

# *The Project is Open*

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by  
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## **Michigan**

I was raised in a small industrial town in southeast Michigan. Factory work — related to the auto industry — comprises the greater part of the job market; the majority of my high school's graduating class went on to become unskilled, union, and factory laborers. My father worked for General Motors in an assembly plant for 18 years before he was let go, only a few years short of retirement. This was my reality growing up, and this setting has influenced my work throughout. It wouldn't stand to talk about this project without staging the environment in which I began unconsciously conceptualizing these ideas so many years ago.

The area I grew up in is emblematic of a rural Midwest geography overlain with the industrialized automotive industry of southeast Michigan. Since the late 1980's this area has experienced a rapid loss of jobs as the U.S. auto industry has faced a steady decline. Michigan's unemployment rate in February 2009 (12%) was nearly double the national unemployment rate (8.1%) (Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives, 2008). Like much of the Midwest, southeast Michigan has dealt with an industry decline for years, however the current mortgage crisis and recent market collapse has further exasperated the issues facing the people living in this area.

## **Ohio**

According to PolicyMattersOhio.org, a research organization founded in January 2000 to broaden the debate about economic policy in Ohio, "Ohio saw a 1.2% increase (in the foreclosure rate) from 2007 and a 70% increase from 10 years ago. The latest numbers indicate that there was one foreclosure filing for every 60 housing units in the state last year" (Rothstein and Mehta, 2009). Areas comprised almost entirely of middle to lower class citizens feel the adverse effects of this system more dramatically than other areas of the nation because of the fragility of their social economic environments. The effect of the recent housing market collapse undeniably disrupts the economic stability of a region, but what I am interested in are the culminating effects such a crisis has on the social fabric of the local communities.

## **California**

In August of 2004 I moved to Santa Cruz, CA. and enrolled in the computer-engineering program at UCSC. I figured I could escape the harsh Michigan winters, and learn the skills needed to enter a lucrative job market. What I didn't know at the time was that I was enrolling in what conservative writer David Horowitz describes as "...the most radical university in the United States" (Horowitz, 2007). While this statement may be exaggerated, I did come to find Santa Cruz to be the most liberal community I had ever experienced. Ideologically, this environment was entirely unlike Michigan or Ohio. Being exposed to this setting has had a profound effect on me. For one, I no longer have aspirations of being a highly paid computer engineer, opting instead for a modest income and rewarding teaching position.

## **Bicycle Church**

Shortly after moving to Santa Cruz I started volunteering at The Bicycle Church, a local non-profit aimed at providing the community of Santa Cruz with access to tools and education in support of the bicycle as viable transportation. What I've learned from this experience is that motivation and work ethic have less to do with one's wage, and more to do with the entire exchange of learning, teaching, and creating. When a project is important to the individuals involved an honest effort is put forth regardless of the apparent rewards. The resulting enthusiasm emerges naturally with rewards that often hold greater value than a day's wage. This may sound like a statement in support of socialism — and it just may be — but what I learned from my time in Santa Cruz is that there are alternative models to the socioeconomic systems that control Midwest-industrial ideology. It is essential that these alternatives be explored if these systems are to be adequately criticized.

My first notable attempt at exploring alternatives to the status quo happened when I decided that I would live car-free. To some this idea might not seem all that radical, but in the vast urban sprawl of Detroit and Toledo — places that claim the title of automotive capitol of the world — the idea of living without a motor vehicle (car payment, insurance bill, maintenance fees, gas, etc.) is considered extreme. A prevailing assumption is that if you don't own a car, you must be unable to afford a car. Freeing myself from this way of

thinking was essential to the liberation of my thoughts from the deeply rooted notions of a manifest destiny of consumption. In southern Michigan, people really do think an automobile is a necessity; I've had endless conversations with friends that bear this out. In short, they think I moved to California and became a hippie. I think that I simply started to add up the implications my actions have on my quality of life.

I am interested in the creativity of the criminal attitude because I recognize in it the existence of a special condition of crazy creativity. A creativity without morals fired only by the energy of freedom and the rejection of all codes and laws. For freedom rejects the dictated roles of the law and of the imposed order and for this reason is isolated. (Bueys, 1978)

A certain freedom is attained through the shedding of imposed social conventions. I began to realize that what I was doing was situating my own daily life as a statement of individual resistance to normative prescriptions about acceptable social behavior. I had physically removed myself from the Midwest — a place I had always felt ideologically separated from — and I now began to put distance between my convictions and my bad habits. I felt that I was breaking through some level of ideological control.

### **Endurance Art**

The sort of work that involves an element of self-infliction is known as endurance art. Emily Vey Duke and Kevin Rodgers have described endurance art as “artistic expression through acts of physical pain, trauma, survival or deprivation” (Vey Duke and Rodgers, 2005). It is this last feature, deprivation, that figures most prominently. While physical pain, trauma and survival often are elements of endurance work; deprivation or the idea that the artist is enduring the loss/modification of something usual to their life for the creative and expressive means is what qualifies a work as an endurance piece. I'm most interested in endurance work that modifies living space and/or mediates the lives of the artist. Here are a few examples of some of the more prominent artists whose work exemplifies this form of endurance art:

*I like America and America Likes Me (1974)*, Joseph Beuys

Beuys lives in a room of a gallery for 3 days with a coyote.

***Art/Life One Year Performance (1983-1984)***, Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano  
Hsieh and Montano live for one year tied to each other by an 8-foot long rope.  
During this time neither artist is allowed to touch the other.<sup>1</sup>

***Bed Piece (February – March 1972)***, Chris Burden

Burden places a bed in a gallery and stays in the bed - almost entirely - for 22 days.

***White Light/White Heat (February – March 1975)***, Chris Burden

Three years after *Bed Piece*, Burden revisits this work and stays an additional 22 days in The Ronald Feldman Gallery on a platform 10' above the floor. During this time he is devoid of exercise, social interaction, and food.

Each of these examples illustrate how the specificity of these works depends upon the particular design constraints of deprivation. For Bueys, who's "challenging the hegemony of American art", the coyote is "a symbol of the damage done by white men to the American continent and its native cultures" (Tate Modern, 2009). Importantly, he manifests this damage as a specific spatiotemporal constraint imposed upon his body — a constraint that is in part shared, but also enforced and enacted, by the body of the coyote. With *Art/Life One Year Performance*, the work is about a specific proximity (the rope is 8-feet long yet the participants must not touch), and a specific duration (exactly one year) (Studio 360, 2005). Burden confines himself to a specific space within the gallery and use this as his only space for the duration of the piece (Horvitz, 1976: 26). In each of these works the intention of the artist is carried out in and by the specific constraints to which the artist is subjected. The constraints restrict, or otherwise carve out, a space within the experience of daily life. By design, then, the artist's idea is manifested within a particular architecture of deprivation.

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<sup>1</sup> Both Hsieh and Montano shaved their head for the beginning of the piece and did not cut it again until the end.

## **Office**

On a Thursday in September of 2007, I began an endurance piece that consisted of living in my office for 294 days. During this time I used the office as my only living space, and I began to live as frugally as possible — sustaining myself became my only expense.

Living in my office, I sought to free myself from the impositions of urbanism. Specifically, I wanted to question the ideology that unless an individual is paying (rent, mortgage, lease, etc.) for a space in society, they are less than moral, equal, motivated. Society tells us that you need to pay rent, you need a private space to live, you need to pay for utilities, you have a certain overhead as a citizen and this isn't negotiable, else you are labeled homeless/non citizen/vagrant.

I lived in my office. I didn't pay rent. I voted on elections. I received mail. I earned a wage. Admittedly, there were times when it was difficult to occupy physical space. I was after all breaking campus policy and after falling under the scrutiny of campus security, the feeling that I was doing something wrong became a constant. This was a crucial part of my thesis work, but I was unable to discuss this part of my project with either colloques or mentors.

## **Kresge**

During my stay at Kresge College, the Safety Officers that patrolled the campus treated me as a suspect. One officer took a particular interest in my situation, and the recollection of this event deserves some elaboration. It was during the Winter Quarter. I had been living in the office for approximately four months at this point when this security officer began to put me under a very close watch. I had really long hair at the time and a rather long beard, I clearly stood out from the freshmen and juniors the occupied the college dorms and it became apparent that this person was specifically watching as I would come and go from the office. This surveillance intensified. Eventually it reached a point at which I was avoiding certain areas around campus, peeking around corners trying to avoid this guy. I was sliding around the back of my office and staying generally out of sight from 10pm until 3 am – the hours that the campus is patrolled.

One evening around midnight, as I was leaving a communal shower near my office, all of this came to a head. While I was gathering my things - dressed in a bathrobe - the officer came in and decided to confront me. He questioned my affiliation to the college and followed me back to my office. He demanded I produce identification and insinuated - more than once - that I was living in my office, although he always stopped short of making any direct allegations. I explained to this person that I was a graduate student conducting thesis research in a laboratory that required 24-hour access. I informed him that graduate work was extremely difficult — he was beginning to make it extremely difficult — and that I could not tolerate any further interruptions from him or his associates. Ironically, Kresge was purportedly a space “designed with the concept of participatory democracy... [Envisioned as] a place where students enjoyed a sense of community, independence and self-expression” (Kresge College, 2009). However, this description did not match my experience.

The next morning I called his superior to determine the consequences of our encounter. I found out that the officer had filed a report on the incident, and the report did include the opinion that I was living in my office. I used a bit of social engineering to diffuse the situation, taking the approach that “I’m not doing anything wrong; after all, I’m calling *you*.” The conversation concluded with the supervisor encouraging me to make a formal complaint, of course I explained that that wasn’t necessary. The officer was doing his job, and fairly well. After all I was living in my office. I continued to do my best to avoid the safety officers, but from that night on the officer pretty much left me alone.

I definitely had my fair share of interesting encounters during my time in the office. These were mixed equally with stretches of fairly predictable situations. There were times I thought what a piece of cake, and other times when I wasn’t sure I could pull it off. Somehow I managed, and after the endurance portion of the piece was completed I had saved approximately \$17,000. Could everyone do this? I mean live in an office for a year and pay off your credit card debt.

## **Auction**

In September 2008 - one year after moving into the office - I used the funds accumulated during the endurance piece to purchase a parcel of real estate in an urban area of Toledo, Ohio. Here is how it transpired:

While visiting my family in the summer of 2008, I found myself bored with little to do. To cure my boredom I began to look up real estate in Toledo, OH. I had been browsing through real estate in Oakland for the past 6 months and at this point I guess it was just sort of a hobby. I was most curious about the housing market in Toledo because I felt it would be an accurate gauge as to the just how intense the mortgage crisis was.<sup>2</sup> While searching online, I stumbled across a web listing for a county auction of foreclosed homes. I found this list interesting, first, because of the quantity of homes, but even more interesting were the low opening bids. Further inspection uncovered that there were two different categories of foreclosures listed: homes whose listing number begins with CI (denoting a mortgage foreclosure) and homes whose listing number begins with TI (denoting a tax foreclosure). I quickly noticed the large quantity of CI listings, but while there was plenty of inventory, these properties held much higher starting bids than the TI listings.

### **19 Tax Foreclosures**

For the month of August, there were 324 properties offered at auction with a majority of these auctions starting under \$30,000. (Lucas County Sheriffs Department) This list was overwhelming to say the least. Was this document a record of 324 displaced families? I needed to find out more. I decided to focus my inquiry on a specific sub category of this list, tax foreclosures.<sup>3</sup>

I spent the rest of the night roving around Toledo via Google Maps. When I woke up the next day I couldn't wait to get down to Toledo and check out these homes in

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<sup>2</sup> As mentioned earlier in this text, Toledo Ohio has such a repressed economy and such a small housing market that any negative effect in either can have severe consequences. In short, Toledo is - arguably - one of the hardest hit cities affected by the housing market.

<sup>3</sup> There were 305 properties listed as mortgage foreclosures, and 19 listed as tax foreclosures. Of the 19 tax foreclosures properties, 16 of them had opening bids of under \$8,000.

person. What does a \$4,000 home look like? One by one I checked off my list as I made my way through some pretty rough neighborhoods, peeking through windows of even rougher houses. I found what one might expect, old run-down houses. Some of these homes had obviously been stripped for their copper plumbing and electrical wiring years ago. They were scrapped of anything that had immediate value.

These homes began to look less like amazing investment anomalies, and more like financial burdens forgotten by disinterested owners. Standing in Toledo in the summer of 2008 looking at \$2,000 homes made my head fill with questions. What happens to a property when it becomes so valueless that no one is willing maintain it? What happens to a community when it becomes so valueless that the citizen are uninterested in perseverance? How does this carry over to the families and individuals of such a community?

These questions were in the back of my brain as I pulled up to a huge dilapidated Victorian mansion in the historic district of Toledo. This was one of the few properties with an opening bid above \$10,000, and one of the last on my list. I could have easily skipped this one and headed home, but I'm glad I didn't. One look at this house, and I was taken back to memories of rock shows in the early nineties. Formerly known as The Hoo Doo House (THD), this place was a staple in the rock history of Toledo during the eighties and nineties. THD functioned as a venue, info-shop, and informal community center during this period. However, aside from attending a few shows near the end of this later period of the property's history, I had been a bit too young to experience most of these events. Yet I was drawn to the rich cultural memory this place represents.

This nostalgia collided head-on with questions that had been floating around my work. The community of Toledo needs a place where groups of motivated people could come together and share resource. As Jeffrey Skoller argues "...avant-garde art is understood as interventionist, existing to confront and transform the dominant culture by putting aesthetic practice at the service of social and political change" (2005: 24). The idea of creating something aesthetic that might empower some part of the community in Toledo made sense. Could THD be resurrected to satisfy this need? The pioneer inside me said yes. With a breath of confidence, I decided that I was going to go to the auction the next day to try and buy The Hoo Doo House.

The next morning I found myself in what I would describe as a large waiting room with chairs placed around the perimeter of three of the walls. There was a podium in one corner and a clerical area opposite the podium. Most of the seats were filled with what I would estimate as 25 people. I sat down and got comfortable, and I begin to admire the diversity of the attendees: a few contractors, with their hardhats and 2-way radios on their belts; an elderly couple who appear to hang around these auctions for a hobby; a few suits, who may either be lawyers, investors, or bankers (turns out there where a few of each); a handful of non descript Midwesterners; and a guy in his early 20's who was buddied up with one of the suits.

At the start of the auction, one of the bailiffs that had been working in the clerical portion of the room approached the podium and announced that the auction was about to begin. What happened next was something I was not prepared for. The bailiff starts the auction and opens with a property whose opening bid is around \$4,000. No bids. Moving on to the next property whose opening bid was around \$6,000. No bids. She moves right on down the list. No bid. No bid. No bid. It seemed so nonchalant for the bailiff to rattle off 20 properties with no bids. I wonder if this is the scenario every month in the Lucas County property auction? When it was all over, only two properties received bids. Both homes where purchased by banks that already held default mortgages over the properties.

The scenario left me frozen in astonishment, and so I didn't bid. I did stick around to ask the bailiff some questions. Most importantly, what happens to all these properties that received no bids? I was informed that these properties would be auctioned off again in another two weeks. If the homes then received no bids, they would be listed in a large annual auction, with opening bids at the annual auction of \$250.00.

Well, I waited two weeks, returned to the courthouse and walked into an empty room — except for the bailiffs. Did I miss the auction? I approached the counter and one of the officers asked if I was here for the auction. Her tone seemed to insinuate that I was in the wrong place. I told her I was in fact here for the auction, and she replied, “What property do you want?” She pulled the paperwork out of the stack. I filled out the form, gave her a deposit, and that was that. I had purchased THD for just over \$17,000.

## **But why?**

I bought the property with the idea that I could push this piece further by developing a dialogical composition, so I began envisioning this space in Toledo as the setting for a type of social sculpture, the medium of which consist of the relations shared between citizens of the existing community in Toledo mediated by the space of the property.

## **Relational Aesthetics vs. Social Sculpture**

It may seem problematic to situate this project as a social sculpture and at the same time employ the categorization of relational aesthetics. Specifically, Bourriaud delineates his idea of relational aesthetics from social sculpture, saying “This (relational aesthetics) does not involve works about ‘social sculpture’ the way Beuys understood it” (1998: 70). He goes on to state how “radical” and “universalist utopias” are no longer “on the agenda” and instead advocates the use of the term “microtopias” (Ibid). Bourriaud’s point of departure from aligning relational art with a work of social sculpture is merely a difference of perspective. Depending on which aspects one wishes to emphasize, a work can cut across both concepts.

In 1982 Beuys was invited to create a work for Documenta 7. For the piece titled *7000 Oaks*, he delivered a large pile of basalt stones. From above one could see that the pile of stones was a large arrow pointing to a single oak tree that he had planted. He announced that the stones could not be moved unless an oak tree was planted in the new location of the stone. Seven thousand oak trees were then planted around Kassel, Germany (Reames, 2005: 42).

This project exemplified the idea that a social sculpture may be defined as interdisciplinary and participatory. That’s well and good, but is this piece not also a relational work? I think so. As defined, relational art is a set of artistic practices, which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space. (Bourriaud, 1998: 112)

The stones were presented to the public, with a simple constraint. Move a stone, plant a tree. The results include discussions about what to do with this pile, where should trees be planted, why should trees be planted, who should be employed to carry out this

task, etc. The results are indeterminate and social, dialogical, and relational. I am interested in creating a work that combines all three elements.

### **The Project Row Houses (PRH)**

The Project Row Houses (PRH) in Houston function as a nonprofit arts organization established by African-American artists and community activists to create a positive presence in Houston's Northern Third Ward community. This project works within a specific inner-city community, capitalizing on two key elements:

- 1) A beautiful form to be filled with architectural, spiritual, and social significance
- 2) A need for social action within the community to bring the project to life.

The founder Rick Lowe believes that art — and the community it creates — can be the foundation for revitalizing depressed inner-city neighborhoods. The methodology of the PRH, which includes the modification of physical space as a means to socially activate a community with unmet needs is an approach I am interested in employing, and at best developing further with the THD. The PRH is revitalizing a depressed inner-city neighborhood through community involvement and social connection (Project Row Houses, 2009).

Unfortunately, a seemingly unavoidable side effect of such a project is gentrification, which disenfranchises the existing community further. “During the 1980s many of these neighborhoods hoods were being gentrified: a process in which alternative space acted as both victim and accomplice” (Kester, 2004: 127). The goals of the PRH include integration and extension of the academy into an existing community, and what I find important to the work is a Robin Hood-esque stance the PRH retains. Because of PRH's presence within academia this community project is afforded access to resources previously unavailable to the community, resulting in a direct improvement of the quality of life of the community members.

Similarly, in my own situation, similar power imbalances are in play. Due to my personal proximity to the academic institution, I was able to use resources that allowed me to save the funds and purchase a property. Likewise, THD is located in an area that has repeatedly experienced cycles of urban flight, dilapidation, and gentrification. The results of these transformations make for an occupancy that is quite diverse. In turn, the

diversity of the participants of this project is essential. The project is open to all community members, and for that I feel that the unavoidable negative elements of gentrification are offset through the open access that the existing community is offered.

### **Power House Project 09 (PHP)**

In 2004, Detroit artists Mitch and Gina Cope bought a home on Detroit's north side. Since then, they have been recruiting artists from around the world to buy foreclosed houses in the neighborhood and rebuild. In addition to the home they live in the Copes also bought a foreclosed house down the street (a working class, wood frame, single-family house that was listed for sale for \$1,900). Scrappers had removed everything of value including the copper plumbing, radiators and electrical lines. Still it was a house under \$2,000 so they decided to buy it and turn it into what Mitch Cope calls the "Power House Project" (Design 99, 2009).

Instead of putting all the utilities back in, the Copes have kept the house off the grid, hoping to get enough solar panels and wind turbines to power the house. They have since turned the first floor of the Power House Project (PHP) into a neighborhood art center and the second floor is a bedroom reserved for visiting artists. The plan is that if they can just get artists to visit the neighborhood they'll want to stay. Their idea is that by creating a community of artist the project will serve to revitalize a run-down neighborhood in need of rehabilitation. So far they have managed to convince about a dozen working artists from all over - the Netherlands, Germany, and Brooklyn - to move into the neighborhood (Design 99, 2009).

I admire the Cope's use of D.I.Y. initiative in purchasing this property and initiating their project. They are offering recourse to an existing community and have used their own recourses to pursue this goal. In considering projects like this, Bishop has argued that: "This DIY, microtopian ethos is what Bourriaud perceives to be the core political significance of relational aesthetics" (Bishop, 2004: 114). PHP employs a certain social credibility by offering their community space/recourse. The Copes are in a position to place the community art project on the global radar, attracting potentially interested participants from a global art community. Artists are actively being solicited into helping the Copes realize their vision for this project/neighborhood. The Copes are

activating their community using unused/discarded recourse (the dilapidated shells of former homes). The Cope's approach as well as their objectives, incites my aspirations for THD. They are - at the very least – a few steps ahead in their process and I am following PHP's progress as source of inspiration.

### **What's Happens Now**

I have a specific vision of what THD could become. My ideas include a space for bicycle repair, a collective kitchen for food-not-bombs, an organic food cooperative, and also a community garden. I feel that these groups/projects all coincide with my ideals about having a progressive cohesive community. This aim is not utopian in the traditional sense but rather is better characterized by Bourriaud's notion of micro-topia. He argues that "...instead of trying to change their environment, artists today are simply 'learning to inhabit the world in a better way'; instead of looking forward to a future utopia, this art sets up functioning 'microtopias' in the present" (Bourriaud, 1998: 13). But this is a community project, and this is less about my vision and more about a collective vision.

I have always viewed my approach to this project as more akin to the staging of a happening, in that I am offering space and what takes place in that space is dynamic and unforeseen. I am attempting to put together a scenario in which citizens who already inhabit the area have the opportunity to engage with part of their neighborhood. Along these lines, Bourriaud makes the following statement, "I like art that allows its audience to exist in the space opened up by it. For me, art is a space of images, objects, and human beings. Relational aesthetics is a way of considering the productive existence of the viewer of art, the space of participation that art can offer." (Simpson, 2001) This quote really defines the core of what I think is important about the future of THD — the productive existence of the audience in a space that has been opened up for participation. I intentionally left the trajectory of this project open. The project needs participation from the community to move beyond an endurance piece towards a richer dialogical piece manifested by the interactions of the citizens of Toledo.

I have printed 3,400 post cards to be mailed to the homes that make up the neighborhood of the Old West End in Toledo. These cards request the recipient to join

the mailing list for this project. The goal of the mailers is to generate a local discussion about what this project is and to spark conversation about what this project could be. By facilitating a dialogue through the use of this space I hope to create something new within this community.

The most pressing of the short-term goals for this project revolve around the issues related to the repair of the property. I recently received a summons from the nuisance abatement office regarding necessary repairs to the property. They are requesting a clear and detailed plan of repair, or I may be subject to fines, jail-time and the house may even be in danger of being demolished. I am currently looking for a construction worker that is interested in a work-trade position so that the rehabilitation portion of this project can move forward. Once the repairs have been complete, I will begin hosting a free-brunch on the last Sunday of each month. The aim of the monthly meals is to bring the project to the attention of people within the community, but most literally to bring the community to the project. During this time, I will be actively seeking motivated members of the community to play an active role in this project.

Forming a board of directors and applying for non-profit status are priorities for the short-term goals of THD. My goal is to gift this property to the community, eventually donating the property to the non-profit. However, in the words of Marcel Mauss, “There should be no such thing as a free gift” (Mauss, 2000). When the benefactor’s intention does not include the possibility of reciprocation, the act leaves no space for any common relations. In this sense, I am fully aware of my own stakes in the project. But I view the exchange as less of a gift and more as an investment.

Now, instead of pursuing the American dream of a stable 9 – 5 work week followed up by a Sunday trip to the outlet mall, I save money frugally, and at times I spend it on dilapidated houses in the Midwest. This an investment in which I hope to receive no financial return. This is the area where I am from, and there is an immediate sense of reparation that comes from offering a resource to this community. I have family and many friends that live in Toledo, and so I have a stake in improving the quality of life for this community. Lastly, this is an investment in my future. This is a project that is a part of my vocation. As a practicing artist I am facilitating this project with the incentive that if THD succeeds, I would be allowed access to more resources and thus be able to

facilitate other similar projects. Despite its collaborative nature, the success of this project would be referenced as my personal achievement as an artist, and in this sense, I am aware of the fraught valence of authorship in collaborative work.

### **Success**

It is my hope that within 5 years, THD would be self-sustaining — meaning, I, as founder would be able to back away from all duties and the existing board of directors would be stable and consistent. I would remain available as consultant, but would not be present on any influential, legal, financial, or personal capacity. I hope to look back on this project and have the sense that I have shared something with this community and that I have learned something from the experience. Fundamentally, I feel that this exchange — one of knowledge and experience - is the primary importance of this sort of work.

To be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is the waste product, a demonstration. If you want to express yourself you must present something tangible. But after a while this has only the function of a historic document. Objects aren't very important any more. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it. (Beuys, 53)

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