

Matt Keegan: Thank you, everybody, for coming tonight. I just wanted to start by saying that my initial reason for wanting to put a panel discussion together such as this was as a response to a kind of force that seemed to be building since this past spring. In my mind, in terms of a mental calendar, I think about Pennsylvania Senator [Rick] Santorum's comments this past April, about him not having a problem with homosexuals but having a problem with homosexual acts. These comments were then endorsed by the White House. And it was a true testament to me, this printed and endorsed sentiment, that there is obviously something wrong with our current administration. And then, in terms of the art world that we're all a part of, there were several exhibitions that gained attention. The first of which—and there are three exhibitions that I have in mind—was “Today's Man,” that was at John Connelly Presents; “my people were fair and had cum in their hair (but now they're content to spray stars from your boughs)”

that Bob Nickas curated that was at Team; and, simultaneously, “DL: The Down Low in Contemporary Art” that was at the Longwood Arts Project that was curated by Edwin Ramoran. I wanted to put together a panel discussion in which artists and curators that were related to these exhibitions or who make work that is relevant to this discussion could be given platforms, so that a dialogue could potentially happen outside of these exhibitions. So, I invited: Ginger Takahashi, who is an artist and also a co-founding editor of LTTR.

AA Bronson, former member of General Idea, artist, and healer.

John Connelly, who runs John Connelly Presents, which housed “Today's Man.”

Carrie Moyer, who is a painter and co-founded Dyke Action Machine.

Scott Hug, artist, curator and founder of K48. Right now there is an exhibition at Deitch Projects in

Williamsburg that is called the K48 Klubhouse.

José Muñoz will be functioning as a moderator for the panel. He is a writer and queer theorist. You should purchase his book *Disidentifications* if you haven't already.

Edwin Ramoran, the curator of “DL: The Down Low in Contemporary Art.” Edwin is also the director of The Longwood Arts Project.

José: Thank you, Matt. Matt put a lot of energy into this, so you should all be very grateful if this turns out to be any fun at all. I just want to ask the different artists and curators on the panel to respond to the initial conversation that they had with Matt about this panel, about putting it together, and some of the issues that may have drawn you here. Who wants to start? Ginger?

Ginger: I guess I'm interested in talking about the shows that happened and who was included in the shows and just the scene—all the work that's being made right now.

AA: I come to this, I guess, as a Canadian in a sense, because about once a month I go over the border, and the difference in reality between being gay in Canada and being gay here is so phenomenal. It didn't used to be so different, but it seems that the gulf has gotten wider and wider under the Bush administration. So it was that aspect of what Matt talked about that interested me especially.

John: Well, I guess I was invited to participate based upon the exhibition “Today's Man” that I put together in the summer in my space, which was an exhibition of over fifty male artists, all representations of men by male

artists. When I first started thinking about the show, it predated the whole “metrosexual,” QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY thing that has been dominating the media for the last six to eight months. And it was just sort of fortuitous that the exhibition was up at that time, but also a lot of interesting issues came out of it, because it wasn't created as an exhibition about queer identity. Not all the artists were gay. Somehow there were threads that people latched on to about the show. I would just like to hear people's reactions to that and also just to see . . . I don't consider myself the most political person, I like to leave that up to my artists. But, I would like to hear what other people are thinking about what's going on.

Carrie: I spent the day in Chelsea knowing that I was going to come to this panel tonight, and I actually think that these three shows that Matt chose to focus on are representative of what is going on, but they're not the only thing. It's like everyone is looking at this liberation culture from the '60s and '70s as this sort of revelatory location. In particular with these shows, it's like straight men copying on queer theory to make art. So we are all looking back at this time because we are all living in a really repressive time, and it seems sort of nostalgic and misty. And I'm just curious as to what people think about this art, because it has basically infested Chelsea—it's everywhere, this sort of hybrid of psychedelia and sexually explicit, funky, and hand-drawn work.

Scott: I am really excited about the panel, especially today with a very conservative White House, and a lot of crazy lunatics from Texas running the country who are conservative Christian, right-wing, and Bible thumpers. I grew up in a small town, and when I go home I still have to be kind of cautious about being out. So I think we are living in a great time in New York, that all of this is going on to sort of bring it back up and fight the power with art, zines, images, or whatever.

Edwin: I was asked to speak on the “DL” show, or what's been called the “DL” show, “DL: The Down Low in Contemporary Art.” It was an exhibition . . . I don't know how many of you came up to the Bronx. That's one of the sort of differences with me being on this panel that

is really interesting, coming from a gallery in the South Bronx. The exhibition itself had nineteen contemporary artists, and we were looking at the so-called DL phenomenon, and it was very much influenced by the media frenzy around “the down-low,” which was looking at mainly men of color and their relationships with women as well as with men and the high rates—the correlation with the CDC reports of the increasing rates of HIV and AIDS with straight African-American women and Latinas. So we were looking at that, and I was looking at how the DL bridges or maybe avoids certain categories. So, that’s where I came from.

José: OK, I’ll ask a question to get things moving. In response to what John said and some extent what Carrie said, I wonder if the panelists want to comment on how useful or productive “queer” might be right now as an organizing concept for your curating or artmaking practices. Insofar as, John, you said that “Today’s Man” was not necessarily about gay or queer identity: Was it about something else, perhaps? Could you talk about that? And Carrie, you were very suggestive in talking about straight men stealing art identities and running around and copying queer theory poses and fake psychedelia. maybe you could name names and point fingers. [Audience laughs]

Carrie: Matthew Barney. [Audience laughs] That would be number one.

José: So, anyone, do you wanna. . .

John: Well, for me the “Today’s Man” show was more about issues of masculinity in general, and it took on many permutations in the show, and the whole idea behind the show was that all the works were small to create an intimacy with the viewer, and it was sort of a dig at the stereotype of the big, patriarchal male painting of the mid twentieth century. So it was interesting to see people’s reactions. I only had one negative reaction, one woman who was very irate that I couldn’t find any women for the show. But I think she kind of missed the point.

Carrie: I think that part of what I’m saying is that queer theory is now totally taught in academia. it becomes a prism--prison and prism--through which everyone is

making their work. So it’s not necessarily straight men who are squatting on queer theory; it’s that that theory becomes accessible to everyone, and now that’s how we read this work. Maybe that’s a clarifying point.

Audience member: And that’s negative?

Carrie: It’s not negative, but when I go to Kurt Kauper’s show and I see him say, “These divas are me,” it’s like, You know what? You don’t need to add that to your work, it already is what it is. I feel like this stuff gets larded onto the art because it’s very handy theory that everyone has access to, and it’s not necessarily about that. It’s that everything gets interpreted through this set of academic parameters that we are all working with right now, including queer theory.

José: Just to rearticulate part of what I was asking, for anyone else as well: How useful is “queer” at all right now? In the e-mail that Matt sent out about this show, he talked about the new queer visibility. How does that relate to queer art practices right now? Does that take the steam out of it, does it distract from it, does it make it obsolete? Is “queer” even useful as a way to think about anything, especially the work you do? In your case, Edwin, you were working on “DL,” which isn’t queer. It’s a response to “queer” in some ways, no?

Edwin: Actually, in the notes that I wrote for the exhibition, I set it up in a sort of polemic, if you will. Within closet politics, that the DL sets up an alternative that has actually been around as long as homosexuality has been around: “since air,” as Whoopi Goldberg says. But the DL . . . what I was looking at is if queer liberation was born out of post-Stonewall, gay liberation. Again, these are all terms that were problematized within the DL categories. That’s sort of how I looked at it. I don’t know if that answers your question. In my statement, I didn’t out the artists within the show. That’s one of the things that came up when the exhibition was mounted. Folks were sort of inferring that certain folks were gay or queer within the exhibition, because it was immediately labeled a gay show. That’s some of the things that I am really having problems with as a curator: that the show isn’t a gay show, it’s about the work and the context that the curator

brings to it. But the strength is the work.

José: Scott, how about you and your curatorial practice?

Scott: Well, with K48 I am trying to include a little bit of everything, whether straight or gay. But, it is definitely there, especially in the new issue. Lucien Samaha has a piece called “Brother Divine,” and it’s actually a true story. I asked everybody who contributed to give a personal experience within their religious practice or history. In this piece he was a young boy at a kid’s church-camp type thing, and he fell in love with one of the guys, a young priest. In the news or press it is always the older guy pursuing the younger guy. But it’s actually a real experience for the younger guy to want or to have an attraction to an older man. I can relate to that because I had a similar experience when I was younger. So it’s definitely there. But I am not trying to throw it in people’s faces. I don’t know if you could say it’s subversive. Part of the reason why I did the religion issue is because I came from such a conservative background and I wanted to expose the hypocrisy and cultish mentality of mainstream America and Christianity. So I think it is always there, sort of self-consciously in my work and what I curate.

José: What about the ladies? Ginger, you started talking about certain exclusions within these shows. You were proposing that, and both you and Carrie were part of lesbian art collectives and group projects. Maybe you could talk about your relationship to this stuff:

Ginger: Sure. For LTTR, the feminist art journal that I make with two other people, Emily Roysdon and K8 Hardy, who are in the audience tonight, queer identity and lesbian identity are both very important parts of the project because we are constantly being erased from everywhere. There is not enough support and documentation, so we have to do it ourselves, and LTTR is one of the ways that we are doing that.

John: What do you mean that you are constantly being erased?

Ginger: Erased, like not being represented in the art world, in mainstream media.

John: As a lesbian or as a queer artist?

Ginger: As both, yeah.

Scott: I could see how being gay has become this mainstream thing, like you have QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY, but you don’t have, like, some lesbian making over-- [Audience laughs] What I’m trying to say is that within gay culture there are still problems, obviously. If you look at Chelsea, there are a lot of conservative gays who want to get married and have children. Maybe I’m stereotyping. But it’s true: There’s not enough lesbian stuff out there, other than ELLEN. Maybe I’m not looking.

Carrie: It’s not there.

Scott: It’s not there.

Ginger: There isn’t money for lesbian art. There isn’t a market.

Scott: I know there are a lot of gay men in the art world, and buyers and stuff like that, but we are missing the women.

Carrie: Well, I don’t think that this should only revolve around this topic, I mean . . . I’ll put my two cents in. I have two practices. My painting is about all sorts of utopian cultures including lesbian separatism and modernism. Put those two together. And I have a public art project called Dyke Action Machine that deals specifically with lesbian stuff, like the world from a lesbian viewpoint. And in general the interesting notion embedded in this topic today is why is queer or “gay” lifestyle (to use a more mainstream word) being held up as this sort of touchy-feely, nurturing--I mean, QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY, it’s like straight men can have feelings, they can like pretty colors, they can like their house decorated. It’s like it becomes this location to have a human experience. That’s what it seems to me, that’s what these shows are about. It’s this traditional, heterosexual, maybe even fundamentalist, mainstream America is being seen as this repressive thing, and then we have this other thing. I look at the press releases for these shows and none of them said they were queer. It’s encoded in some other way.

José: But then the mainstream media is throwing out “queer” like there is no tomorrow, so what does that mean?

Carrie: Exactly. Maybe that’s a reaction.

José: It could be.

Edwin: Isn't that also a mainstreaming of the word "queer," since we are putting "gay" and "queer" out there interchangeably?

José: Maybe. "The queers," "the gays."

Edwin: Gays. Queers.

José: Absolutely. I was wondering, to bring AA into the conversation, not only in your perspective as a Canadian, but: I broke out my General Idea catalogue out today. I was looking at all the work you guys did over decades, and I was wondering what it looked like at this moment from that perspective.

AA: That's a very general question.

José: Yeah, it is. Do you want me to get more specific?

AA: Yeah, a little more specific would help.

José: In General Idea, queer, or even gay or lesbian wasn't something that was thrown around as an organizing label. What about at this historical moment, when queerness has this certain mainstream visibility but seems not to be useful now in relation to people's curatorial practices. Or it seems that its usefulness is questioned.

AA: Well, for me it has never been particularly useful anyway.

José: That's what I thought you would say.

AA: Because we started working as a group in 1969. We were told for the first ten years that we were working together over and over and over again, that we could not be artists if we were working as a group. Because you had to make individual decisions and if you were not making those decisions then you were not an artist. Which I think was basically a straight point of view, a straight male point of view, so I think we were inherently gay just by being a group. [Audiences laughs]

AA: Then we kept—we were always bad boys. We wanted to participate in the art world, so we never said that we were gay specifically, but we kept pushing it in people's faces in the work, waiting for people to write about it. And nobody wrote about us as being gay or in terms of queer theory year until 1985. So, by that point we had been working together for sixteen years.

Audience: Sixteen years? And who wrote about it?

AA: I don't remember. But you have to remember that the whole idea of queer theory started . . . when? You [to José] would know best.

José: Early '80s-ish.

AA: Yeah, so maybe that's not such a surprise. So I sort of felt that we existed in order to give birth to queer theory rather than the other way around. For me it continues that way, but I don't really think about it that way, because I sort of predated it. I always feel guilty for not reading queer theory, and I'm afraid that I read very little of it, because I guess I just somehow think about making the work. So, that's my relationship, and it's not very helpful in this context. I was very interested that there could be so much openly queer or gay work in the city this year without being labeled as such or pigeonholed as such. That was very interesting to me. It seems like a very specific moment in time, and it seems to coincide with having same-sex couples in the wedding announcements in the [NEW YORK] TIMES. Those are both happening at once, and I don't think that it's by accident. And that's what I have to say for now.

José: I think that it's really interesting that you say that one way that you all were queer was working as a collective, as opposed to the one individual, heroic artist. And I think that's something that a lot of people here have turned to, collective work. I know that, Scott, stuff in "The Teenage Bedroom Show" was almost like a collective experience in the way you brought the art together . Maybe queerness has to do with the relationships that people have with each other and the collaborations that they have on some level. Let me open up for questions to the audience. We have a big and obviously talented audience. So ask us some questions.

AA: We should ask them questions.

José: Oh yeah. Well, John already asked. John wanted to hear feedback for "Today's Man." Any feedback or engagement you have with any of these folks' work would be interesting.

John: One thing that I think would be interesting for us to talk about is the relationship between economics

and the heightened visibility of queer culture. I realized this whole "metrosexual" thing and QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY is all about commercialism and selling more products to straight men. Even the idea of gay marriage being legalized in Canada, I think there is an argument that it is a fuel for the economy. I think that could be brought into the conversation too.

José: And Philadelphia wanting to be the gay tourist capital of the world, going after that queer dollar.

Audience member: Well, I have a reaction to the "Today's Man" show which is actually kind of a nonreaction. I didn't go, because I didn't want to see another show about white men. And in some ways-- I have been doing a lot of thinking about community and what it means to speak to your own community and to be in a community and to branch out to other communities and to have a dialogue. But all too often you have a category like art, and beneath that is the default category of white or queer and white. So I would like to sort of throw that race thing in there. I think it's tied to economics, and is a tenet of old-school identity politics. I also wanted to comment about the efficacy or usefulness of queer identity and what that means. I am in the Bronx AIM program and I have been making before-and-after photographs, and it's inspired by drag; but not all the "after" characters are drag queens. Sometimes it's blackface, or old age makeup. But all my fellow artists can only wrap their heads around is drag: female impersonation. And I'm not interested in that, I am interested in transformation. So being an artist who works with a form that is representative-- photography, video--I find myself pigeonholed as the black queer or just in the black context.

José: The race question. Does anyone want to respond to that?

John: Well, one thing that I feel would be a valid criticism of the "Today's Man" show was that there were not enough artists of color in the show. Although, a few of the artists that I asked that happened to be black--actually there was only one or two who refused, and both of them were black, and I don't know if that was a coincidence

or what. But, I think that's a good point and I think it's definitely something that we should talk about.

Audience member: Do you think that it's something that they said that they wouldn't do because--

John: I don't think that it was an issue of race at all.

Audience member: They weren't doing it as a protest.

AA: It was a coinky-dink.

John: But, it's also this issue of anti-political correctness. Do you have quotas where you try to find as many black artists to fit into an exhibition? I have mixed feelings about that. I want to be as inclusive as much as I can, but also you have to judge it on the quality of the work and what you actually respond to. And also it has to do with issues of visibility. I agree that there is a lack of visibility of the work. And I think that we have to address that somehow.

Audience Member: Do you think that you would ever do a show without women in it again?

John: No. [Audience laughs]

Audience member: Will you ever do a show without white men in it?

John: I wouldn't rule it out.

Carrie: But that was the show. The show was about men doing images of men. I mean, I don't think that curation--I think that would be very sad if it was like, one of each had to be represented, because that doesn't fit every idea.

Audience member: I'm definitely not advocating for that. I am just saying, go to the South Bronx, go to other places. You don't know those artists, they haven't come across your table because maybe as a curator you haven't taken the risk to go beyond what's comfortable for you to go to other neighborhoods or other contexts.

AA: Or other countries maybe. Other states. It's very expandable. It's not necessarily about race either.

Audience member: Definitely.

Audience member (Dean): Ginger, maybe you could talk a little about LTTR and also about the Bookmobile. I'm just thinking about how that kind of travel, with Bookmobile, could influence you meeting other groups of people and collaborations that have happened through that process.

Audience member: What does LTTR stand for?

Ginger: It stands for different things, it changes all the time. But it has stood for “Lesbians to the rescue,” and it’s also stood for “Listen, translate, translate, record,” and it’s also going to stand for “Practice more failure.” [Audience laughs] Dean up here in the front row is asking about the Bookmobile. And the Bookmobile is a traveling exhibit of artists’ books, ‘zines and independent publications. It’s a collective of people in Canada and here, mainly based in Montreal and Philadelphia. And we take a collection that changes each year of artists books and zines, and we go all around Canada and the US, and we go to all kinds of venues, it’s not just art-world settings. We go to community centers and schools and parks, and stuff like that.

José: I think it’s safe to say that the New York art world is somewhat insular. I think we could all agree on that. And I think it’s a really good point that there is a de facto whiteness and that there is a de facto localness, in relationship to this neighborhood and some parts of Brooklyn. Amy?

Audience member (Amy): I just don’t see what’s so radical about these shows. It’s still just white guys, and yeah they’re gay, but a lot of artists are gay and always have been, and I just don’t think that there’s much of a difference. I think the shows are fine and great, but I just don’t see what’s so radical about it. I think that what Ginger was saying and what was said before, is that there aren’t a lot of black artists in the shows, just like there aren’t a lot of lesbian artists in the shows. And I think that we have to do it for ourselves. If the girls want a show, then they just have to do it, and if the black people want a show, they have to do it. I think it’s unfortunate, but that’s how it’s always been and I just don’t really see any difference now. That’s it!

[Audience laughs]

José: Anyone else?

Scott: I was actually kind of embarrassed when my third issue came out and I had all the portraits, the “Class of 2002.” And this black girl came up to me and she was like, There’s no black people. And I felt really bad. It’s

true. And one of my favorite artists is David Hammonds, and we do really live in a very white art world. And I wish that there were more people that would--

Audience member: Deal with the racism?

Scott: Yeah, deal with the racism.

Audience member (Dean): It’s a little bit difficult, because you can’t expect those people who are coming in who are black to educate everyone else.

Audience member: Right. You live in a very white art world, I don’t.

Scott: I do live in a very white art world. I guess for myself I should go out and get a better overview of what’s really going on and not live in such a white art world ghetto.

Audience member: My question’s pretty simple. So is QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY completely evil?

[Audience laughs]

Scott: My mom loves it. She is one of the gayest people I know, actually. Every gay icon, she doesn’t even know it, but she loves it. I think it is like we were saying, the whole commerce thing. It’s another marketing niche.

Carrie: And it makes it not fun to be gay anymore.

Scott: Right.

Carrie: And that’s why you’re all here, right?

Scott: We live in a different time now where it’s more mainstream to be a gay man. I’m not interested in that.

Audience member: Is it wrong for it to be mainstream?

Scott: Well, I think for a while it lost its edge, but now it’s coming back.

Audience member: I actually like the show. And me being a gay man and watching it, it does cross these fine lines of being wrong and right. I can understand why people don’t like it. But I think the positive thing about it is it has people who would normally not even touch gay issues talk about it and talk about it respectfully. Like, I have gotten responses from people who have very closed views of gay people, and they like the show, and it’s kind of interesting how America is like--if you have an idea you have to slim it down and make it ready to wear and put it out there. That’s basically what that show is and that’s

basically how the art world is too. You have to look at it that way, too.

José: I’m holding back my pedantic professor talk, but I do kind of think of it as minstrelsy. I do think of it as a little shuckin’ and jivin’ that those men perform. I have a big problem with it. Not that I don’t watch it, but I have a big problem with it.

Carrie: Did you see the Christmas version?

José: No.

Carrie: That was on two nights ago.

Audience member (Dean): Interestingly enough, I just had an experience; I work in a gallery, and they just came to the gallery where I work, the QUEER EYE, and they filmed at the gallery as the person was guided by the culture tour guide.

José: The little brown one?

Audience member (Dean): And they looked for something to collect. It was a pretty intense experience. I think that actually what was interesting was that in the end the straight guy had some really nice things to say about the work. [Audience laughs]

Audience member (Richard): I feel like the complaint about QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY is really small and narrow. I could understand the complaint, but I don’t think that it has any real relevancy to talking about queer people, however they identify themselves, moving in today’s world. Because it’s not telling us what’s happening at large, it’s only telling us what’s happening within a very limited and again commercial venue. It reaches the level of minstrelsy in some respects, but also as Carrie said, it buys a location where a kind of person is humanized. I think we need to keep that in mind, because if we go back to 1940--what year was LAURA, 1944?--we can look at the queer guy, Clifton Webb, and we can think about how the lesbian or gay man or transgendered person, they were around then and appearing in things--they may not have been appearing in contemporary art, but they certainly were appearing elsewhere. And they were really scary. They were on the level of monsters. So I think if we want something static, we can talk about QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY, but if we want

to talk about flux, then we need to find broader terms and broader meanings. Yes, I would love for straight people to stop coming to me after having been educated by QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY when they think that I can help them with their wardrobe. [Audience laughs] And that has happened, it has happened to me. What about these made-for-television shows on cable, that have to do with the lives of transgendered persons, I mean are we talking about QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY? I don’t think that those are feel-good shows. Maybe they are, maybe there’s some feel-good message encoded in those shows, but I think we are talking about change. By focusing on this complaint, we are not talking about change at all.

José: Thank you. Nayland, you had your hand up?

Audience member (Nayland): I guess there’s a couple of things, I think Richard’s point is really well taken, but I can’t resist. To me, the two problems with QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY are one, that it presents a world where five gay men can agree on something.[Audience laughs] [Two.] that it tells straight men that gay men actually care what they look like, and how their lives go. To me that is the insidious part. That the roles of those men is rooted on this guy, where in reality we don’t give a fuck. I don’t care if she says yes or no to you. I have no interest. [Audience laughs] To me, that’s one of the main problems. But, I want to go back to one of the things Carrie said first off, which is about the sort of wistful re-imagining of a late ‘60s moment in time. To me the thing that is really striking to me tonight is that we are about ten years since Queer Nation, but in a funny way, some of this’ stuff is ‘90s nostalgia. I think it is important to note that we have been having these conversations about identification, and about visibility and about representation, and about inclusivity for about twenty years now, and I think that we need to look at the fact that those conversations are not taking hold and we are not gaining traction. I think we are coming back to them now because, as Carrie said, it is a scary world out there. It’s a rough time. This is not a new batch of guys in Washington, these are guys

from the Nixon administration, these are guys from the Reagan administration, these are guys from the first Bush administration, and there attitude really seems to be, who knows when they will get another chance in the big seat, so they're not going to hold back. So, we as the object of their ire--we need to figure out how we can put together some kind of support for each other to figure out ways to investigate each other's communities more fully, so that there is time in the day for people to actually have conversations about a substantive issue instead of us constantly being forced to raise it after the fact and then having to play catch up. That's where I would love to see this conversation going, and I don't quite see right now where New York has the forum for that. I think it's been abandoned in the sort of collapse of queer activism after the supposed solution to the AIDS crisis.

Carrie: Doesn't this group of people even have that sort of feeling, like early '90s?

Audience member (Dean): Yeah, I was just going to say that we're all in this room for a start. I feel like that's the kind of value, because I see a lot of familiar faces, but I also see a lot of new faces. And it's interesting to see ways we can offer support, just to consolidate energies and things.

José: Young lady in the back with the blonde hair?

Audience member: There's something to be said about the idea of people who are in office who are trying to leave their mark. And, I think about projects like LTTR that give me confidence, and that's the call that I would say is the most important right now--I mean if they're not giving up, than why should we? There's no reason why we shouldn't be resisting things like QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY, because it completely feeds a consumerist culture that I am trying to not be a part of: It's exciting, because I know a lot of people who are here who are also trying to do that kind of work.

José: Just to piggyback on that a little, and what Nayland said. What does it mean that there is more queer visibility than ever in the mainstream, while it is the most repressive and homophobic regime ruling at the same time? And to bring up what John said about queer

economics, has queer economics or queer commerce or queer consumption replaced queer activism? And if so, how should our community, or communities plural, respond to that?

John: Well, I think that this administration is trying to use it to their advantage and trying to scare everybody into this issue of gay marriage, and they are going to turn it into a major issue for the election, even as a turning point. I think that's their agenda.

José: Absolutely.

Audience member (Richard): I was thinking about how you have to go to the state to set up a nonprofit with the word "queer" in it, and there are not a lot. And that's recent, that's now. And to address the idea of ways to establish a forum or ways of cross-collateralizing, because I hear ideas of how to bring together other communities, and how to you do that. How do you know where to go, what exists? A queer gallery guide? [Audience laughs]

Audience member: I wanted to extend, just off of what Carrie was saying, that . . . just the fact that we are talking about it is a great thing, if everyone left here with an idea of a way to work collectively, and bring these issues that are close to our hearts to the general public to really take a look and see how we are really representing ourselves. I think that's how you go against a regime, that's how you go against the government. D.C. is a vacuum, and what happens across the street from there is a completely different world. Most of the time they don't really know what's going on. They are in their own corner and we are in our own corner. Luckily we are in the public, so actually we have more access, philosophically speaking. Just this conversation is a spark for something that can be bigger.

Audience member (Dean): Edwin, maybe you could talk about the exhibition that you put together at Longwood Arts Project, and the idea of where that is, in terms of the fact that the gallery is on a community college campus. I imagine that you have a lot of people and students coming through who are seeing this exhibition maybe without even thinking about these issues before.

Edwin: I love that you are in the front, Dean, because we have had some really nice conversations about the exhibition. I think that that's a really good question. I said earlier that we were getting labeled as a gay show, and I think it's good if we are going to talk about queer visibility. It was a good way to talk about an issue that's taboo, as folks say, and letting it be discussed in a public forum. I was sitting in the gallery a lot, and it was interesting to see the reactions and nonreactions--and the violent reactions--to the work itself: There were so many discussions that I had with gallery visitors, and I didn't try to set it up so that I would say, "No, you're wrong, this show is really about this." I kept it pretty open and that was in the spirit of the exhibition, to keep it pretty open. The terminology is one thing, but the real life issues that the context raises gets to the nitty-gritty, and it talks to the economics that John was referring to. When we talk about QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY, we are really talking about subservience to a straight, normative, rich white male. I was looking at it from that point of view too, and that's why I was sort of knocking queer terminology right now, because there is a mainstreaming of that. If you look at the title QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY, it's not a straight guy working for the queer person. We are in subservience to bettering and improving the lives of straight men. And the terminology of "metrosexuality" is based on heterosexuality. So if we are going to talk about normative, we are actually back to square one, and brings us to a sort of quagmire. I love the fact that The DL was able to look at class within urban, Latino and African-American, and poor working-class communities. That was one of my political leanings, and I put that out for now in terms of looking at how the art world is hegemonically, if you'll let me use that term here--it is a white hegemony within the market system. Bronx Council for the Arts founded Longwood Arts Project for that reason. We really make a point [that we; sugg: to] do exhibitions supporting emerging artists, especially women, artists of color, and now more queer artists, if you will. That's already in the mission, and what we were founded on since 1981. There's a whole lineage of shows

that we have done that look at those categories and the issues that come from those communities. I totally went all over the place with that answer. [Audience laughs] You guys are so welcome to ask me more about it after, because there is so much there.

Audience member (Lisi): It seems like this is a really good forum for cutting the bullshit out. I think of the long trajectory of communities empowering each other, the Jewish involved with civil rights, and lesbians involved with the AIDS crisis. Couldn't we have a white male gallerist who is behind economically empowering artists of color and lesbians? Could we make a pact? I'm sorry, but white gay guys--dual income, no kids--that's the economic agency. For example, I walked into Kreps [Gallery] and saw LTTR and it didn't matter if it was a representation of lesbians that directly referenced me. I was excited about it and I was ready to fork out my money for it. So it seems to me--not to be all Reagan-trickle-down-economics--if I'm willing to put my ten bucks behind it, just because it's there, I'm sure that there are other people who are willing to do that. I mean, since we are operating under capitalism.

José: Yes.

Audience member: There is also something to be said . . . One of the things that I'm nostalgic is not '60s psychedelia but that moment when gay and lesbian artists took over in the late '80s and early '90s and sort of threw images in front of us. And I always think of the "AIDS" images from General Idea made from that period as being emblematic of that period, and also Gran Fury. Artists went out there and said Notice me, here's a pause, here's something going on, and here's the work, deal with it. I don't know, I think of that as an incredible moment. I don't know what artists who were doing that work then think of artists today. Or if those same artists are still doing stuff today, Or artists working today, like plastering up posters in the subway: "Here it is whether you like it or not."

Audience member: Too many of them have passed away. In some ways that is what's great about going to galleries, going to Chelsea. To see, thank God, we're

back.

AA: That's true.

Audience member: There are people still making that art, and if you go outside of New York City--that's where I'm from-- [Audience laughs] --things are a little different. It's important to do that.

José: The question of nostalgia has been brought up at a few times. I wonder if nostalgia is always bad? Maybe it is more than escape from being depressed about the present. It can be useful in some way, right?

Audience member: Just in terms of the idea of nostalgia and activism: I was involved in Queer Nation in the early '90s, and we had meetings and . . . what I'm really trying to say is, all activism that has happened in the past was in a response to a threat--Stonewall, Anita Bryant really helped our cause, in Toronto in the '80s it was the bathhouse raids--and so it was always a direct threat or issue that galvanized the communities, and I guess there isn't such a direct threat now. I guess this is the beginning of a response.

Carrie: Yeah, but you would think that gay people . . . I mean, I was in Queer Nation and Lesbian Avengers and a number of other groups too. We are used to organizing so why didn't people organize around this war, gay people? I guess it always has to be--I guess that's where I would like to see all this go: Could we use "queer" to be for something else rather than just queer stuff? [Audience laughs]

Scott: That's exactly how I feel, and that's where I'm taking what I'm doing. I don't see the need right now to get out there that I'm gay, but there are broader issues right now, with war. It seems like everything is about consuming or marketing something. There aren't enough natural resources on the planet to keep things going the way America is working. Part of what's going on in these oppressed Middle Eastern countries is that they feel America coming in and crushing, and saying, "We need this." Those are the things that are more important.

Carrie: Or even a more complex argument about gay marriage. Has there been one anywhere? There is a whole feminist critique of marriage that has never been

brought into a gay discussion about marriage. It's like everyone is supposed to be on the bandwagon about gay marriage.

Audience member (Nayland): I can remember that there was a pretty elaborate one, years ago in San Francisco. That's the other thing that gets left out here, that New York is amazingly provincial, particularly in its relation to queer history. If it didn't happen here, than it didn't happen. I thought that was really evident in the Jesse Green piece in THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE SECTION on Sunday [December 7,2003]. Any sort of queer activism and queer art that didn't happen around Manhattan disappeared. That's one of my points of frustration, that I have seen these flyers positing a critique of gay marriage and still have them from ten years ago, when this issue was first coming up. It's frustrating to see what information gets where, and to see information die on the vine, when it doesn't seem like it should be too hard to move on with it. Exactly what you are talking about, to build on existing critiques.

Carrie: What you are saying about wanting the early '90s again: I feel like that's what that Jesse Green piece was about. All these people who were involved in that stuff felt very energized by it, and you like having that feeling, it's a great feeling. It's about being collective and making change and nobody seems to muster it. I had total problems with that piece too. It was like, This is the only art that ever changed the world. It was kind of amazing.

AA: The other thing about that article is the General Idea "AIDS" image was in there because the picture editor phoned me and said, We need blah, blah, blah, and I said, Well, there was other things too, that's the most obvious thing. And he said I'd be lucky to get that in, I'm trying to broaden the palette and include some other people. So there is always the story behind the story going on as well.

Audience member: I came here not expecting much political discussion, because I assumed if we are talking about queer art we are talking about the same commerce as talking about QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY --that is, we are talking about products that are consumed

by an elite portion of our society, so how do we get beyond that?

Scott: In working on the K48 Klubhouse, this show is definitely in reaction to a lot of things going on right now, and there's an army of artists, there over sixty people in it. I am really happy with the show, and I think New York needs shows like this, and that's why I am working in this sort of curatorial direction. It's an exciting time in New York, so if you haven't seen the show you should come out.

Edwin: And Scott, you have a petition, talking about direct action.

Scott: Yeah, I am really interested in keeping the Deitch space, in Williamsburg active, otherwise it's going to be a morgue for dead art, or art that's not being shown. Because you know Jeffrey banks a lot of art, and basically I'm proposing a space where artists can come and collaborate. We can do more shows, bands can practice and perform, we can organize protests, just a place where people can congregate and come together and address these things. And basically I'm putting together this petition and if it doesn't work I'm going to change the locks and squat.

AA: Well, the interesting thing is I had a conversation with Jeffrey in Miami at the art fair and I wanted to say to him when I went to the opening of your show is that I hadn't felt such a peak of energy since 1977, I really hadn't. It really reminded me of the punk peak of energy. It was in '76 I had met the head of Sire records and he had just signed on the Talking Heads and he said to me, "The way I decide on which bands I'm going to take on is--I collect Deco art and I don't know anything about these bands, but I just watch for the energy levels and when the energy peaks, I sign them on." I always thought of those words, and at that opening I thought, Oh, this is really a moment, it's a 1977 moment, it's a Sire Records moment. And, when I saw Jeffrey in Miami I was about to say that to him, and I said, "It was an amazing night, that opening," and he said, "Yeah, the energy, it was just like the late '70s, and I haven't seen anything like that since then." And he was so incredibly proud to be able to give

birth to that.

Scott: Yeah. I actually hugged him at the opening, because I was really grateful to be able to do this. There has been some times when I have tried to call him and he hasn't had time, and I'm over that art world mentality where these people in power don't have time to talk to you, and I say fuck it, I'll take it into my own hands and show them how it can be done so much better. I'm more about the bigger picture and not a painting that sells for \$20,000 and sits in some elite's house. I love art and it should be for everybody and it should not be a precious object. That's what I love about General Idea. I actually don't know that much about them, but I am sort of figuring it out. But man, they were there in the '60s doing what I am interested in now. It's funny how things come full circle. I'm a huge fan.

José: Michael?

Audience member(Michael): I was just thinking about nostalgia and the relationship with ephemerality and also the connections with nostalgia and utopias. There are also issues of queerness and things that are ephemeral. Could you talk about that?

José: The question is about the relationship between nostalgia and utopianism, ephemerality and stuff you can't just consume or buy. Queer artmaking practices that don't conform to the market in that way. Do you see a relationship--for example Carrie--between your work with utopias and nostalgia, and how do you understand that relationship?

Carrie: Wow. Do you have two hours? No, that's a huge question. I don't think of it as nostalgia, but the fact that everything that I make with Dyke Action Machine is always free--it's embedded in the project. So that is nostalgic for an art market that doesn't function like the one I know. And then my paintings are situated in the traditional and commercial world. So I have chosen to do something that I could always give away for free. Such as these "Run Bush Run, the Lesbians Are Coming" buttons. [Audience laughs] And you can get yours if you are one of the first twenty people. [Audience laughs]

Carrie: But I wanted to go back to this thing about

political art, and it's less about queer stuff: I think we all have a hangover from what we think political art looks like. It's very dry, minimal, Whitney Program art. [Audience laughs]

Carrie: You can read it, so you don't need to look at it. So we need to invent some new kind of political art that's really fun to look at. That's kind of my goal. [Audience claps]

Audience member: That is exactly the point that I was going to make, is that art is starting to have a sense of humor again. The "Today's Man" show was kind of a hoot. I liked some of the art, and it was fun to be in that gallery. The show that was at Matthew Marks a couple of summer's ago that Nayland did was a hoot. It seems to me that what I interpret as the "new queer art"--some of it is political and some is not, but it is actually fun to be back in galleries and looking at art. And if queer people—well, we supposedly always controlled the art world, but now we're admitting it. Well, that's good. It's good for art. I am actually surprised this has been a political discussion, because I expected to put our foot on the table and say "we're back" and we're having a good time.

José: You had your hand up?

Audience member: Yeah, I just wanted to respond and say that I think that work is happening right now. It can be answered in terms of practice. I think that projects like LTTR and music shows--Tracy and the Plastics--or even people who are teaching around videos they show are redefining practices and how to reach people. I think that they are not reaching everyone, but that they may be strategic. And in being strategic they can be fun, but have different agendas.

Audience member (Emily): I am really invested in having a good time. [Audience laughs] And I didn't see the "Today's Man" show. I had an opportunity to, I was in the city at that time, but it's not a good time to me to see a show that considers masculinity to only be male bodies. That's not a good time. I also wanted to talk about nostalgia, which is another thing that I am pretty into, and to return to some sort of specificity, which may be nostalgic, but I want to talk about language. I don't want

to use "gay" and "queer" interchangeably. It has been really confusing to hear that over and over in here. Or the term "ladies" [laughs]. In this space of a good time and in the space of specificity, I think that we are here to build a team. That's what I'm trying to do, and I think that's what a lot of us are trying to do. And I don't think that these shows are expressing my full desire of a queer identity or for inclusivity or for a good time. Can we be really specific? How can you have a show about masculinity and only have men in it? That's not even addressing feminist discourse. I mean, it's 2003.

John: I wish you had seen show. The idea is that I asked all men because I thought it was important that--

Audience member (Emily): You asked what? All male-bodied, all biologically born men. I mean, let's be specific.

John: OK. Yes, all biological men. Men with penises, not women with penises. But there was an image of a woman with a penis too.

Audience member (Emily): We love cock too.

John: What did she say?

José: She said, "We love cock too." [Audience laughs]

José: By the way, when I use the word "ladies," it's always in quotes. Nayland, did you have something to say?

Audience member(Nayland): I think that the thing to be nostalgic for is exactly that: the sense that people can actually do something. I think that the best response to any of these situations is more shows instead of guilt-tripping. It's about how to facilitate the next project. Because that's what my memory of the '70s was about. You went and saw great shows and you left the show and you wanted to start a band. You wanted to put a record out. You wanted to record your friend's band and put their record out. I think that's the only way to keep this going. Because we are talking about ephemerality, and things that don't stick around and don't end up in museums and don't fall within to the normal mechanizations of historicization and preservation-- we have to come up with other ways to keep that energy going. And come up with other ways of reminding each other why we are around, and other ways of making our own fun.

Audience member (Derrick): I think that guilt-tripping is about who's taking the trip. I think that it is really important that this happens--that this voice can be heard, that that voice can be heard. If you want to take a guilt trip, that's your trip.

Audience member(Nayland): I'm sorry, that's what I meant by it. Don't sit around and think about how bad you did and how now you were publicly told that you were bad.

Audience member (Derrick): Like, Now I've got to figure out how to get to the Bronx. [Audience laughs] A nice thing might be percolating.

José: Something to add to that. When asking questions about race or about gender, that's not the thing that stops the conversation, that's part of the conversation. That's seems to be the most important moment that we need to have. In the past that has been the breakdown about a bunch of queers getting in a room like this and talking about politics. That's the thing that makes things always fall apart, or always has historically in different activist settings. So to be able to hear that from each other in a spirit of goodwill I think is useful. Maya?

Audience member(Maya): I'm curious about, in this environment that is talking about work that is not getting out there in terms of voices--in terms of creating communities, what is the role of criticism? Is there a role for criticism? Because one of the roles of criticism is to archive, so I'm wondering if anyone has any thoughts on criticism.

José: Art critics out there?

Edwin: Actually, I think that is a very good point, because criticism is very important. I am personally very interested in seeing more critics of color, for instance. It's really important . . . not to knock my colleagues in that field, but sometimes the criticism tends could be more descriptive than criticism. Which is very problematic for artists of color or queer artists if it is just describing the work without saying it's kind of bad or it's good. One of the things that actually came up with the "DL" show, if any folks read any of the criticism, it did set it up that show as the anti-"Today's Man." I didn't see "Today's Man" (sorry

John, I didn't get to Chelsea that day). Franklin Sirmans set that up, actually, which was good to see, because if we are going to talk about specificity, we are a gallery in the South Bronx, and the reality is a lot of people don't get to the South Bronx. I'm glad Derrick even asked that. I would ask, How many of you have been to the Bronx in the past week, or have seen a show in the Bronx? Raise your hand if you have. Those hands are like this [raises hand slightly], and that's the reality of it. Working in the margins--and I'm going to say it, because working in the Bronx is working in the margins within the centrality of New York--if we are going to talk about things being Manhattan-centric. I think the role of criticism is important, and the fact that we have critics like Holland Cotter and Franklin Sirmans coming up to the Bronx is one of the most important things, and I applaud them for coming up there, because you need to be courageous to come up there, and it's 2003. That goes for the art-going audience as well, and I don't mind guilt-tripping people.

José: It's often fun. Ricardo, you had your hand up?

Audience member (Ricardo): In those earlier moments when race and gender came up in queer organizing, the reason things really fell apart is because the white boys left and took the money and the media access with them. So I guess now we have to figure out how to lock the door and have them empty their pockets while they are still here. [Audience laughs] And I don't know if we will ever get to that. We haven't found a useful way for men and women of color to keep the cash from going. We can say what we want about a show that we didn't see, like "Today's Man," but how does this then become more livable space? In terms of Edwin's show, all kinds of colored folks from Queens and Brooklyn were in the Bronx and turned out for that show. It's not like people don't get around, it just seems like there is this sort of white hole that is Chelsea that sucks everything in. . . . And I meant that. [Audience laughs]

José: Of course you did.

Audience member: I hear a lot of frustration with the mainstream--people talk about QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY , you can talk about Chelsea and its

conventions. Ultimately, I think it is unrealistic to expect from the commercial mainstream something that is not in its nature to be and to do, particularly from the art world. If you are not seeing standards of inclusiveness, connoisseurship, or equality, you have to create it for yourself: You have to create your own context. As a gallery owner myself, it's difficult when I hear someone say, Why didn't you have this or that in your show? I do what feels right for me, and I don't know if it's my responsibility. It's my responsibility to express my aesthetic, but I don't know that it's my responsibility to represent something that's not in me too.

Audience member: You have to interrogate your aesthetic.

Audience member: Absolutely.

Audience member (Derrick): What's the name of your gallery?

Audience member: Oh, do I have to put myself on the spot too? I'm already such a lousy speaker. It's Pavel Zoubok

Audience member (Derrick): We are talking about commerce, but in the context of "queer."

Audience member: Sure.

Audience member (Derrick): We're not talking about the mainstream, commercialism or even the marketplace. We are talking about what we as artists, curators, and gallerists can do.

Audience member: Well, I think the biggest problem is the visibility issue that keeps coming up. It's visibility for its own sake. It's marketed. I think that a lot of what people are doing, the kinds of shows people are doing needs to happen, because it's not going to happen at Larry Gagosian. That is another context, and I find it enormously frustrating.

Audience member (Derrick): I don't have any illusions that someday we're going to wake up and be reborn and build Noah's Ark with a lesbian, a black, and a Jew and it will all be good.

José: Can we mix it up a little and can someone interject?

Audience member: I didn't bring enough of these

[handing out flyers]. If you can just look at whoever may have a copy of this, it's a call to artists. This is going up in a nonprofit space in San Jose, CA next year. It started as an idea, and there was nothing to back it. The gallery is a collective thing, it's not a commercial gallery, like the galleries in this building are. So it depends on funding from wherever it is going to come. We are developing the funding now. Hopefully with something like this, it will be as inclusive as anything can be. I don't know what to say about that. Whether or not artists do respond, we are trying to get the word out. I don't see commercial galleries per se really addressing hardcore issues.

Audience member: It doesn't make money.

José: Is it to say that the commercial gallery is not a site to even try to talk about politics, that they're exclusive?

Audience member: I think it's happened, but it's been staged. It has been staged at the right moment. That in itself was ephemeral. It wasn't reaching out to a broad audience. If we look at the past and look at what has happened in terms of politics and art making, if we look at the most overt statements, in a lot of cases they were catering to a very small crowd. If we consider for instance, Dyke Action Machine or General Idea--the form itself--we are talking about something beyond commercial space and something beyond the white walls. It has the potential to reach a lot of people, and it is not bound geographically or economically. I don't see commercial galleries as being able to do a very effective job politically.

Carrie: I actually want to kind of disagree with what you are saying, because there is a very codified political art that sells quite well. I went to a panel with Rob Storr and Arthur Danto, and they were talking about political art at SVA, if you can imagine. Rob Storr, being the youngster, showed Cindy Sherman. That was the latest location in political art that was also accepted in the museum, i.e. commercial, rhetoric.

Audience member (Dean): Look at the fact that we are even here, that the gallery gets offered for the night, so that these conversations can be facilitated. Beyond the work that is actually in the gallery, there is also work around the gallery that can do just as much for the

community. Maybe it is important to also identify those actions as well.

Audience member (Emily): They may never be the site of radical ideological production, but they can support people like us. If Scott gets a show and someone in it is queer, that's exciting and that's supportive, that's a possibility. It's up to us to provide that moment of excitement that other people may eat up, but it gives us an opportunity to talk to each other. I call myself out as one of the members of LTTR, and we are self-sustaining: Tracy and the Plastics bankrolled us. So that's one of the really exciting things, that it is handmade by the community for a community and anybody that wants to be involved in it. So far it's working. It's at bookstores in Philly and it's at the ICA in London, and that's a pretty diverse thing. I would love to get everybody here my phone number to collaborate. [Audience laughs]

Audience member: I just want to have a crabby moment with you, which is that I think the political and nonpolitical distinction of things actually stops us from looking at the political dimension of the work wherever it occurs. I think that is really not productive. Work that occurs in galleries is political. It is occupying a political position. Saying that it is not, it makes it very difficult to come to any kind of critical examination of what the specifics of that position may be.

José: I think that's a good point. [Audience claps] Amy?

Audience member (Amy): I just wanted to say that I agree.

[Audience laughs]

Audience member: The man that said that the "Today's Man" and Bob's show was a real hoot: Yeah, they are a real hoot. But why is there this dichotomy of shows that are a real hoot and shows that are political and serious, because I think that "Today's Man" was a political show. I think it was trying to define masculinity, and I agree with Emily that it is kind of disappointing that the definition of masculinity is so small within the queer community as to not include transsexuals at all.

José: For some folks masculinity is really a big deal, and is expansive, for other folks it isn't. I think Carrie invited

us to think about what is political art, and what does it look like, and what is the future of political art? It doesn't have to be somber. Maybe the political nonpolitical binary is a problem. Maybe we should put pressure on that.

Audience member: Let me make it clear that I think having fun is political in the context we are living in.

There's a cynicism that is coming from Washington that I find rather difficult, and I really like the exuberance that in a lot of ways is a sort of "Fuck 'em, we're going to have a good time." And if you want to look at precedents, as you get to know General Idea's work more, they have things like these poodle paintings and they are--

Audience member: They are fucking poodles, fucking hilarious poodles.

Audience member: They are these great, funny paintings. They did the Miss General Idea Pageant, which has these deep meanings, but I imagine they were also having a good time. I really think that this exuberance is what makes it exciting to get out there and feel like there are still interesting and important things out there.

Audience member (Amy): I'm sorry.

Audience member: No, I didn't make my point well.

What I find exciting about these younger queer artists is that there is this incredible sense of energy, and that things are happening.

Audience member: Whooh! [Audience claps]

Audience member: And old guys like us appreciate that. **José:** JD?

Audience member (JD): I wanted to say how excited I am about how multigenerational this group of people is, and I think there is a lot to say about the way we are talking and our different languages, our different generations, and our different experiences with economics right now. I'm really excited about that and I think we should talk about that.

José: In that way it's a really mixed crowd.

AA: In my opinion, a community by definition is mixed generationally or it is not a community.

Audience member: Why?

AA: It's a partial community otherwise. A community has to include stupid people and smart people. Both, or it is

not a community.

José: Yes?

Audience member: I would like to tie this idea of multigenerational to what you were talking about criticism and the role of critique. I think writing is so important in order to avoid problems with nostalgia and to make a history. For me, this process took a long time.

AA: The Internet makes that very possible. The question about criticism immediately took me back to the mid '60s thinking about the explosion of underground newspapers. The invention of the web press made it possible to publish very cheaply, and suddenly everyone was doing their own publishing which and there was never anything like that before. In '76 or '77 suddenly bands were able to produce their own records and they didn't have to go to through a recording company. Recently, with the internet, it's possible to self-publish extremely cheaply and to reach a large depth and breath of population and means. I think self-publishing is an amazing means to that and LTTR is the proof:

Audience member: I wonder what the economics of putting together shows are? What about with the "Down Low" show? Did it take a huge amount of money?

Edwin: We're gonna get down to the figures?

José: No, it's good.

Edwin: No, it's a good question, and I was actually able to bring artists from the West Coast too. That was one of my curatorial decisions, to expand on the artists that were showing in New York. I was surprised that some of the artists I showed had never shown in New York even though they have received a lot of critical attention, like Alex Donus from Los Angeles. For doing work that is very . . . if you want to talk about queer visual culture, it has very much been out there and been shown in public spaces, in nonprofit galleries, commercial galleries, and has been responded to violently. In particular, the imagery of opposing factions kissing, like the Pope and Fidel kissing, or the two Marys kissing. So he was able to bring in something that we looked at as queer visual culture within this work. And he is a painter, too, so he straddles looking at identity as well as being a strict painter. I'm

skirting the issue of money. It took a lot, actually, and I think I over-budgeted.

AA: You could do a show for nothing, though.

Edwin: Yeah, you could.

AA: You could do a show for nothing and do it in a telephone booth.

Edwin: Yeah, or in a U-Haul like people do.

Audience member: Also, people want to see stuff: I think artists forget that. The general public does want to see new things. They don't want to see the same things. So being challenging and putting it out there with no fear is the way to do it.

Audience member: There is a limited space for reviews. There are a lot more shows happening then get reviewed, so how do we know about it? Like, you have a show, but you may not get a review.

AA: Maybe you're reading the wrong paper.

Audience member: To make your point more simple, one thing I did when I wanted to get out in the New York art world, because I'm not from here, I sent out press kits to various organizations. I sent them to THE NEW YORK TIMES, and to museums, and surprisingly I got responses. So sometimes you have to follow the system in order to get things going. I think it is important to look at popular culture and see how it works. See how it works mechanically and then use it to do your thing.

Audience member: What if a commercial space was to form a partnership with a nonprofit space, so they would devote a certain percentage to show what a commercial space would not normally show? I am just throwing that out there.

Audience member (Dean): It seems to me, though, is that becomes a middle model, which is the un-profit space. For the reason it's practical, but it is not so interesting to think about it in those terms.

Audience member: I would also just tell everybody to support artists. I'm just a middle-class, middle-aged guy. A paycheck comes in and I say, "All right, I am going to buy something." It's not a \$20,000 painting that was used as an example, it's art and it's continuous, and it's doing something. We saw a show on 27th Street and every

work of art was under \$100. Under \$300. We bought something for \$20, literally. So support artists and then they can get things done.

José: We have like five or ten minutes left. Does anyone on the panel have any last words?

Ginger: I just want to say that there is a lot of hot, hot art happening outside of Chelsea. On Saturday go see Tracy and the Plastics, and in Philadelphia there is an amazing collective called Space 1026, where people make awesome silkscreens and stuff: So those are just two ideas. Yeah, this is a really small community here, and there is so much stuff happening outside.

Scott: Tonight we are having some bands playing at the Klubhouse until midnight. I am going there after this, if you want to come out. It's free. I also started a new 'zine for "The Outlaw Series" that Lisa Kirk organized. It is a dollar if you want one, and there is also the petition, if anyone would like to sign it.

Audience member (Emily): I would just like to say that I am really glad that everybody came out tonight and to thank Matt a lot. [Audience claps]

José: Anyone else?

Carrie: Are we doing our self-promotion hour?

José: Yeah, do your self-promotion. Everybody do your self-promotion.

Carrie: I have this show up at a very hot new gallery that is not in Chelsea, called Canada. It is at 55 Chrystie between Canal and Hester. There is a card up here if you want to get one.

José: OK. Thank you, panelists. Thank you, audience. Thank you, Matt. [Audience claps]