CCS BARD ARCHIVES

Speakers Series : Prem Krishnamurthy, "Endless Archive (Part II)"
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Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College
Annandale on Hudson, N.Y.

00:00:00:01 **PREM KRISHNAMURTHY:** Thank you, Ann, thank you Tom, thank you Bard. It feels [inaudible] to be here today, as I'll try to outline today, it's been a long dialogue with this institution, thinking about archives, thinking about curating, publishing, design, as being all part of one set of interests. So I'll try and keep in mind that today is scratching the surface of it. But the thing that's most exciting is that it feels like apart from the fact that I have a lot more storage space now, the fact that these archives could be identical. Because that, to me, is the most impressive thing, is when, whether it's exhibition making, or design making, the desire and impulse for creation works for many tools available.

00:00:52:01 So I'm going to scratch the surface of it a little bit today and hopefully, we'll start a conversation. But let me start. So I want to ask us all to do something together I have been doing this for a couple of years. But whenever— before I give a talk or before I do a conversation with somebody, I've often, for the past couple of years, had a ritual that helps us all to focus and be present. And I used to do this, you know, in the proverbial green room, but nowadays, since the last year, I have tried to do it with the entire audience. Because like, why do I get to be the only one who's calm and focused? Why can't we all be? So, if you want, I want to ask you all to stand up.

00:01:36:27 Stand up and [inaudible] stretch [inaudible] for you to be able to feel your body. I'd invite you to close your eyes. And try to feel if there are any parts of your body that hurt or are in pain or uncomfortable. Try to feel your whole body. So I want us to count together. [inaudible]. Feel free to participate if you want. I'd like us to count together to sixty. And while you're counting, you can listen to your own voice; but also listen to the voices of others around you. Let's start.

00:02:37:13 **[Group counts together to sixty]**

00:04:25:28 You can open your eyes. Thank you. [inaudible] I want to try to not talk for longer than anybody can possibly be able to focus on, so I'm going to set myself an alarm for sixty minutes. And hopefully, when it goes off, I'll be done. So I wanted to start by talking about my first [inaudible] contact with CCS. So that takes us back a number of years. I think somebody else would know better than me whether this was 2004 or 2005 or 2006. I think it might've been 2005.

MAN: 2005.

00:05:18:17 **PREM KRISHNAMURTHY:** See? This is the good thing about archives is that other people know the answers. Let's see. I'm going to occasionally refer to my computer, to files on the computer, a particular PDF. But this is something else that I just pulled out. So let's see if I can use [inaudible]. So in 2005, Project Projects, the design studio that I co-founded with Adam Michaels, was invited, I believe by Joshua Decter, who was teaching the practicum at CCS—and this was at a time when Norton Batkin was the director of the program, we were invited to be the designers for the student publication that the first-year practicum students were putting together. And I'm not going to go into all of the details of that, but it was a project that involved all of the students working together to put together a publication and an exhibition that was called *Reshuffle: Notions of an Itinerant Museum*.

00:06:38:00 And what was really interesting for us as graphic designers was that we were all roughly the

same cohort. We were all the same rough age. But we were designers, they were curators. And we all were in the same room trying to figure out what this publication and exhibition could be together. And it ended up culminating in a show at Art in General, and a kind of set of contributions by writers and artists and designers and other folk that any visitor to the exhibition could come and assemble into their own box, and then take home with them, ostensibly mail to somebody else. Though I think probably almost nobody took this box that we made, with a mailing label that sealed it, and actually sent it to somebody else in the world. I'd like to know if anybody actually received one.

00:07:28:05 But I think what was interesting and thrilling was noticing, even at that early point, the overlaps of graphic design and curating, and thinking about them as being really kind of part and parcel, in the way that both disciplines think about mediating or framing or translating ideas from one context into another, whether— And then, you know, a graphic designer often works with a page, with a screen. A curator often works in a space, though by no means exclusively. But the idea that really started to emerge in my mind through that encounter was that maybe graphic designers and curators are kind of the same thing. Or at least structurally, extremely similar.

00:08:17:03 And that began, I guess, something like a fourteen-, fifteen-year dialog with CCS. And so I myself rarely know what's in these folders. These folders have been sitting in filing cabinets for quite a while. But in appears that there are things like some of our early sketches for the designs to see how you could make a box and a set of individual cards that were totally modular, that could exist each other, whether you had any context or not. And I think that— there are things like pieces of paper that tell that we decided that they should be seven-by-seven. Seven-point-five by seven-point-five inches. And started to articulate the information. And then even try to think about how the space could work, working with the curatorial students to design the space at Art in General.

00:09:18:01 In to what, in my mind now, I think looked like a really relatively rudimentary exhibition. But nevertheless, a kind of early move of thinking about page translating into the space, translating into the walls. And also, one of the kind of underlying things that you may see throughout this, is that the relationships built at every point in time continued. So at that moment in time, the person who was the curator at Art in General, where the show was, was Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy, who had gone to Bard, and later and still continues to be, a dear friend and collaborator. And so some of those relationships are really there. And I found this image this morning and realized there's some people that I recognize still in the picture. But thankfully, you can't see them too closely, because they're all fifteen years younger.

00:10:10:03 Now, but a kind of second thing that I wanted to talk about, a project that more directly spoke to the archive, is this book here, *MATRIX Berkeley: A Changing Exhibition of Contemporary Art*. And I will say right now, I'm standing here, and you're sitting there, and I'm hoping that a little bit later on, we'll all get up and we can also move around and look at things together. And if any of you are so moved, you can join me right now [inaudible]. *MATRIX Berkeley*— and I'm going to pull something else up here that I just found. So *MATRIX Berkeley* was a book that I worked on with the studio Project Projects for probably almost two years. And it involved going through the entire exhibition archive of the MATRIX Berkeley program, which was one of the first kind of project spaces within an American museum. It was opened in 1978. And this involved working with the curator of the MATRIX program at the time, Elizabeth Thomas, to literally go through every single project file and put together a kind of compendium of the 228 projects that had happened before. And she had been at the Walker Art Center previously, and she understood how design is not just a service, it's not just something that happened at the end of a process, and so she invited Project Projects to be co-editors with her, of the book. And so our goal was

helping to organize the project, helping to research it, and helping to get it shaped. And so interestingly, you know, there have been many engagements with Bard over the years, but one that I remember, which seems appropriate here, is that in 2010, Sarah Demeuse, who was a graduate student here and now happens to work with me at my studio workshops, she was a graduate student and invited me to come here to Bard to talk about this project. And so I gave a talk, together with Kari Conte, she was there, as well, and Ann was there, talking about the *MATRIX Berkeley* project and talking about going through this entire archive of materials to try to make a kind of volume that reflects the archival experience, to some extent.

00:12:37:22 And at some point, I'd encourage you guys to look through this because part of our strategy in designing the book the way we did was to almost take the— to let the materials guide the design. So some projects, some exhibitions in the book, in their history, got two pages; some got six pages. And they got that material based on what was in the archive. What did the archive kind of tell us? And in many ways, I mean, one of the other things that's part of my archive now at Bard, is the entire set of original MATRIX Berkeley exhibition brochures from the very early days. The MATRIX Berkeley program originated [inaudible] in the early or mid seventies, and a graphic designer who I sadly never did another [inaudible] with, though I wish I had. And he created a very simple five-and-a-half by eight-and-a-half inch format of exhibition brochures, which at the beginning, typically had no kind of images. They were black and white, they were produced with an easy kind of typesetting machine, they were three-hole punched so they could be put into a binder.

00:13:49:20 One of the things that guided this book and this format was the early [inaudible] that reproduced those brochures at 100% scale, at times, so that we actually could use the original textual curatorial materials, wrapping them— necessarily putting a very overt second layer of interpretation on top of that. And so I hope that one day, you might take some time to look through the original brochures in the book, because for me, what I can say is the process of doing that project over two years was effectively my curatorial boot camp. I never went to curatorial school. I don't think about it. In fact, I almost did come to this institution, and ended up, decided not to. But in any case, going through and looking at the correspondence that the multiple curators of that program had with the different artists, and seeing how those communications changed over time— How in the beginning, there was more direct communication with artists, and then by the 1990s, it was mostly the curators writing galleries to ask them, you know, to get test sets for how to get the right projector. How those things changed was very, very important. And so around this period of time, in the mid to late 2000s, after having run a design studio for a number of years, I was also starting to do a lot of archival research about East German graphic design, and designer named Klaus Wittkugel, in particular. So that's just a little bit of an introduction to why I'm here.

00:15:21:05 But let me zoom back to another place for a while, which is— I feel, as Ann mentioned, I come to everything I do from graphic design. Actually, that's not really true. I come to everything I do from writing and then to photography and then graphic design as a synthesis of those. But graphic design seems like the best place to start here, to not have to go back to being a teenager. So when I was kind of in school and studying art, there was a moment in the late nineties when a very important graphic design school started in Arnhem, in the Netherlands. It was called the Werkplaats Typografie. It was co-founded by the designer Karel Martens, who just turned eighty this year, and Wigger Bierma, who left after a couple of years.

00:16:06:22 But it was the idea that graphic design could be both practical and kind of open-ended at the same time. It was focused in the making of graphic design, but also Karel never studied graphic design and he studied in Holland in the 1950s. Graphic design didn't really exist. It

was just he studied to be an artist, and happened to drawn to printing. And so he didn't see those distinctions. And I'll just point— For some of you, that might be very interesting. There are numerous documents in here from the Werkplaats Typografie, from other graphic designers from that period, from the 2000s. Here is *IDEA* magazine, which is a Japanese magazine that still exists. Actually, I'll say I think their last issue focused mostly on an exhibition that I co-artistic directed called Ministry of Graphic Design. But this, for us in the 2000s, was kind of like the bible. It had all of what we thought interesting in graphic design at that moment, in a kind of global context. And it was what Project Projects was aspiring to be in dialogue with. But very fertile ground.

00:17:15:26 Now, so in 2004, as I mentioned, Project Projects started in New York. And some of the things in the archive are really from these early days. And so one thing is a publication called *Act, Patriot Act!*, which was made for a show called The Contemporary. Not a place, an institution, itinerant institution, called The Contemporary in Baltimore. Now, it was produced primarily by a collective called the 16 Beaver Group. And that was a collective of artists and writers and activists and other people, a lot of whom had gone through the Whitney's Independent Study Program. And Project Projects' first studio was at 16 Beaver Street. It just so happened that it was a cheap studio, even though at the time, we didn't think it was cheap. At the time, we thought, oh, my God, it's $750 a month; there's no way we can afford this. But we took a studio in lower Manhattan in 2004. And through being in close proximity to a number of artists and thinkers, started to collaborate with them on some projects. And this— It was— I'm not going to get into— It's too much if I get into the context of every single project here; we'll be here seventeen hours. And I think we should spend far less time. But if there're questions, I can also answer them later, about specific projects. Just to say that as a designer—and here, I could replace the word designer with curator—being a designer in close proximity to artists and figuring out ways to work with them was what made us do what we did.

00:18:54:17 And at this time, we also started to work with other nonprofits in New York. For example, Creative Time, that some of you might know. This was a project called "The Plain of Heaven," which was a very early project curated by Peter Eleey at the site at 820 Washington Street, which is now the Whitney Museum. So—where is— oh. Hannah's done a fantastic job of putting all of these materials, but I just have to find them. So let's switch over to here for a second. Now, as I mentioned, sometimes, as an aid to my memory and as a kind of visual reference, I'll refer to *P!DF*, an ever evolving electronic publication that I published. Or that actually, David Reinfurt of O R G published. But some of these things are in here. So if I search for "Plain of Heaven," then I can find kind of like an archive of my own thinking, in a very partial way. I can a section of the book that focuses on this. So I think you'll be able to find that if you want. But it was a very important project for us, as well, to work with an arts organization on everything from a kind of identify and logo to publication, to a website, to all of the printed material and to the exhibition graphics. And very, very importantly, it was also where, I think, there was a formulation that the book for the show could be two things at once. It could be both a catalog for the exhibition that would have, you know, texts on the artists and info about them and all of the stuff that a catalog has; but it could also do something else. It could be multifunctional. And so actually, the book was made to be a kind of time capsule.

00:21:02:01 So all of the pages in the book are French folded, with the folds on the the outside. So if you broke the binding- or when the binding falls apart, because it was extremely cheap, you would reveal images on the inside of the pages, which were photographs I had taken of this abandoned meat packing facility at 820 Washington Street, which no longer exists, which was about to be demolished, right after the show. So it both did what a catalog needs to do, and then also did something else. But it was a secret. It was a kind of thing that you only found if you were looking

for it, or maybe after twenty years.

00:21:47:00 Around this same period was when we started to work with other arts organizations. You know, I'm just [inaudible] a couple of things we have here. But one I'll mention is Dieu Donné, which works with artists and paper. And interesting— so there was an RFP, or request for proposals for new identities for it. And I guess this is 2007, from the invoices I'm seeing here, and emails. And so interestingly, the person who was the program coordinator of Dieu Donné at the time was Peter Russo, who was then subsequently, one of the co-founders and then the director of Triple Canopy, who is now our studio mate that we share with. But Peter was there as a program coordinator. We sent him RFP with the price bid, to do their identity. We did. We worked with him. It was fun. And then suddenly, a couple years later, he started a magazine and asked us if we wanted to do other things. And so, that's often how these things work.

00:22:50:19 I think that in the same period—I'm still in kind of the early mode—but these collaborations closely with artists or organizations continued. I'll do another organization. That seems interesting. So another kind of long-term collaboration that started in that period was with the Vera List Center and Carin Kuoni, who was a curator there. And actually, that came about because of a Bard CCS graduate. That came about because of CCS Bard. That came about because of Bartholomew Ryan, who was a student here. He was doing his first-year internship. I had known him through his ex-partner and a project that I had collaborated with him on. And so he was asked to be part of the curatorial team for this exhibition called *OURS: Democracy in the Age of Branding*, which was at Parsons and curated by the Vera List Center. And he said, "Well—" You know, he said to Carin Kuomi, [inaudible] "We need a designer." And he said, "Oh, I know a designer." And so they called me or called us, and then we ended up doing the exhibition design and graphics and kind of a lot of other things for this exhibition. Which to me, was still, in a way, one of these kind of beautiful crossovers of things, of working with people in a way that's extremely fluid.

00:24:20:10 So I was going to talk about one other thing here, which I think could be interesting one day for any of you, which is Omer Fast, the artist. His book, *In Memory*. Which at that point in time, he had made a number of monographs, a lot of them with a great graphic designer in Berlin named Manuel Raeder. But he wanted to do something different [inaudible]. Here's a book that created a couple of problems for me. It was a kind of anti-monograph, because it was for his largest show to date, which collected a number of his film installations together. But he also intentionally was really resistant to the kind of authoritative mode of a total catalogue. And so it's a book that—and you can probably see it better in the PDF, so I'll do that for a moment, and then [inaudible]. But so essentially, the book functioned almost in a Talmudic fashion, where you would have these main texts, which were commissioned by curators and other authors, which then Omer commented upon with his own monologue, critique, or commentary. And you know, in an era of fake news— I mean, I don't know what that means in the era of fake news. But a lot of them were entirely fictional kind of asides about historical people. And sometimes he would have sections in which—

00:26:02:10 This, for example, was an essay by Tom Holert, which is annotated by Omer, which is then annotated again by Tom, and then by Omer responding to Tom. And the interesting thing about— You know, it was extremely difficult, also. I said it caused some problems because it was also bilingual; it was in German and English. And I do speak fluent German and I had a Swiss-German designer working with me at the time, who could help with this. But trying to make these two languages line up was extremely difficult. But this type of really close interlinking of the artistic intention and the curatorial intention and the design intention, meant that there are things like the first page, what's typically the half title of the book, actually says, "One. Omer, could

you please write a short, sweet, even salacious footnote about the book's title for the sake of its hardworking designers? Since this is technically the half title page, it would be wonderful if the full name of the book, *In Memory*, could appear somewhere in the text. Thank you, and be well." Footnote two is, "Unfortunately, due to his untimely death, Omer Fast was never able to answer the designer's request for a last footnote here. Out of respect for the artist's unfulfilled plan for the book, the editors have decided to keep the designer's unanswered request in lieu of a footnote. Three: for an outline of this late artist's brief, but admittedly [inaudible] career, the uncommitted reader is invited to skip ahead to page 111, footnote 16." And so Omer is often considered the book, and the institutional catalog a work of his. And that's a way that I like to think about graphic design. In its best cases, is that rather than representing a thing, rather than documenting a thing, it performs something. It actually is not after the fact; it is part of the fact. It is creating the fact.

00:27:59:16 Now, I'll end that kind of era, in a way, this chapter of the talk, by pointing to the Whitney Biennial catalog that Project Projects designed in 2010. In fact, I guess I'm able to say here, I think the reason why I didn't come to Bard was because we got the commission for Whitney Biennial catalog, and I said, well, rather than going to graduate school, there are probably other things I can do as a designer that will be— you know, so I deferred for a year, and then I think I endlessly deferred, and then I think I never actually came here. But so interestingly, also in this kind of [inaudible]— So this was a 2010 catalog. I don't know how it reads today. Had a picture of Barack Obama, in a cowboy hat on the campaign trail, on the cover. And one of Project Projects' moves in thinking about the book was to create a kind of time machine of presidents of— the US presidents of a given decade and juxtapose them with the Whitney's building, to kind of think about the interior/exterior, what's happening in the institution, what's happening outside. And kind of then interestingly, because we had shown the curators, at our first pitch for the project, we'd shown them the unfinished spread from the *Berkeley MATRIX* book. They said, "Well, this Biennial is meant to include not only works from the show, but also works from the collection that were collected from past Biennials. It has a retrospective character. So let's include a section that is, in fact, press from past Whitney Biennials, and then also a complete register of all the past catalogs and their covers. And so that arose out of dialog with the *MATRIX Berkeley* book, which we were working on. So there's a kind of interlinking of these different things. They are also both using a very similar green. There was a moment in time when I thought, we have to stop using green. Too much green.

00:29:56:06 So then I think to kind of jump ahead— I keep coming back there as I check my time. Now, within the studio and my own life, that really represents a watershed moment. Not the Whitney Biennial, per se, but then it was also a moment in which the studio changed scale and which— I mean, for one, we were finalists for the Cooper Hewitt's National Design Award in 2009, which we later won in 2015. But it was some moment, having been a small, three or four person graphic design studio, we suddenly kind of got a kind of recognition that we didn't expect. And they gave us— I'm not ready to say whether it was confidence or whether that's good confidence. But let's just say the studio started to change and what happened was we added a third partner, as well, who was Rob Giampietro, who is now the head of design at MoMA. And so he joined us and the studio started to take on larger projects. And grew in scale, as well. And some of those that are very, very important for me are things like SALT, in Istanbul. So let's find SALT here. I love the fact that I can just search for things. One day, that'll be the case with this archive, I suppose.

00:31:25:03 So SALT was an experimental institution in Istanbul, founded by Vasif Kortun, who was the founding director of CCS Bard. And so it was an institution that combined art and design and other kind of cultural, anthropological questions. And long story short— Again, this is in

the PDFs, so there is a lot that one can already see about it. But instead of simply being an identity system— So we were invited to do the branding for this institution. And this is where the archive's interesting. So let's draw a scene. Which is me and my partner Rob Giampietro at this moment in time getting ready to fly to Istanbul to make a pitch for possibly the largest— one of the bigger institutional projects we'd done at this point in time. And we have a whole presentation ready. And this is why it's not always great to be my business partner. So I think the night before we flew— And I just found the drawing, this afternoon, which is really good. The night before we flew, in a hotel, five in the morning in Boston, I suddenly thought, `Oh, fuck! This whole presentation is wrong. We have to redo the entire presentation. There's a whole other thing that we could do here.' And then Rob kind of, bless his heart, we ended up spending the entire plane ride to Istanbul remaking our presentation. Getting to SALT, presenting 300 slides in sixty minutes. And then getting the project eventually, but also not sleeping for a very long stretch. But I just found this, which is really a fun document. It starts with me— It was from a note. It starts with me trying to revise, or make comments on our presentation. And then I say, "Hey." And then suddenly, everything starts to move into all caps. "Rather than function as the sole designers of an institution's identity, P.P. works as a kind of design director-slash-curator, who creates an essential design framework that is then envisioned-slash-reinterpreted by different designers over time." This is all caps. "So [inaudible] over time and changes based on both having new relationships, [inaudible] constant reevaluation of the institution of different parties, typically concrete. We create a basic and [inaudible] and rudimentary master plan for the identity, parentheses, [inaudible] criticism, [inaudible], et cetera, which is then carried out [inaudible] challenged by other designers, say on a bi-monthly basis. The identity itself become an active reinterpreted, renegotiated site for change. All through this entire process itself, it's heavily documented to constitute and begin to create a contemporary archive of graphic design practices, approaches, and methods." Okay. So the project did evolve in that direction, and became, to my mind, also not only perhaps one of the more important design projects we did, but also one of the more curatorial projects that I've done. Because it involved, again, not simply being the designer, but creating a framework and a platform in which other designers could then be part of it, and treating it as an exhibition within an identity system.

00:34:51:09 Around this same time, or maybe a couple of years later, I'll point again to some of these kind of, you know, institutional projects, larger-scale projects, but also the connections with people before. So Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy, whom I'd already mentioned as an early collaborator. She then became the artistic director of the ninth Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil. And so she approached us about creating all of the identity materials for that and all of the books. That's what these are here. And they invented a kind of alien language. They invented a language based on kind of [inaudible] graphic symbols and geologic symbols, that was used for every piece of communication for the biennial. It was really about thinking about typographic design as being able to speak in another language, as being able to break people out of everyday rhythms and make them think about language differently.

00:35:49:29 So at the same time, this idea of collaboration or involving multiple people, which is something in SALT, became quite important in a number of other projects. And I'll point here— Not only is she here, but Project Projects, around the same time, was art to guest art direct and design the venerable graphic design magazine *Print*, which sadly is gone out of the business entirely. But it was around since the 1920 and thirties. And we were the first ones to do this, followed by other designers like Metahaven and [inaudible] and other designers, particularly with a kind of art bent. But our issue focused on collaboration. And so we commissioned a number of texts about collaboration, invited different artists, and did a whole section on Group Material, actually. We commissioned an article by the writer Sarah Hromack, on Group Material. Which is how I started to come more in contact with the artist Julie Ault, who was one of the founders of

Group Material, and with whom then we designed a number of books. These books, Tell it to My Heart, volumes one and two, which were a next edition of the works from her collection, most of which she had received as, you know, swaps or gifts from friends, that was both a book and a catalog of all of her— actually, this one is also nice in an archival context. It's the checklist of everything in her collection, more or less; and then it has annotations by her and a host of other collaborators, including the artist Danh Vo; Julie's own life partner and collaborator, Martin Beck; and other people, about these individual works. So these kind of stories that come out of the archive.

00:37:39:16 And there's a kind of fluidity between the exhibition space and the space of the book. That is probably probably apparent throughout, but I'll point to a couple of other interesting overlaps of different media. One was, as I mentioned, Peter Russo and Triple Canopy before. Triple Canopy asked us—I don't know what year this is anymore; probably 2010, 2011—if we could help them to make a print archive of an online magazine. And so we designed what was called *Invalid Format*. It was a book that translated the web into a set of volumes; but also tried to use some of the ideas of the web, but changing orientation, as a way to create a design system.

00:38:26:03 I'm also going to point here for a moment to "Dis-play/Re-play," which is much later, 2016; but it's a show that I co-curated with Walter Seidl of the Austrian Cultural Forum. And it was a rigorous, but interesting opportunity to think about being curator of a show, as well as to design, together with the designer [inaudible], who was working for us at the time, a publication that came out simultaneous to the show. So it was a show that was about artists using space in a particular way, and so they were all site-specific installations. And since the graphic design was happening close to home— In fact, this publication, which has all of the installation images of the show, including this, you know, large installation by Brian O'Doherty, who I'll speak about in a moment, it came out at the opening. You know, that's a rare thing. Usually you have an exhibition, it's installed, and a month later or six months later or five years later, a catalog comes out. In this case, the publication and the exhibition are simultaneous. There are no wall texts because they are in this publication that people are carrying around with them.

00:39:30:22 I will speak to one more design project that has to do with kind of overlaps. So these are the two books for the Carnegie International that happened in 2018. Those archives aren't here for various reasons. But Ingrid Schaffner, who was the curator of that exhibition, she very presciently, as soon as she got the commission to curator the show, she actually put together what she called the creative team, which consisted— She said, "I need other people around me to think about this exhibition and how it travels in the world." And so she invited the editors of Dancing Foxes and Project Projects or me, later Workshops, to then be her partners as part of a creative team who would think about all of the aspects of the show's, you know, communications—from wall labels to exhibition design to publication to website, all in a kind of single kind of family. And that, in fact, in a way, it was an odd relationship. Now, being one of the artistic directors, with Tina Kukielski, of the FRONT Triennial in Cleveland, I learned from that as well. And so we all [inaudible], we're creating an artistic team in which there are a number of curators, but there's also the editor and the graphic designers we're hiring, as well as an artist from the show, are all part of this larger team who's thinking about the exhibition and how it moves into the world.

00:40:58:16 So exhibitions, how they move into the world. So I'm going to now change gears to the kind of third chapter, as it were. So now, as Ann mentioned, around 2012 to 2017, I ran a space on Broome Street that was called P!. Now, P! was called many things. I called it a kind of mom and pop kunsthalle. But it also functioned as a gallery. I think I said at the beginning, it was a combination of a project space, a commercial gallery, and a mom and pop kunsthalle. And this

was very important because even though nobody ever understood what that meant, it was a kind of intention to try [inaudible]. And I'll just point to the very first project, the first show that we did, which itself almost articulates three different modes of curatorial engagement within a single show. The show was a three-person show that included the artists Christine Hill; Karel Martens, who I mentioned before, who was one of the founders of Werkplaats Typografie and was a very important figure for me, who's eighty years old now and still kind of looms in my imagination; and the artist Chauncy Hare, an engineer turned photographer, who dropped out of the art world entirely to become an occupational therapist. And I'll just kind of say very quickly, this first show on Broome Street, my [inaudible] those three figures was very, very [inaudible] Karel Martens. I worked almost in a kind of classical mode of curating, where I did a studio visit, and saw these amazing monoprints that he had been making since the 1980s. Actually, 1950s and sixties, but— And not only exhibited, said, "Okay, let me make a selection with you and then we'll display them and present them in the space." Now, with Chauncey Hare, who as I mentioned, was an engineer turned photographer who dropped out of the art world, his work was not available. He did not allow his work to be shown. So I acted as an exhibition designer. Finding materials, books I could acquire, and creating a display, a large-scale graphics standing beside vitrines with books in them, that I could then show these works. So I was an exhibition designer. And finally, for Christine Hill's project, which was called "Volksboutique Small Business Outpost," it involved having transactions with other local businesses in Chinatown, where I had just opened a gallery.Meaning, going into those different businesses and trading— Asking them for hand painted signs that they had and swapping them for the duration of the show. We would design a new sign for them and had borrowed their sign, which went into the window. And so in that case, I was a performer. I was like a complicit active agent in her project. And so these were three different curatorial modes.

00:44:01:23 Now, of course, part of the influence of P!, I mean, one of the things that was there right from the beginning— Let's see if I can spell O'Doherty. I'm sure most of you are familiar with Brian O'Doherty, the artist, writer, critic, novelist, ex-TV host. [inaudible] on television. You know, made a documentary about [inaudible]. But, Brian's writing, "Inside the White Cube," or, the essay series, that was then published as "Inside the White Cube," was very important to me in thinking about conventions of display. I mean, one of the things that I think about as a designer and curator at all times is that there is no neutral. There's no neutral interface. There is no objective interface. You know, kind of every way in which you access a certain message is coded, is ideological, is political. And as a designer, that's a very, very apparent. But I think, as a curator, that's also true. And the white cube is just one of those interfaces, which has been naturalized over a period of time and which, in its denaturalization, starts to show other possibilities. And so being able to actually have a space in which I, as a gallerist, could approach Brian O'Doherty, who together with Simone Subal, who was also a graduate of CCS, and ask him to make a set of shows, is a fantastic thing. And it led to me being friends and, you know, he's like my father. [inaudible]. But he has [inaudible]. Anyway, [inaudible].

00:45:51:19 The point being, which I think the last time I talked here was with Brian, maybe like four or five years ago, was doing a conversation with Brian O'Doherty. Other figures who come to mind are Elaine Lustig Cohen, who passed away a couple of years ago. But she was a kind of polymathic graphic designer and artist and archivist. And having this space allowed me to engage with her to make shows with her, and then we could curate shows. Most recently, the Jewish Museum with her work, and kind of engage in a dialog with her over a number of years. So P! was all of those things. It was a space to be able to work with artists in a particular way, some of whom were far my elders; but also many of whom were my contemporaries. Like people like Maryam Jafri. Let's see if I can—

00:46:54:24 Yes. With Maryam Jafri, in her first kind of solo show in the US. Or the artist Wong Kit Yi. Oh, [inaudible], Céline Condorelli. Let's see. Ah, [inaudible]. Let me talk about this for a moment. So the artist Wong Kit Yi, who is based between Hong Kong and New York. This was a very funny situation. She was one of two artists who I was introduced by someone else, by Jane DeBevoise, who run Asia Art Archives, which is a [inaudible]. And so, Ali Wong, as goes colloquially, she came to show me her portfolio. And I almost cancelled the meeting, because I thought, I don't have time to see anybody else. She came by the gallery and she showed her portfolio. And she actually then went even one step further in being bold. She said, "Actually, the reason why I'm here is because I need a visa. I need a visa and I need someone else to give me a show, so I can apply for my O-1 visa." And she was like, "And here's the show I want to curate with you. I want to curate a show together with the Feng Shui master who goes by Mr. Ye." His full name is Ye Lei Ping. "But I want to curate a show with the Feng Shui master, in which he will chose all the artists, out of a list that we give him, that has their birth date and birth places [inaudible]. And then he will tell us which artists are good artists, and then he will tell us where to put their work." And as it happened—and the show was called "The Ceiling Should Be Green," because in his reading, he said, of the space, he said, "Well, the ceiling must be green." And you may have noticed in this earlier picture of the first show, we used to have a loft ceiling, so we followed his instructions. And I think the thing was very important to me [inaudible]. All of a sudden a lot of that is in here and [inaudible] under her.

00:48:57:05 She goes by Wong Kit Yi as an artist and Ali Wong as a curator. Included in the show was a video, that was the process of Mr. Ye doing the reading that I mentioned. So it kind of unmasked the methodology of it in [inaudible] way. But what was important to me was that that system of knowledge, that system of curating, was just as authoritative and important as the other ways we know, architectural, curatorial or other kind of methods and systems of knowledge that we take for granted. And it was by far, one of our best shows.

00:49:31:07 I mean, there are other shows. If I had more time, I would talk about them. "The Stand," which was a kind of experimental exhibition built around a novel by Stephen King. But I won't go into that now. I'll end this third and almost last section with talking about our last show at P!, which was by the artist Céline Condorelli. So really, Céline's first kind of solo show in the US. I believe she brought [inaudible]. But there's a lot of print-based— I mean, she's amazing. She was one of the co-founders of a space called East Side Projects, in Birmingham, and co-editor of a book called *Support Structures*, which is still one of the best compendiums that exists of various things. But so Céline did the last show at P!, which then continued as another show in London, at Kingston University London. But amongst many things she she did, including creating this fantastic bench that was created by cutting out the gallery wall and then repurposing it, with a kind of piece of gallery furniture and new upholstery, into a bench that could be where we had conversations and events, including with Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy, James Voorhies, and Lorraine O'Grady, who just happened to show up to this talk and sat down with us at the table. So it became a kind of platform for other things. But it also became— sometimes you only realize why a thing exists way after. Oh, it's in a different document, that's why.

00:51:08:07 Sometimes not everything is in P!DF. So I'll point to this, for sure that's here, which was [inaudible] piece from P! And it was the last talk, the last event at P! And it was with a young art historian named Kristie La, and me, and Céline, in virtual, by Skype. And we're talking about the politics of exhibition display. And in some ways, it crystalized— I realized that in fact, it crystalized my entire reason why that space existed for five years. Which was that as part of Céline's show, we had borrowed, from Tamar Cohen, the late Elaine Lustig Cohen's daughter, the original drawing called *Field of Vision*, from 1930. Yeah, 1930, by the artist and designer Herbert Bayer, who trained at Bauhaus. And this is one of the most reproduced diagrams in the

history of exhibition display. And you know, lent to exhibitions of wildly different ideologies. And we managed to borrow that original work, which was in the wall at P!, in the [inaudible] that Céline had created. And through that, we were able to invite Kristie La, who's now at Harvard as a graduate student, to talk about Bayer's Nazi era period, in which he wrote out of his biography, when he was actually complicit with the Nazis and designed graphics for them, before coming to the US as an émigré and designing the famous Bauhaus exhibition at MoMA and kind of continuing to make a large mark on exhibition design there. And I, at the same time, spoke about Klaus Wittkugel, an East German designer whose work I had been researching in his archive since 2008, right around the time of the *MATRIX Berkeley* book and thinking about the ideology of display. And so this last event was almost the kind of most important event we did, the culmination of why all of the [inaudible] shows existed.

00:53:08:12 So that sure seems like a good way to transition. Because part of this archive that I have given to Bard are boxes something like this that might be marked with things like "PK Ephemera". This one is [inaudible], but they might be labeled as "PK Ephemera: 2004-2006," or "PK Ephemera: Best." Because as a kind of graphic designer, not a kind of hoarder but as a person who likes printed things, I have a habit, from the late 1990s on, of any time I saw an interesting piece of graphic ephemera on an exhibit, I would tend to grab one or two or three copies of them and put them in a box. And many of them have stories. Like for example, this is interesting. This is actually— This is a type sample from the type foundry Milieu Grotesque, run by the designer Timo Gaessner, who was the designer who designed the custom typeface for SALT with us. So these are a couple of type samples from him. This is—oh, yeah—the Van Abbemuseum show of Maryam Jafri, which showed the installation that we had shown in New York in that form. Then there are things like a brochure from the artist Bic Van der Pol, who did a number of things here around 2008, 2009. I think this was the project they did in Istanbul for the biennial. This is a very fun one. Brian O'Doherty gave me one of his— For this show at Betty Parsons in 1970, a fold-out invitation that has the notation, the kind of language that he used, this ancient Celtic language, that notation on a kind of invitation.

00:55:08:27 You know, there's a lot in here. I, obviously, don't even know everything that's in here. But I think there's probably some hot stuff. Okay. So I'm going to end with something that— Well, I'm going to go a couple minutes over, but constraints and systems are meant to be broken. So I named this talk "Endless Archive." And "Endless Archive Part Two." I should say "Endless Archive," the name itself, coined probably over a beer or several with a musician named Ed Sterling. And he kind of gave me permission. Originally, I think it was meant to be a photo blog, sometime around 2004; then he gave me permission to continue to use it for other random things. And so I was invited, in 2016, to give a talk at Armory Fair, by Matthew Israel, who used to be at Artsy. And it was meant to be a five-minute talk about the future. Like in a kind of super-fast style. And I think it was 2016, the art market was kind of blowing up. It was at an art far and I thought, well, I should give a talk that works for that context. And so I gave a talk called "Endless Archive," in which I proposed that every art fair, exhibition, and biennial from no on should be permanent. That once it's mounted, it never goes down. And then that was a piece that kind of I gave this talk, and it was on YouTube or Vimeo, and kind of it was a five-minute talk. And a couple years later—

00:56:47:03 So fast forward to 2017, when there was a new space in Ghent, in Belgium, about to open. Or it was even before that. There was a really interesting artist-and-designer-run project in Ghent called 019. It still exists. And it's a collective of artists, architects, designers, who have been making very experimental exhibitions for about five or six years there. There's really— And they also have a music label, and so they do a lot of pop concerts, and they're just really energetic. And interestingly, a couple of them studied at Werkplaats Typografie. So they had come out of

graphic design, but are working also as exhibition makers. And they— long story short, they end up winning the city's bid to create a new Kunsthalle, Kunsthal Gent, in an old former cloister. So in a big church-like building in the center of Ghent. And long story short, I had co-written with a couple of people— This is too many different things. I'm going to skip some them. Well, let's just say in 2016, Maria Lind was the curator of, or was the director of the graduate program here, was the director of the Gwangju Biennial. And she convened, together with Binna Choi, a group of small to medium-scale art institutions who all kind of had a workshop— Like workshop working group day to try to think about problems in small to medium-scale art institutions. And I ended up— unbeknownst had nominated me as a facilitator for [inaudible], so I ended up being the facilitator for a group of institutions who were all wondering why they still existed. And it was at the moment in which I had already announced that P!, my space, would close. And it would close in the middle of 2017. And so that was also on my mind, a kind of death, an expiration. But also, what does it mean for a thing to— Why does it have to exist forever? Why is it that things that last longer are better? Why isn't it that we think about limitations, constraints, as being a natural part of at least existence here? And why couldn't we embrace this? And so we ended up offering a kind of tongue-in-cheek test that wanted to make an archive of institutional memory in Brisbane, Australia, thinking about [inaudible] on the beach and thinking about postapocalyptic scenarios in which it might be useful to have a place in Australia to put all of these institutional archives from various small to medium institutions. So this is a short text that never got published because they never made a second book, like they intended to.

00:59:34:28 And again, a couple years later, Kunsthal Gent opened in Ghent, in Belgium. And I had sent them this text, or they had asked me something about it, and they said, "That's a great idea. We should really do that here in Ghent." And I said, "Okay, that's interesting." And then they found this "Endless Archive" talk I had given a couple of years earlier, and they said, "Actually, we really are interested in this idea of kind of slowing down the temporality of exhibition. What does it mean for an exhibition to be permanent? What does it mean for us to kind of think about the effect that exhibitions have in different ways?" And so in conversation with me, they commissioned me to make a work called *Endless Exhibition*, which exists in many, many forms. It exists as a contract, it exists as a set of lectures that I have given there now six times in Ghent, it exists as a set of derivative works from that, and also things that they'd made in response to it. And it leads their whole exhibition program. And so the last thing I'll show is a video made by [inaudible], who is an art and photographer there, out of the footage of me giving this talk several times. And then we'll watch that and we can open it up to discussion.

01:01:23:07 **CLIP: "**The Winchester Mystery House in San José, California was built by Sarah Winchester, heiress to the weapon manufacturer's fortune. She thinks that she is being chased by ghosts because of all those killed by her family's rifles during the colonization of the American West. Winchester commenced a thirty-eight-year program of nonstop day and night construction on her grand mansion. She believed that by constantly adding new rooms, secret passages, trapdoors and more, she could confuse and trick the phantoms. Her project of never-ending construction continued until she died, a bloody past projected forward into an exhausting future.

01:02:36:22 I can't help but connect this odd case with the current proliferation of art fairs, temporary exhibitions, and international biennials, which are built up every day, only to be torn back down the next, in a continuous cycle all over the world. Mounted at great cost for a terribly short period, these shows quickly disappear, leaving so much waste. The question lingers in our relentless pursuit of the new, which ghosts are we fleeing? As an exhibition [inaudible] remarked a couple years ago, "Exhibitions are fugitive, imperfect, and fragile [inaudible]." In their brief physical manifestation, exhibitions have a truncated lifespan and are, statistically speaking, not

seen by most people. They may have an afterlife, an existence in rumor and reputation.

01:04:17:19 But as a lover of exhibitions, I desire to see them all! So today, I'd like to make a speculative, perverse, performative proposition. From now on, forever, and into the future, every museum and gallery exhibition. Every biennial, triennial, quadrennial. Every art fair booth or site-specific project. Should be treated as a permanent presentation. [inaudible] installation. An endless exhibition [inaudible]. Our new [inaudible] exhibitions forever.

01:05:37:02 Let's freeze them in their immediate architectural and spatial context. Let's keep them on continuous view. Or better yet, seal them up for a period, to be reopened, like fresh time capsules or sarcophagi, months or years or decades or millennia past their initial moment, when they can be experienced anew by some intrepid seeking soul.

01:06:33:15 [inaudible] "if their survival is synced to museums or institutions."

01:06:49:09 Isolated and forcibly restrained, they often lose the physical, the social and spiritual context of their original presentation. In the case of exhibitions, longevity is an even more complex issue. As we know [inaudible] artist and writer Brian O'Doherty, in his seminal "Inside the White Cube," the context is now the content, which disappears the moment a show closes its doors. Even when an exhibition is reconstructed in part or in whole, the recurrence of its original display often signals an absence even more clearly. We trust that exhibition archives can give us a glimpse into their origins, process, and players.

01:08:08:27 "But the physical context of the original presentation is usually lost entirely. It seems like any documentation is doomed to fail in preserving an exhibition's power, its timeliness, its urgency. What it felt to actually be there. So how then to capture exhibitionary presence? One approach looks like Walter De Maria's *New York Earth Room*. Built in 1977, the installation, with its 140 tons of dirt filling a 3,600 square foot loft is to be preserved in perpetuity by the Dia Art Foundation. The maintaining of the status quo requires constant watering and raking to ward off mushrooms and rats and vermin."

01:09:26:28 "Seen from today, the *Earth Room* [inaudible] impermanence flies in the face of our terrifying political, cultural, and environmental uncertainties. A mere year after the Earth Room was installed, Stephen King published his apocolypric novel *The Stand*, in which a government created superflu leaks out and kills 99.4 percent of the human population."

01:10:06:27 It's an uncanny look at life beyond the end. [inaudible]

01:10:37:23 "Perhaps what we need to counter accelerating art world and world-world time is a new necropolis, a graveyard of exhibitions, frozen in form, while still fecund, like so many verdant monuments to change. Just imagine this set of silent sentinels watching over us, an endless archive of shows that lives forever. Starting today, I proclaim that every exhibition we mount is permanent."

01:11:41:27 "Like an in-progress archaeology. A cancer city of eternal making, these exhibitions will accumulate and recolonize the space around them, until they are the space. There will be no forgetting. Now how will we reconsider our production, our consumption, our understanding of these fragile and fugitive creatures?"

01:12:13:29 [inaudible]

01:12:28:02 "Or will we instead find ourselves emboldened, driven to even greater risk taking and experimentation? With this expanding palimpsest of perpetual exhibitions overtaking the world, will we finally lose the luxury of believing that today is only today? The [inaudible] counts our eternal program undermaking every illusion that the future is yet to come, rather than trembling already, ground-to-dust under our feet. Thank you."

PREM KRISHNAMURTHY: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]