

- 00:00:00:00 **GIORGIA VON ALBERTINI:** Thank you for joining us for tonight's edition of the CCS Speaker Series. My name is Giorgia, and it is with great pleasure that I introduce tonight's speaker, Gavin Brown. Gavin Brown is the owner of Gavin Brown's Enterprise, a gallery that does not only produce milestone exhibitions, but also continues to engage in meaningful public programming, and has emerged as a dynamic social hub. In the contemporary art world, when old models for museums and galleries seem to be running out of gas and when art seems to be further and further removed from life, Brown is somewhat of an anomaly, continuously taking risks and experimenting with what a gallery might be and do.
- 00:00:48:26 Having grown up in London, Brown moved to New York in 1988, after he was accepted into the Whitney Independent Study Program. At that time, besides working as an artist, Brown was also working as an art handler for Pat Hearn Gallery and for Lisa Spellman's 303 Gallery. In 1993, Gavin Brown rented a room in New York's Chelsea Hotel to present the work of the then unknown young painter Elizabeth Peyton. Half a year after that, he opened his first gallery in SoHo, where he seeded the careers of artists such as Peter Doig and Chris Ofili. Three years later, Brown relocated to a space on West 15th Street, where he staged exhibitions with, amongst others, Laura Owens, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Rob Pruitt. There, he also opened a bar next door to the gallery.
- 00:01:41:09 In 2003, when everybody was moving to Chelsea, Brown relocated to the outskirts of the West Village. From May 2010, the gallery also occupied the space of its former neighbor, [inaudible]. The inaugural exhibition at the expanded site was an exhibition of new work by Martin Creed, as well as an installation by Jonathan Horowitz entitled "Go Vegan," a clear nod to the building's history. Brown fostered and curated unprecedented exhibitions in this space, such as Urs Fischer's 2007 show "You," for which the artist dug a huge crater inside the gallery; and Rirkrit Tiravanija's 2011 exhibition "Fear Eats the Soul," for which he removed all the windows and doors of the main exhibition space to create a soup kitchen, a t-shirt factory, and a makeshift cooking pit in the ground, all of which was open to the street.
- 00:02:40:19 Today, in addition to his primary location in Harlem, Brown operates two other gallery spaces, one in the Lower East Side and one in Rome. Recent events at Gavin Brown's Enterprise include The Family Awards & Lesbian Ball, which Brown hosted with filmmaker Leilah Weinraub; and a politically-engaged night of conversations and performance discussing the options for people threatened with deportation. Recent exhibitions include solo shows by Karl Holmqvist, Avery Singer, Arthur Jafa, and Jannis Kounellis. Notably, in the current issue of *Artforum*, Arthur Jafa's exhibition is listed as Kerry James Marshall's best of 2018. The fact that Brown's galleries are not only frequented by collectors, but my many artists as well, is certainly a distinguishing and telling feature.
- 00:03:35:06 As Tom Eccles said in 2013, "What sets Gavin apart is that he's an equal artist to all of the artists that he represents. He has never stopped being an artist." Without further ado, please join me in welcoming Gavin Brown.

[APPLAUSE]

- 00:03:59:17 **GAVIN BROWN:** Okay. It's— Well, it's fantastic to be here. It really is. I haven't really had an invitation like this before, so it's been a process of uncovering and digging up images and memories that due to my lack of ability and attention, a lot of which has fallen by the wayside and fallen into the trash heap of history, perhaps a lot of it not to be found again. So I found what I could. But it's also very personal for me because parallel to be standing here, there is an exhibition of Colin DeLand and Pat Hearn's history. And that was so formative for my experience as a participant in this community we're all— Well, you're thinking about becoming part of and perhaps consider yourself part of. And back then, it was a lot less formalized and I was lucky enough to be a stowaway, perhaps, in.
- 00:05:41:05 And I really— Just to give you some context, you pointed out I was working at Pat Hearn's as a first job, just post my exiting the ISP as an art handler. But I didn't know the first thing about handling art or patching a wall. But I turned up at— I needed a job and I turned up at— Well, I'd heard Pat was hiring, and I turned up at 39 Wooster Street late one night. And SoHo was very different then. And knocked on the door and Pat answered. And there were guys finishing off the floor and she looked at me like I was a crazy person knocking on the door, you know, at eight o'clock at night. I don't know why I went there at eight o'clock at night, come to think of it. And she said, "Come back tomorrow." And I did and she gave me a job.
- 00:06:48:15 You know, good on her for having the faith to do that. But I remember in the following spring, sitting out on the steps and looking at Colin across the street. It was Pat and a bunch of us just sitting out in the sun, and she was kind of waving at him. And that was in kind of the height of their love affair. And I had an insight into the romance and beauty of being involved in art in what was then, and in some ways still is, the greatest city to do that in the world. And she would be making jokes about him to us and calling over to him. I think he was doing something with Peter Fend there in the street. And I was, you know, a young lad of twenty-four or twenty-five, and I—perhaps consciously, unconsciously—remarked to myself what an extraordinary situation this was.
- 00:07:50:22 So that's the context in which I'm here today. And it's funny, walking through that exhibition, Lincoln Tobier's— Things circle round. Lincoln Tobier's installation about Roger Ailes seemed— At the time, I thought he was a bit of a nerd, talking about this guy that no one really cared about. But what do you know? His subject was a subject that describes all our lives now. All that said, just to get on with the narrative that I have scrappily prepared, so forgive me for holes that you might spot. I know they're there, too, but this is what we have.
- 00:08:40:08 So this is— To go back, actually, Silvia Kolbowski. I hadn't thought about that name in a long time, but I remember her at the ISP as being a kind of a creature I hadn't encountered before. Very serious, very specific [inaudible]. And I don't know where she is now. But it was just a strange thing, her name there. Anyway— Sorry, [inaudible] point. This, I was working at 303, and I went up to Randy Alexander's gallery on Broadway. Back then on Broadway, there were a bunch of galleries in the buildings on Broadway. And Randy had been at Paula's, and he had branched off. And I was told that if you wanted to know what was going on, you should go and see him. So I walked in the space and there was some show on there. But I walked into his back office, which is probably half the size of this area here. I pointed at different things and said, "What's that? What's that? What's that?" And I came to this thing and said, "What the hell is that?" And he said it was by this artist whose name I did not remember because it was unpronounceable. And it was so confounding to me. And it was a break in my consciousness, in my thought about art. And it never left me. And this is really the talisman that started me off on any particular journey I am, on for whatever worth that journey has.

- 00:10:25:26 And it is the most ordinary of objects. But in its ordinariness, I have seen something worth following. It's a stack of bottles from an opening of Rirkrit's that I wasn't at because I didn't even know who he was. But it had an audacity and it had a sense of somewhere else, values from somewhere else. And at that point, I realized I wanted to— I suppose I felt, being an artist at that point, I felt that it was perhaps worth devoting myself to something else that was not myself. So we're going to follow some images, you know. And this is the structure we're in. So for better or worse, this is what we have.
- 00:11:24:09 So here I am at 303. And I'd met [inaudible] this guy called Rob Pruitt. And he was with a guy called Jack Early. And they were the hottest shit out there. They were making something— I think Ron Jones, in a review, described it as like magnesium. And as a high schooler, I remember in my chemistry class, burning magnesium and how fast that burned and how hot and bright it burned. And that was exactly what they were. They were two— They were a gay couple talking about the America outside New York and its iconography and its beliefs. And there was a— They described it so perfectly, in a language of geometry and minimalism, of a kind of a Pop sensibility that was less like the Pop of the sixties and it was more, I guess, invested. These were two people who had experienced firsthand, the nature of this language.
- 00:12:43:01 So I found it, given my innate nerdishness, very seductive. It had a logic and a beauty to it that I really responded to. So Rob was an artist out there, just as I was. I was working at 303. And then one day I came into 303 and there was a work by Pruitt-Early on the floor, one of these stacked beer can cases. And without knowing it, Lisa Spellman at 303 was now representing Pruitt-Early. So that was a kind of emotional-social lesion I learned, that you can be friends with somebody and suddenly they occupy a different space to you, even though you're having this relationship with them. And suddenly I was working for Rob.
- 00:13:41:11 But still, I found this undeniable work. And at the same time, I missed this opening because it was September, early September, and I was in Scotland with my then wife. She had just given birth to our son, Max, who came to Bard. So plenty of circles going on here. But I remember leaving the hospital about four in the morning, the first person I called was Rob, to talk to him about the experience of becoming a new father. Rob was then and is still now very close to me. There was a period in between, when his life went into collapse, after his Leo Castelli show, where he and Jack made an exhibition about— You know, art is about things, I guess, sometimes. And it was about the African American experience. And this was 1991, and for two white Southern boys, that was absolutely verboten. And in many ways, it should have been. And it was called on to be boycotted, by the *Village Voice*. Everything sold, because Leo Castelli had a bunch of collectors who believed whatever he said. But beyond that, it had no integral impact into the world I lived in. And before you know it, Rob was persona non grata. In fact, I remember '93-'92, '93—seeing him on the street and crossing the road so I would avoid him. But he came back into my life, and he is one of my closest— He's my dearest friend and family.
- 00:15:36:29 This is all very anecdotal. There's not much critique going on in the next hour or so, so forgive me. '93. We're kind of going back and forth a little bit here, because I put this order together quite quickly. This is a picture in the Hotel Chelsea, Chelsea Hotel, room 828. Being involved— After having seen that stack of bottles of Rirkrit's, I went to— I put Rirkrit in a show. Perhaps it's somewhere. Nah, it's not. I put Rirkrit in a group show at 303, met Rirkrit, met Elizabeth, who he was with then, and saw these strange drawings she was making, and suggested to her we make some autonomous show in an autonomous space. And as you can see, this is a— Oh, yeah, there. This is a single bed. This is the lowest the Chelsea Hotel could offer. There wasn't even a toilet. And we put up these pictures of Napoleon. This is of Ludwig II of Bavaria, on his horses. There's Elizabeth I, the princess, talking to the children of the empire during the war. I'm not

sure what it was exactly that drew me to this work, but she brought in a portfolio to show Lisa Spellman, who wasn't interested, and I told her I was very interested. And we did this together.

00:17:28:23 **TOM ECCLES:** Why did you do it? Because it's an interesting show. And I remember the time that I— You know, I said to Elizabeth— You'd been really rude to me. And I said to Elizabeth, "You don't know how to draw, do you?"

00:17:28:23 **GAVIN BROWN:** I think she did know how to draw. Look.

TOM ECCLES: This was a quite radical show... at that moment. Now, it wasn't like [inaudible] now everyone goes, "Oh, yeah, art."

00:17:49:16 **GAVIN BROWN:** I don't think it was radical, in that I don't think representational drawing is radical. But it was perhaps oppositional to something. And people would come in. There were like, you know, a few people coming to that opening. And I mean, it's quite beautiful. There's a sink, there's a mirror. The Chelsea Hotel does not look like that now. And this is obviously, this next hour is also a disgusting episode in, exercise in, nostalgia. But it was [inaudible].

00:18:25:06 That was a girlfriend of the woman— So when I arrived off a plane in 1988, this woman— I went to an apartment on 97th Street. And I'd been promised a room there for a month, and this woman was a girlfriend of someone living there. And she's gone to Bennington to somebody else. And one of the people she had been to Bennington with, Matthew Marks— And Matthew Marks' sister had a lease on this apartment. And her boyfriend moved out, the other one moved out, and I was left there. My girlfriend moved over. We had Max and then we had Rosy, and then we had Tallulah. And they still have that lease, and that's thirty years later. Now, does this have anything to do with art? I don't know. It has something to do with how one functions, how one navigates a certain kind of situation or city.

00:19:29:07 So anyway, this was an attempt at something. It was deliberately on the margins. And ironically enough, I found myself more interested in the margins than I had been in, you know, intervening times. So yeah, as you said, six month later, four months later, I opened a space on Broome Street, at the urging of Paul Bloodgood, who had a space next door called the AC Project Room. And it was a gamble, but I didn't want to get a job. I knew no one— Given my experience at other galleries, I couldn't get a job. This is— That is frustrating because it doesn't really tell you— Okay. So this is an image of a photograph. So what you have here—excuse me—is— This is the windows of the space, this is the door of the space, and you're looking out into the street. Here is a beautiful tree that had blue flowers in the spring. And I mention it because there are some exceptional photographs of this painter, of myself and other people, including Martin Creed out there in '95, '96. And across the street here, down in the basement, was where we did a show with the Chapman brothers. I'm bouncing back and forth, excuse me. So this is the first show I did in that space. [inaudible] turned the space into a pinhole camera and took a photograph. The space took a photograph of what was outside. So it seemed a really appropriate way to start one's public journey, to be looking outwards. And these are other examples of what he was doing then.

00:21:51:15 Okay. Here we have a photograph of a group show, a two-person show, I made quite soon after that with Rirkrit and Warhol, where I joined made three pairings. One was the bottles you saw with a painting of Mao above it; this Brill-o box with an excerpt there of Rirkrit's pad Thai installation, [inaudible] in 1990; and then we cleared out the— You can see the state of the floor, which I kind of left, which back then, seemed quite radical. And for the opening, we cleared it out. And in the back, behind the wall— Oh, see, there's another pairing. That has always, for me,

been pretty much I ever needed to do, those two things. And I guess I've been kind of chasing that ever since. And there is the other pairing, a sculpture of a bed with Warhol books and Warhol videos.

00:23:05:27 And then Rirkrit was invited to the Whitney Biennial in '95, and he produced a kind of wooden box, the shape of the space. And he presented a film of Broodthaers, at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park in London, writing messages on a chalkboard. And behind it was a kind of improvised—was musical instruments in an improvised band. And that was what's going on here.

00:23:37:05 Okay. This is then '95, the year after I'd opened. And this was a kind of a breakthrough moment, publicly speaking. I did a show with Elizabeth Peyton, which people really responded to. I guess they were folk art paintings, really, of a folk hero. I don't really have much to say about that. I love it. I love it so much. But you know, I guess I love it the way one loves— As a teenager, you look at album covers. And I don't necessarily distinguish between the love you have for that and the love you have for a Rothko. And I think she translated it to— And at that time in my life when the both of were emerging— It seemed it was ours and we were presenting it to the world. And people would say, "What in hell is this about?" And the notion of love and values of that kind were not necessarily on the table. This is of Antoine Doinel, the Truffaut character. Then I started to rent a space temporarily, across the street on Sixth Ave. I did a show with Laura Owens here. And perhaps you've seen this painting and this painting at the show at the Whitney. That was the beginning of my story with her. Now, you remember this space? Across the street— I knew the Chapmans. So I was the guy who, like, had friends in London, had friends in New York. And I met the Chapmans. And they were two [inaudible] guys, and they wanted to do something in London and I— This space here. So there [inaudible]. We went down the steps to an apartment below, which was really an abject place. But it seemed appropriate to do something with them, so I suggested that they do a show there. And they did a show with this sculpture, with another sculpture which I don't have a picture of, and it was, to me, the most successful show they've ever done in New York. And it was their first show. And then they went on to show with Gagolian.

00:26:14:16 Now, this is an image of a show I had myself as an artist, at David Zwirner. Tell me whenever you want me to just hurry up and I will. So in the process of having an art gallery, I go to this printer. And there were all these pictures on the wall that he'd have, and they were such a superb, random, beautiful collection, a kind of an amazing cultural curation. And I just took those and made a portfolio of them. These are books I bought on the street. And this is a mirror that was at 303's [inaudible], and I put it against the wall and I sprayed. This was a picture of my parents, by [inaudible]. I don't remember what this was, but it was on a chair I found on the street. And here's a picture of Clarissa Dalrymple's son, taken by Robert Mapplethorpe, which I've always taken as a kind of a weird stand-in for my own son. So was it a successful show? No. But looking back on it in this process of putting this together, I quite like it.

00:27:28:20 So there's a portrait of Elizabeth Peyton. That is Piotr Uklanski's disco floor at Broome Street. Piotr was a guy who walked in the door one day and said he'd met— He'd talked to Matthew Higgs and thought I might be interested in him. And he was immediately very seductive and I pretty much did whatever he wanted, including this, which was, at that point, a real major pain. But look how decent it is.

00:27:59:19 Here's Martin Creed playing on it. That must've been '96, '97. '96? And that's where the— That's the site of where the Chapman show is now. This is 15th Street. I'm not sure what's going on there, what night that was. That was the entrance of the gallery; that was a window of the bar; those are the doors of the bar. But I think that's probably an opening. So when I first— That was the— So that's funny. So this woman, I don't know where she came from, but she has this loft **full**

of balloons. This is Anton Hottner. He now builds boats in Sausalito. [inaudible] you know, details of a history. What? Don't want to talk about that?

WOMAN: Yeah, maybe you can—

00:29:03:20 **GAVIN BROWN:** No, literally, the past two weeks, she's sending me three or four texts a day. It's just interesting that she's there. This was a Martin Creed installation of multi-colored balloons, on 15th Street. And clearly, this is before— Oops. This is before Passerby because Passerby was the door right there. There's my daughter, our son. And now you get to the Passerby days. This was an installation. It was kind of around the time we opened Passerby. We installed this apartment installation of Rirkrit's, which was open twenty-four hours a day. It had running water, a flushing toilet, a shower. People slept there. And at the same time, there was a bar open there, until two in the morning each night, which I hadn't really considered. In Cologne, when it had been shown two years before, for like six months, there was no bar and a kind of constant fuel of alcohol involved. So it had an entirely different, slightly— way more bacchanale effect upon it.

00:30:17:11 And this is a Thomas Bayrle wallpaper. We've kind of tried to put different things, fold different things into it. This looks like Passerby. No, this is a Chris Ofili opening, also at 15th Street, just to give you a taste. That's the outside. This was a performance the Saturday— No. The Thursday before September 11th. Mark Leckey came over with Ed Liq, as a group called donAtella. And they were an art band. There's Mark. And this is the opening then on Saturday, September 8th, with Nick Relph. That's Nick. There's Ed again. Nick and— I don't know if you know Nick Relph and Oliver Payne. I showed a trilogy of videos of theirs that opened that Saturday before 9/11. They brought, like, thirty of their friends came over. It was the most extraordinary evening I've had in a long time, and since, actually. And everyone got stuck, because Tuesday was 9/11. So you had this ecstatic evening, and then you had— It's not quite— Well, what do I do? How do I get past this? There we go.

00:32:09:08 There's Passerby. It's a little [inaudible], excuse me. So back to 2001. How many of you've seen "Fiorucci?" [inaudible]. No? Is there volume on this? [inaudible voice] I just want to give you some clips of different things. Thank you. [inaudible voices]

00:32:57:01 So just to give you to some context. So Mark Leckey, who I showed you an image of before, was someone, if you can go back to 1993, Chelsea Hotel, he was someone who went to Newcastle Polytechnic. That's where I went; that's where my ex-wife went. She was in the fashion course, a lot later than I was, so I'd left; I'd come to New York. So they overlapped a year and they knew each other. And then he contacted her and said, "Come I come to say with you? I'm on my way to San Francisco." She said yes. I didn't know who this guy was. He came to stay with us for like ten days, and I had what was and continues to be a fascination, love affair with him, and an absolute conviction that he is one of the great voices of our time. And he disappeared off to San Francisco. Came back. He was in New York for a while, and then he went back to London. He was in London. I was there at an opening with him, and someone was talking to him, who was a curator of a museum. And I said, "You should really do something with him." And she invited him to make a video work. And nine months later, came out "Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore," which I— and I don't really care what the people think, because I know they also agree with me—[think] is one of the great works of our time. It's not an artwork, it's a work for all people. All people who've grown up in the past twenty to thirty years and experienced life, you know, in the dark with music, with other people. It takes its structure of English youth culture from [clip plays in background] Northern Soul, as you see here, all the way through to Hardcore. So here you have— Maybe it's Wigan Pier. Anyway. If you haven't seen it, find it on YouTube. Put it on a good sound system. It is one of the most transcendent things of all time. You asked me to be here and you've

asked, I guess, to ask what I believe in. And that's one of the things I really, really believe in. And these are some stills from it. If you don't know it, find it and watch it. I've watched it maybe 200 times. There's so much in it. It has love, it has a sense of place, a sense of time. It's just a great work of art.

00:35:39:23 This is a picture of Passerby. Other pictures of Passerby. Passerby was a mess. And I'm happy I did it, but it was a disaster. This was 19—

TOM ECCLES: Can you talk about the economics of Passerby and making the bar?

GAVIN BROWN: The first year, we made a load of cash. And then the police descended upon us and we got, like, a \$2,000 fine every week for, like, bugs in the wine, underage drinking. And staff were stealing from us and it was just— It was— I stepped away. I couldn't deal with it. So I wasn't really— I don't know. I mean, you know, it was, on the one hand, a really transcendent, extraordinary place. I met some— People met each other. There are a number of people who'd met each other, got married, are still with each other now. I met people like Thomas Bullock. DJ doesn't really describe him. He's an incredible guy, who is now still a close friend, twenty years later.

00:37:04:14 It was just one of those things that some ridiculous notion in me propelled me to do, because we built it ourselves from ground up. We did the electricity, we did the bar, we did the floor—we did everything—without really knowing what we were doing. We had to work with the Building Department. And I can't believe now, having been through other building projects, that I went through it that way. But that's how we did it.

00:37:28:17 This was my reconnection with Rob Pruitt. He made a show called "101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself." This is '*draw yourself into your own cartoon.*' There's Rob. Rob is still a really divisive figure. I just think that's perhaps part of his nature; I don't know. There, we did a show of panda paintings. I asked for an installation shot [inaudible]. This is 2001. He's kind of known for these panda paintings. Back then, they made a lot of sense. He was someone who was trying to break his way into the art world. He was not liked. There was still a lot of resentment towards him for this supposedly racist show. So then he thought, how can I get people on my side? So he made paintings in glitter, of an invented species, that are very graphic, that are vegetarian, and possibly, a kind of a self-portrait. And he's kind of gone with it ever since. And the fact is, it's incredibly cynical, but also true. This is real. In fifty years time, when we perhaps have these things only in the most artificial conditions, they are a portrait not only of Rob, but of us and our desire for shiny objects of things we don't want to think about. And I know that's all in everything Rob does.

00:39:14:13 So anyway, back to Nick Relph and Oliver Payne. We really are bouncing around. Sorry. [inaudible]. Matthew Higgs. Perhaps you know him; he's done some things up here. He was doing a visiting lectureship at Kingston Polytechnic in London, and he called me and said, "My God, I just encountered these two guys. They're extraordinary." He sent me some videotapes, VHS tapes. I played them and I was convinced, ,too. This is— There's a trilogy. *Driftwood*, which was a kind of rip-off of somebody else's notion of London.

[CLIP PLAYS]

00:39:57:00 And then *House and Garage*, about the suburbs. **[CLIP CONTINUES]** It's about skateboarding and how one can avoid and transgress boundaries put forward to you by [inaudible]

[CLIP PLAYS]

00:40:55:25 But they were, I think, nineteen and twenty-one when they made this. It's incredibly not just prescient, but it has such a will and intention to it, which was obvious to me. And we showed it at that opening I just talked to you about. And it's a description of a city and who owns a city seems— And I think after 9/11, everyone who had an exhibition was trying to—well, not trying to—imagine the connection between their exhibition and what had just happened to us. And in this case—excuse the term—I lucked out, because this exhibition, this video of an idea of a city from an alienated point of view really rang true for everybody who saw it. And I don't have time. As you see, it's twenty-four minutes; I don't have time to show that. But again, I can leave links with everybody. I encourage you to see it. These are some stills from it. Incredibly emotional. All filmed by the artists themselves, but from a really particular point of view.

00:42:14:14 Now, that is what 15th Street looks like now. There's the hotel. Then we moved to Greenwich Street. Sorry if this is getting boring. This is a work by Martin Creed. That is an opening. We used to have parties up here. This is Martin Creed, what you mentioned before, a marble floor. You know, looking back on it now, marble is the most luxurious material; but he kind of reduced it to its elemental nature, which is just rock from the earth. And you kind of had a real good luck at it. Very beautiful.

00:43:11:09 This is a show by Peter Doig in 2009, the last show I did with him. He now shows at Michael Werner. Always wanted to talk about prices and stuff.

TOM ECCLES: I think it would be really good to fast forward.

GAVIN BROWN: Fast forward?

TOM ECCLES: I think for many of the students, the period that began when you moved to Harlem is really essential. And I think, you know, we're all going to experience [inaudible]

00:43:43:17 **GAVIN BROWN:** Oh, right. Okay. Well, this is Urs Fischer. Oops. Some of you may not have seen the images of this. He came to me. I thought I was going to get a sculpture show, make a lot of money. And he suggested this. I think it was a dare. And I said— It seemed great, so I said yes. This is Sturtevant. There was somebody working for me back then who was about to leave, and he was— I'll race through this stuff now. He contacted Sturtevant, using an email address from the gallery. She replied, saying, "Why would I want to show in a townhouse on the Upper East Side?" And I contacted her, went to visit her in Paris and said, "I'd like to show you." And what do you? Then we did a show with her. And it was one of the great relationships of my life. I fell in love with a ninety-year-old woman. I think she fell in love with me. I would visit her every time I went to Paris. She lived in a sixth floor walk-up. In the winters, she would have a fire going. And not that she lectured me, but in my relationship with her, she taught me everything all over again.

00:45:04:06 **Mark Leckey.** This is the beginning of green screen. "Go Vegan," which you mentioned, in the meat locker, by Jonathan Horowitz. I'll race through all this. Rirkrit Tiravanija. This was a reproduction of the show I showed you. There's the bottles, there's the Mao, there's the wok, there's the [inaudible], there's the bed, there's the TV. This is all in ceramic. We took the windows out. Everything was open. We cooked in a pit in here [inaudible]. This is a t-shirt factory. 356 Mission Road. Laura Owens' show. That was, in many ways, one of the loveliest things I've done and one of the most painful.

00:46:01:16 Leaving Greenwich Street. When I opened that space, when I rented all that space, one of the

first notions that came into my head was to be able to do this [inaudible] show. Then [inaudible] shows and this and that, and the business of art, and this got pushed to the back. And then when it was clear that the space would be lost, I pressed forward, contacted him. Amazingly, he said yes, and we installed this show. There he is. And that's what it looks like now.

00:46:43:03 This is the outside of Rome. I found this space. I had a gallery in Rome with two other people back in the day, and I used to sit in a restaurant and look at this space. But because the windows are so high and the door was sort of closed, I could never see it in the day. And we did a show with Rirkrit. We opened Easter Sunday, 2015. He cooked a lamb stew. And inside the stew was a marble lamb skeleton. That's the space.

00:47:16:05 This is a show we did with Kounellis in 2016. September 2016. He died January, 2017. And looking back, and look at all these sarcophagus. Mark Leckey, the repeat, or a kind of a development of the show he did in Greenwich Street.

00:47:48:07 Sturtevant, Gober's buried sinks. Incredible in that space. I love this space. It's an eighteen century church. So any artist that goes in here is entering into the flow of human activity. Joan Jonas. Arthur Jafa. This is extraordinary, to have that there. Just extraordinary. And this is a show—

00:48:19:00 Okay. So we come to Arthur Jafa now, and Harlem. So 2015, leaving the space on Greenwich Street. The lease was up. I was looking around all over downtown, for another space. Could not find anything. And I'd seen this space previously, where we are now, and discounted it because it was too unlikely. Still looking for everything uptown— downtown. Everything is developed or were too expensive or not correct, not the right story. So— Hm. [inaudible] I woke up one morning in a panic. And I called the landlord of the space, said, "Please don't tell me you rented that." They said, "We haven't. I'm not ready to rent it." But I demanded he did rent it to me. And that's where— But in the meantime, I had two years of renovation, and then two years inactive. But I'd committed to going uptown. I lived there already, and I committed to my entire endeavor going—which was kind of unwieldily big at that point—going uptown to 127th Street, when everybody else was downtown. And to tell you frankly about how things developed there, I woke up one morning, after having signed the lease, you know, some months after, realizing that I was opening in the capital of the African American experience, a contemporary art gallery, whatever that meant. And I represented no Black artists. I had no one of color on my staff. And I thought, what the hell am I doing? I realized I was putting my family at risk by entering into such a foolish endeavor. And I panicked, and started to—as someone said to me—rush to Black. And I'm being totally frank with you now. I'm not proud of it.

00:50:48:11 But in the process— And I can go into detail about how it happened, but [inaudible], ironically enough, I was talking to Kahlil Joseph, and he said, "Come and see this film, my version of *Lemonade*. I'm going to be showing it in a private screening on Friday," the last Friday I was there. And so I went along, thinking maybe I could make a connection. I was still panicking, because it was just— What a crazy idea, to imagine I could just go business-as-usual uptown. I kind of came to my senses, in a way, but very late. So I went along to this screening. And it was a small cinema, maybe the size of this room, and I was in a row to myself. You know, twenty-five people there, maybe. And I was expecting *Lemonade* to come up. And I was trying to be cool with Kahlil [Jacob] and his wife and his kid, trying to be cool. And sat down, and unannounced, came this film. I didn't know what it was. There was no— You know, Kahlil didn't say what he was putting on first. And it was *Love is the Message*. I don't know if anyone has seen it, but it comes out very fast and certainly strong, so you don't have kind of a moment to acclimatize yourself. You're in it. So I was in it, trying to process it—whether it was an artwork, what it was, what it

was saying to me. And it was one of the eight-minute great moments of my life. And I was so directly communicated with. And it went down, *Lemonade* came up, forty-five minutes of— You know, that was great, whatever. Wasn't the same.

00:52:46:22 And then I chased up— I asked Kahlil who that was. His friend Arthur Jafa, who I'd never heard of. And by the time October came around, I'd figured out he was in L.A. We had talked on the phone; he was coming to New York. Middle of October, we have lunch together. He says, "I'm going to put it on YouTube." I said, "No, please don't. I want to show it. It's a public sculpture. It needs to be shown." And then three weeks later, we'd shown it. And so going back to this panic, I found, strangely enough, a solution to my panic. But I found way more than that. I found a brother in arms. I found someone who's changed my life in the same Rirkrit had. And however you take that, cynically or not, it's how I've experienced it, that A.J. is now absolutely changed my life. But he would say I changed his life. I mean, if you think that is extraordinary— But he is— And so then we did show it. I'm rambling a little bit, but we did show it. But the Saturday before, we showed this piece, by Jannis Kounellis, in my house. And it's an illegal work of art. You see all these gas bottles and the flames going? And the noise. You go into this room and it's frightening. And this is the Saturday before the election of 2016. And Jannis is there with his wife. A.J.'s there. We're all there. We all witness this piece. And then the election comes. And then the Saturday after the election—I don't know why this isn't showing.

00:54:40:19 Anyway, you've seen *Love is the Message*. These are the stills. It was one of those blessed moments where we're witness to art talking to each other. Not only one work talking to another work, one work from 1972, another work from 2016; one passing the baton to another; from one population to another; from one moment to another; but also from one person to another. I saw Arthur meet Jannis. And they didn't— He didn't speak Italian; Jannis didn't speak English. But there was a true understanding of what each was doing. So that was, you know, another great moment. Anyway, that is the piece at 127th Street.

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