost your parents, you would have a black sign. Now it would be totally impossible to have a black tie or something if you lost your parents. We are never to speak about that.

What is a nice story about Andy Warhol, he loved his mother and when his mother died - he would go very often to parties with his mother - and people would say, where is your mother? Why is she not here? What is she doing? And he would say, oh she is very happy at the country, because it was too complicated to say that she died and he was very unhappy she died, because what can you say? And now to say that somebody who you loved died, is nearly impolite. And it is nearly impolite to look old. And I was in a beautiful part of New York and think there is a girl of 20 years old and at the last minute you see that she was 80. Because you can not become old and you can not die, we refuse all that.

CB: You know, also I love the idea of progress, it is very important, but before when you were at the country for example, there was a table, the grandfather dies, the father takes the place of the grandfather, the son takes the place of the father and what was important, things go on. And now, things go so quickly. That if there is somebody who is a worker and you say, you must do this, but now you can not do anything to somebody, because things go so quickly. In my first text I spoke to you, I wrote, dying is something of shame. It is really a shame to speak about dying.

In any case I win with my Tasmanian. Because normally I, for him I was suppose to die 2 months ago, so I win, I don't know for how long, but I win..

JG: That is good

CB: Especially cause he pays more than he thought.

JG: Yes, and how did he react to that?

CB: We have no reaction, we do not like each other.

He always says he wants to see me dying in the work and I wrote that he was a little crazy and he was the devil of Tasmania and for all these reasons we are not in a good mood. But it's ok, he pays me one month and he is filming with me, but we are not friends I can say.

JG: And the camera's are still on?

CB: All the day and night, In the studio and not in the studio. In any case, when I made this piece it was also because it is true that now I go at the staircase not so quickly as I did 5 years ago. And if I survive it will be more and more difficult. And I think it is important to show that, not to refuse that. To show that you have become older, to show that. And one of the reasons was to accept that people are going to see me older and older, I mean if you don't die you become older and older.

JG: And when you are an artist you are also a name and people always think the name stays young forever. Because your work is there.

CB: Haha yes. And when I was active, I was looking like I was active. At the same time I feel myself very close to the fact of dying and it is not a joke, I really feel myself close to the time of dying and on the other hand I don't feel myself so old. Sometimes I feel myself old you know. What is difficult when you are my age, that you can't say, in 10 years I shall make a show in Venice, you can't. When you have your age, you can speak about in 10 years, but you can die tomorrow, but you can speak about 10 years. With my age it is very difficult to speak in 10 years, I can be alive in 10 years, but it is difficult to speak about it. The future is short. And for myself that is a bit of a problem. In any case, nothing to do... it is something to go on.

A very close friend of mine Agnes Varda, you know the film maker Agnes Varda? She is 88 and she just made a film with a photographer who is 33 years old and both of them are in Cannes, Cannes festival and they make jokes and they go everywhere. And the thing is, you never know and she is like somebody of my age, she is not young, but she is like somebody of my age and she is 88. It is always possible.. for a woman more than a man, but it is always possible, you never know.

You know there is this story that I love about that, I had an uncle that said I come by next week, because Monday I had this lunch, Tuesday I had this important meeting, Wednesday I have a dinner, I have no time. I think one of the reasons I am full until 21. I can't die because I have all these shows.

[phone ringing, CB answers phone]

JG: I realized that Harald Szeemann already talked about individual mythology in '72.

CB: Szeemann was really my father in art. I love him, he was much more than a curator. He was like André Breton for the surrealists. And he loved me so much and individual mythology is coming from him, but also something that was very close for me. He made a show about his grandfather who was a barber and he made this show just after the Documenta in '72, and he made the show in Bern, in his flat, about his grandfather who was a barber. And it was a very small show, you can imagine.. and he told me it was exactly the same thing at Documenta. I mean the biggest or the smallest, was the same thing for him. And it was what I made before and after, all the objects of his grandfather, stories about his grandfather and also something to save his grandfather. In any case he was a great, very close friend. Someday I was looking at my papers and it was suddenly a cut post card from him, so he writes post cards, he was very close for me. And he was more crazy than the curators now and I am going to tell you a story:

I met him at Documenta and he wanted to go to Paris and I met him in a very small room where he was living. The room was so dirty, you know this kind of room that artists can have.. And they passed, Harald Szeemann and his wife, passed 10 days and they were very happy. And the thing you can't imagine now, is the curator of Documenta, you know after Documenta to be happy

in Paris in a very dirty room! And he had this same kind of relation with money and he was poor.. Harald Szeemann had never taken his driving lessons. He bought a driving license, but he never.. I mean it was ok, but it was not a real one. At this time, the artist and the curator can be not in the line. And I always say to my students, the one thing you can say to an artist is you are professional. And I am professional, but I am very old, for a young artist is so full to be professional and in these times I think that people were not professional like they are today. They were dreamers. And with Szeemann and with everybody, I don't know eh, Acconci and James Lee Byars.. What is also what I said when we were speaking about the fact of dying is that all my generation is dying and that is something sad. I had a friend who was a little older than me Jannis Kounellis was a very good friend and I was friends with Acconci and I knew Penck a little. All these people were around me, they all died very quickly.

JG: Yes, I wrote it down, Jannis Kounellis, because I know that he was a friend of you and he had a whole different perspective of the construction of a cathedral, because he said he is interested more in the construction whereas you are more interested in its function?

CB: I think he was more political than me. I am not political at all. I am left side and, really like everybody but I really don't care about the political side. I am against fascism, that's another problem, but I was never political. And Kounellis was very political and he was with parties and it would be impossible for me to imagine to be in a political party. I hate fascists and I hate [..?] people, but that can be because the city is communist here and I am not communist, because the city is a very good city, but I don't want communism out of the city. But you know I am not political at all and Jannis was really political. He was also a little older than me.

And he came from another country.. For me with time, I can say, it is difficult to say that, I feel more and more Jewish. More than before and more and more against people being a little anti-semitic, I feel that more and more and more, but that is also my age, thinking about religion, but not a special religion, but I am not at all political. I come from a little family and all my life, I was born a socialist, but I don't care.

JG: What do you have, as a last question, what are you hoping for that people are taking with them as a memory of your show? Is that describable?

CB: To me, I think art is to move people and to ask questions.. And I hope that people are going to be moved and perhaps some of them are going to ask questions to themselves. And that's all. You know it is not a question of beauty it a question of what I told you, to be in a place where you can think a little and where you are moved. There are two big families of artists; one is people who are working about art and the other family is people who are working about life. In fact sometimes it is mixed, but I am working about life. And for this reason sometimes I am more moving, I can move people easily.. than somebody who is working about art. I know that Duchamp is a very important artist and I know that he helped me I am sure, but I don't care. But on the other hand, Duchamp also seems to be a very strange artist, speaking about life and about obsession. I mean nobody is only in a box you know.. And Mondriaan was totally mystic.

And what is the beauty of art is that you can love things that are totally different, I mean I love Mondriaan and I love Hopper. And I am sure Hopper hates Mondriaan and Mondriaan hates Hopper.. but there is no one who is right and one who is wrong. Art is something so open that you can love things who are totally different. That is the beauty of art and for this reason I think everybody must take what he needs. If some visitor with his own background can take something about my show, I shall be happy, that's all. But there is no only way to understand. Sometimes I make a work and 20 years later I understood why I made this work, or I understood one of the meanings and reasons of this work. And I think when I make a show like this show there are a lot of

things I don't see and I don't understand, And somebody else can understand for me or it may come to me later.