RISD Museum
Convening: Raid the Icebox Now
Transcript – June 20, 2018

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Sarah: Welcome everybody. My name is Sarah Ganz Blythe I'm the deputy director of Exhibitions, Education, and Programs here at the RISD Museum, and we're so delighted to have you all here with us, and to our guests who are joining us today. As you probably know this is our opportunity to kick off the 50th anniversary or Raid the Icebox with Andy Warhol. The exhibition has become a touch point for the idea of as artist as curator, the artist working in museum collections. For us it's part of a larger project, an opportunity to look at our past to think and learn from it, and to do this we have marked the 50th anniversary by inviting artists to work with us. So Pablo Bronstein, Nicole Eisenman, Pablo Helguera, Beth Katleman, Paul Scott, Simone Lee, Opening Ceremony, Adam Pendleton, Sebastian Ruth, and Triple Canopy will be joining us over the course of several years to realize projects both in our galleries and online using our collection. This will start in 2019 and carry through to 2020, and we're so delighted the many of the artists are with us tonight, both physically in the room but also joining us online, and we're really honored to have you with us.

Sarah: There's a few goals that this helps us achieve. One is that we are interested in questioning the dominant narratives and the traditional practices of museums, and we look forward to doing this with the artists that we've invited. We're also interested in further developing the idea of artistic research, and to think of what it means to have a museum collection that is always in use, and how as a museum can we shift our practices because of that? And we also look forward to the fact that many of these artists are already pointing to areas of our collection that we have not paid enough attention to, and highlighting them for us.

Sarah: But this evening we thought was a great opportunity to ground ourselves in a bit of history, to spend some time with the origin of this project, Andy Warhol's Raid the Icebox. And so, we'll be starting off with John Smith our museum director who will look at how the exhibition fit in with Andy Warhol's life, his work, but also how it relates to Andy Warhol's relationship to our history and to collecting.

Sarah: Then Dominic Molon the Richard Brown Baker curator of contemporary art will give us the specifics of this exhibition. How was it realized, how it actually was a traveling exhibition that went to New Orleans and Houston, but also how is it that we're thinking about this 50 years later? And a lot of that has to do with the fact that it was photographed profusely, mostly the incarnation here at the museum, and there was also an exhibition catalog, which has been very much coveted. We will be reissuing it with the exhibition.

Sarah: Followed by Dominic Fred Wilson a conceptual artist who challenges the assumptions of history, culture, race and conventions with the display of his work. And he will be sharing

with us how he came to his seminal exhibition in 1992 at the Maryland Historical Society called Mining the Museum.

Sarah: And finally, Ingrid Schaffner is joining us, she's a curator, art critic, and writer, and educator. She's currently organizing the Carnegie International the 57th edition that opens this fall, and Ingrid's going to share with us her own experiences working particularly within a museum that honors the artist's voice, but also how curatorial practice itself has shifted with this idea of the artist as curator.

Sarah: Following the presentations the panelists are going to have a conversation, but we want to quickly open it up to our audience. Not only are the artists in the room, but the curators who will be working with them, as well as many people who we understand actually saw the original exhibition. And so we hope to also hear from you about these first hand encounters. Before getting started, I just want to thank my colleagues, Deb Clemons, Marny Kindness, Kajette Solomon, and Pam Kimel for making this possible. We also want to thank the NEA, RISCA, and the Association of Artist Communities who are a partner with us as well. So without further ado I'm going to turn it over to John. Thank you.

John: Thanks Sarah. So as Sarah said, Dominic is going to talk about the mechanics of the show, and how it came to be, and how it played out here in Providence. But I thought that I would begin by at least laying the cast of characters if you will, the four people who were really responsible for making the show happen here at the RISD Museum.

John: Obviously we begin with Andy Warhol, and I think we all probably know Warhol's biography quite well at this point. But I think it's really important to point out what was going on with Warhol at this time in 1969, because it was a really momentous and a very transitional year for Warhol. First of all, in June of 1968 Warhol had been shot by Valerie Solanas. He had actually been pronounced dead when he got to the ER and was resuscitated, obviously. And but it was something that had an incredible impact on Warhol, really for the rest of his life both physically, emotionally. It was just two weeks ago was the 50th anniversary of this shooting as well. And I think this photograph from 1969 by Richard Avedon really demonstrates the extent of Warhol's wounds, and just how brutal, and how emotionally complicated the recovery of this, which took months, and months, and months.

John: In 1970, Alice Neel painted this really moving and pretty ... as Warhol described it, very grotesque portrait, and you can see Warhol right below the wounds is a surgical corset the Warhol actually wore for the rest of his life, essentially to hold is torso in place. So that had happened the year before Warhol was embarking on Raid the Icebox.

John: It was also at the exact same time that Warhol had publicly turned his back on painting. Said he wasn't going to be painting anymore, that he was going to be devoting all of his energy to filmmaking, and a statement that actually filled many of the more conservative art critics with glee, and struck terror in the hearts of most film critics. But 1969 Warhol released his film Trash which really was is first full length narrative film, and

for the next several years Warhol really would be putting a lot of his creative and financial energy toward filmmaking.

John: 1969 was also the year that Warhol founded Interview magazine. Initially it was because he couldn't get his films reviewed any place else. He actually started a magazine of film reviews. So this was a really transitional moment and a really important date for Warhol. Two years before 1969, in 1967 Warhol had met Fred Hughes, and Fred would over the next 20 years become really the key person in Warhol's life. He was his gatekeeper, his business manager.

John: Fred was born in Texas to middle class parents, something that he spent the rest of his life denying, because he really had a very to the manner born personality. And Fred really was the antithesis of Warhol, where Warhol was socially awkward, very shy, Fred was polished, very charming, and very socially ambitious. And Fred said whenever he met Warhol, and he met him in 1967 at a party where the Velvet Underground was playing. And Fred came with the daughter of Jean and Dominique De Menil, who you'll hear a bit more about in a moment. But Fred always said, "I came with an heiress and Andy came with the band," because the Velvet Underground was playing at this party.

John: But he also later recalled that ... and I'm going to read this quote that, "I never questioned whether we'd get along or not. For one thing he knew who I was and saw the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow just as I did." And it was really through Fred's ambition and really strong business sense that Warhol himself moved from this fringe artist to one who was really part of the mainstream, and became extraordinarily wealthy. The pot of gold that Fred was referring to were Jean and Dominique De Menil.

John: And Fred had met them when he was a student at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, and they immediately recognized Fred's talents and his charm, and he really became their protégé. The de Menil's were Houston philanthropists, art collectors, and they were instrumental in getting Fred the foothold in New York and in Paris with art dealers.

John: Dominique De Menil was the matriarch of the family, and here she is in a portrait by Warhol in 1969. She was an heiress who had moved to Houston in the 1940's where her husband oversaw the American branch of her family's oil business. And obviously if you've been to the Menil collection in Houston, that's Dominique de Menil's handy work.

John: In early 1969 she and her husband visited the RISD Museum. There was an exhibition her of part of their collection, and as they were spending time they came for the closing of the exhibition. And as they were here going through the museum with the director at the time, Danny Robbins who is here in 1965, the year he became director of the museum looking very young and very unwearied by having never been a museum director yet.

John: And Danny was taking them and I think lamenting the fact that I think there was no storage at the museum, and how much of the collection lived in storage. And I suspect

he was angling for the De Menils to step forward and say, "We'll build you a new museum. We'll build you a wing." But instead what they suggested was, why don't you get an artist to do an exhibition from your storage. So it was really Dominique De Menil that really had the idea for the exhibition, and also suggested Andy Warhol who she had formed a relationship with, and become really one of his leading patrons in the United States.

John: And I think we can certainly understand Danny Robbins excitement around this idea. Certainly understanding the PR component of bringing an artist of Warhol's reputation to RISD, but also understanding the importance of keeping a donor, a potential donor like Dominique De Menil happy was well. I think for an artist like Warhol this is an idea that now certainly would have appealed to him. Warhol would later predict that some day all department stores would become like museums and all museums will become like department stores. I think something kind of prophetic, and in the end I think the opportunity to shop the bargain basement of the RISD Museum was a really exciting offer for Warhol.

John: But I think there are more reasons why Warhol was a wonderful choice for this project. First of all Warhol had been raiding art history for many, many years. Certainly in the 1950's whenever he was working as a commercial artist and as an illustrator, he was drawing from a variety of sources like Grand Villes Le Fleur Anime where every page of Warhol's book In the Bottom of My Garden is almost a direct quote from this fairly obscure French book. But beginning in 1963 on a more routine basis Warhol would come back to the history of art over, and over, and over again.

John: In 1963 this portrait of Mona Lisa which coincided with the first tour of the only exhibition of the Mona Lisa in America at the National Gallery, and at the Metropolitan. So Mona Lisa at this particular moment was like Marilyn Monroe. I mean she was in the news, everybody was talking about this really extraordinary opportunity to see this painting, and so Warhol obviously capitalized on that. But over, and over again Warhol drew from Renaissance painting. Raphael, Picasso, Matisse, [inaudible 00:24:10], and again at the end of his life a really quite extraordinary and moving series of plays on Leonardo's Last Supper paintings.

John: But I think even more ... I was just going to say Warhol also had a way of inserting himself into the history of art, and certainly speaking to this long tradition of Memento Mori paintings in this group of work from 1977 of Warhol of self portrait with skulls and just another example of how Warhol was tying himself into the history of art.

John: I think probably more important is Warhol's relationship with collecting. Something that from his earliest childhood Warhol was deeply invested in, and this is a portrait of Shirley Temple, and autograph to Andrew Warhol ... loved Shirley Temple. And Warhol would write from the time he was about seven, eight years old would write to Hollywood stars through fan magazines requesting autographed portraits, and then he would carefully paste those in photo albums.

John: So, this idea to collect and categorize objects is something that we see in Warhol really from his earliest youth, to this which is a photograph of Warhol's dining room, shortly after he died in 1987 before all of the busy bees at Sotheby's could get their hands on things and start cleaning this up. So I think it's this idea of collecting, and this love of objects, and this real deep connection to things is something that we see pervading Warhol's entire career. For those of you who may not remember the 1989 sale of Warhol's estate was a six volume Sotheby's catalog. It went on for days, and days, and days. And at the time of the sale it was the largest single individual sale in the history of Sotheby's.

John: And I think we don't want to draw too many connections what Warhol was collecting and the objects that he chose for Raid the Icebox, but I think there are things that in a way you can't ignore about how Warhol was being led by his own interests, and his own desires. Here Warhol's selection of American 18th, 19th century chairs, and Warhol's own obsessive collection of chairs. Warhol shoes, or the shoes at the RISD Museum that Warhol decided to just show as a group, and the cabinets in which they were stored, and Warhol's own reputation throughout the 1950's as the shoe guy. He was the person who was known in advertising as the person that could really draw the right shoe and sell it. And also Warhol's passion for Native American blankets and textiles, which he selected here but which you can see just a small group of what Warhol had collected here in his home, and then this really beautiful photograph of Warhol with a selection of blankets.

John: So I just want to end my piece by a couple of quotes, and one was a letter that Danny Robbins wrote to a museum patron soon after the opening of the exhibition because the exhibition here was met with as Dominique will talk, it wasn't a popular exhibition let's put it that way. And Danny's writing to a donor, I must say that all of us were a little startled by the nature of works that Andy chose, of almost 300 objects that are included in Raid the Icebox there are perhaps 25 that any curator in his right mind would agree were first class. But

John: I also want to reference a quote that was in the New York Times today, because there was an announcement about a major Warhol retrospective that's going to be opening at the Whitney Museum in New York later this year. And the curator of the show Donna De Salvo said, "To humanize Warhol an get people to actually look at what he made is not as easy as it might sound." And I think that's something that's really important to bear in mind, not only about all of Warhol's work but particularly about this exhibition, because I think that Robbin's dismissive statement of the show has really been the way that it's been received. That it was Warhol sticking his thumb in the eye of the institution of pulling these embarrassing objects out of storage.

John: But I think it's actually much more interesting to think about how it connects to Warhol's larger practice, and as I think about it I draw this connection to Warhol's ... this elevation to super star status of the drag queens, and the hustlers, and drug addicts, and the wayward heiresses, and all of these other people who lived on the fringe of society. And thinking about how that translates into Warhol's selection of objects for Raid the Icebox, the idea that these misbegotten, unloved, dejected, and embarrassing objects that lived

hidden away were able to be reclaimed, and resuscitated, reappraised, and given some love. And I think that, that was really more than anything else was something that really drove Warhol in this true appreciation of the objects that he chose to show. So, we're going to hear more about the exhibition from Dominic Molon.

Dominic: Okay, two caveats. One, having been born about eight days before the close of the show, which was June 30th, 1970 I am functioning as a bit of an archaeologist, looking back. I wasn't here on the scene obviously. Those of you who were if you're ... feel free to correct anything I recall on history's behalf that when I'm with the show. And I'm also a little long but I'll try to be brisk, and hopefully punchy, and a little overlapping with John's presentation.

Dominic: But in preparation for tonight's talk, I had a long conversation with the former chief curator and director of the RISD Museum [inaudible 00:31:10]. We discussed events and circumstances surrounding Raid the Icebox one with Andy Warhol, from his position as then chief curator, up close observer, and having been charged with cataloging the almost 300 objects that Warhol included in the show, whether it was a shoe, an umbrella, or a Cezanne for the printed volume that accompanied the exhibition. His role is frequently noted by critics and historians in later texts about Raid as one of the many instances of Warhol's disdain for institutionalized museological professionalism.

Dominic: He mentioned one word to me that he rather despairingly felt should inform my presentation tonight, mythology. Noting that there's been a lot written about the show in the aftermath that having been here as chief curator misrepresents what he'd seen and experienced. I was too grateful for his generous time, and supremely acute 86 year old memory to remind him of John Ford's classic quote, "When the myth becomes fact, print the myth." And while the mythology that's developed around Raid has allowed it to inspire many urgently necessary artist curated projects, it still feels important almost 50 years on to take a closer look at some of the often overlooked facts of what happened and why.

Dominic: Tonight I intend to present the show that happened ... consider the critical responses, and present a few museum exhibitions in the style of Raid the Icebox to set the stage for Fred's presentation. It's necessary to remind that RISD, the capital RISD brand associated with the school and museum, in 1969 meant something very different than it does now. This is before the Talking Heads. This is before the careers of Dale Chihuly, Jenny Holzer, Nicole Eisenman, Shepard Fairey, Roni Horn, [inaudible 00:33:01], Carol Walker all cumulatively placed RISD ...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:33:04]

Dominic: MacFarlane, Gus Van Sant, and Kara Walker all cumulatively placed RISD in the collective cultural consciousness.

Dominic: Danny Robbins arrived in 1965 to become the RISD Museum's director, fresh from a curatorial post at the Guggenheim Museum. He strove to build a more contemporary presence and mindset for the well art apportioned, but still sleepy art school museum,

developing the Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art, and the Albert Pilavin Collection of 20th Century Art, of which our 1964 Warhol Race Riot painting was the second edition in 1968.

Dominic: As John mentioned, his expertise and scholarship dedicated to Cubism undoubtedly motivated him to bring the exhibition look back, an exhibition of Cubist paintings and sculpture from the Menil family collection, to Providence in 1969, making it the fourth venue on an international tour.

Dominic: His very modern propensity for cultivating contemporary art-directed philanthropic support led to an invitation to John and Dominique de Menil for the Valentine's Day closing reception for the show, and a tour of the museum's storage areas.

Dominic: They came, and as John mentioned, Robbins's lamentations about much of the collection languishing in storage and the Menil's own observation to that end prompted them to suggest that the museum invite an artist to select works from storage based on his or her extra curatorially-minded approach. As John de Menil asked Robbins, what would happen if some important contemporary artists were to chose an exhibition from our reserves? If the only organizing principle would be whether or not he liked whatever he saw? Would the result be different from having a storage show chosen by a curator, or by anyone? If the artists who selected the materials were strong enough, would he impose his personality on the objects? If he were famous enough, would it not oblige the curious to look? Might his attitude not do violence to the true nature of the objects?

Dominic: The Menils suggested Warhol, whose business manager Fred Hughes, as John as noted, was close to the collectors and was undoubtedly keen to develop a relationship between them and his new boss. They also arguably secured Warhol with the promise to their patronage helping to persuade the otherwise on-the-fence artist.

Dominic: Additionally, the Menils underwrote the exhibition, participated in at least one of Warhol's six site visits ... there's Dominique, to the left of Andy ... contributed a text to the catalog, secured, one assumes, the first venue for the exhibition at Houston's Institute for the Arts at Rice University, and as we'll see later, helped supervise the installation there, and offered the pro bono services of their New York-based PR firm, Withers Swan.

Dominic: It's hard not to sympathize with [Steven Ostra's 00:35:51] bemused opinion of the elevation of Raid to its now-iconic critical status of institutional critique. The show is developed from the Menil's genuine interest in lifting the museum's profile with some PR visibility, Robbins's desire to bring the Menils into the museum's fold as donors and as important players in the contemporary art world, Hughes's aspirations for informed, friendly, and substantial patronage for Warhol's work, and Andy's perhaps privately genuine, if initially grudging, interest in having a museum's collection at his disposal.

Dominic: One needs to also consider the breathtaking, almost inconceivable speed pre-Internet, Skype, smartphones, et cetera, with which the exhibition and catalog were assembled

and how temporal necessities mothered, if not inventions, then many of the circumstances attached to the show.

Dominic: On February 14th, 1969, it's barely the germination of an idea. On October 30th, it's opening to the public in a venue 1800 miles west of Providence.

Dominic: Warhol's visits are endearingly and memorably chronicled in David Burden's essay for the exhibition catalog. With an entourage of Borden, Hughes, and others in tow, Robbins led Warhol through storage areas, where he identified cabinets of shoes for display, as well as a table of stacked 18th- and 19th-century hat boxes, stacks of paintings exhibited as-is with the sandbags propping them up, a blanket chest crammed with American Indian blankets, Windsor chairs in a row on a shelf, and sliding metal racks of paintings hung in no particular art historical order.

Dominic: All the while, Robbins recommended period costumes or leadingly rummaged through drawers of Coptic textiles, Turkish embroideries, and antique chasubles. Warhol was unmoved.

Dominic: Only one contemporary artwork was selected, and it was not Warhol's own Race Riot, but rather Eduardo McIntyre's [En Violeta, 1966, currently on view in our [Branoff 00:37:47] galleries, and presumably only because it just happened to be hanging on one of the metal racks.

Dominic: The eventual determination of where and how these ready-made assemblages of the museum's then-cramped and unkempt storage- things have changed- where they were presented in the galleries, appears to have been a product of Warhol's on-the-spot suggestions during the site visits, and Robbins's own interpretations.

Dominic: Indeed, a memo from April 7th suggests that even with two weeks until the RISD opening, the installation, the exhibition was very much TBD. Try getting that past a registrar and a preparator today.

Dominic: Correspondence from the earlier presentation in Houston suggests that Fred Hughes was on-site working with Dominique de Menil on the installation of the show at the Rice University Gallery. Hopefully continued digging into archives both here and elsewhere will reveal more than these fragmentary indications of how this incredibly distinct presentation, with one gallery papered in black and lit with three bare bulbs suspended from the ceiling, the entire show cast in low lighting to create a solar-like effect, came together. That this has rarely, if ever, been clarified in subsequent texts about the show, creates the false impression that Warhol was here, directing museum installer Tommy Ryan, also the janitor, and his crew of one, as to where this stack and that pile should go.

Dominic: And just to situate everyone where this all took place and how things look today, it was in what we now refer to as the Waterman Galleries, in approximately 3100 square feet of gallery space. I didn't want to intrude on our own ... space that we're keeping from view, so.

Dominic: Before moving on, a note on the title of the show, which is bizarrely omitted from all the texts written about the exhibition. Well a colleague at the Menil thought it might have something to do with a hand-painted Warhol Icebox painting from 1961, in the museum collection's holdings. Its origins are either far more prosaic, or close to RISD. Any one of the major players might have recommended the title as evoking someone rummaging through the fridge for a midnight snack. Given it was Warhol, could've been raid the cookie jar. It might've also alluded to painting storage, with its steel doors documented in the catalog, and its status as the only cold place in an otherwise then-atmospherically uncontrolled museum.

Dominic: The One in the title suggests that this was to be the first in a series, a dream that died ostensibly with Robbins's departure a year or less later. The show opened at the Rice Gallery in Houston, and then traveled to the Isaac Delgado Museum, now the New Orleans Museum of Art, in early 1970.

Dominic: Robbins approached both Metropolitan Museum and the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts to see if they might become collaborators, only for tight exhibition schedules to preclude their participation. Other museums- Baltimore, Philadelphia, The Whitney, Kansas City, St. Louis- were also approached, but the Delgado was the only one to bite. It's interesting, considered from today's perspective where wooing donors from beyond one's own base is considered standard practice from museum directors. But other museums didn't appear similarly enthusiastic about an opportunity to cultivate the Menils. Though then, ultimately, this gamble didn't really pay off, with the Menils' involvement and investment in the RISD Museum more or less lasting as long as the duration of the show, and/or Robbins's short stay after its close on June 30th, 1970.

Dominic: Warhol arrived by chartered bus for the press preview of the exhibition at RISD, in what Ostro described as an orchestrated disaster. With only three reporters, one television crew, and Warhol, who answered questions through socialite Jane Forth posing as his girlfriend, Carol Labrie. The reception included a student rock band, Morning Star, who performed a song written for the occasion. Other student participation in the event was far less positive, with the continuation of protests lobbying for an increase in minority financial aid that has similarly disrupted recent school-related events.

Dominic: Contrary to the harmonically codependent relationship between the school and museum today, the two entities seemed to coexist more or less contentiously at the time of Raid. Stoked, possibly, probably, by Robbins himself, in terms of his privately low estimation of the faculty, and publicly dismissive description in the Pup Raid catalog essay a RISD student says, quote, "Lacking the patience for the bulk of the objects on exhibition in previous shows at the museum." Robbins stated in a letter to John de Menil after the opening that 1200 people, including, quote, "throngs of students," attended the opening. A Providence bulletin newspaper article reported it as 600, and Warhol and co. were not among them. Quote, "Despite noting that Warhol was approached by students requesting a donation for their financial aid cause, and receiving a typically Warholian recommendation of a good new deodorant."

Dominic: While the exhibition was seemingly popular at each of its venues, its legacy lives on through a distinctive 103-page publication comprising texts by Dominique de Menil, David Burden, and Robbins. Menil offers a disproportionately idealistic screed, given the arch quality Warhol's actual presentation. As previously mentioned, Burden's essay is a predictably acerbic bit of reportage on the process, while Robbins presents a startlingly candid bit of TMI, from today's perspective, on the circumstances of both the exhibition's genesis, and its development. More significant, perhaps, are the Warhol Polaroid images taken on site visits that define the tone of the book. Their cropping and placement in the hands of local designer Malcolm Greer, as well as their unconventional documentation, the process of Warhol's selection, give the book a remarkably contemporary feel, and also the sensibility of an artist's book.

Dominic: And of course, the previously-mentioned exhaustive categorization of the almost 300 objects in the show, performed by the chief curator, left its bite as a Warhol broadside against middle management, as later critics would later assess, but more the all-hands-on-deck expediency required of a then-smaller museum's staff under time constraints.

Dominic: Indeed, it's arguable that the document that the book represents, as well as the now-iconic images of the RISD Museum’s installation specifically, and not those of Houston and New Orleans' presentations, by staff photographer Robert O. Thornton, should be credited with a great deal of the responsibility for the critical reception of the exhibition in the present day.

Dominic: This is characteristic of any historically significant museum show, however, one could argue that the radical manner in which these museum objects were represented makes the legacy of their visual documentation that much more significant. Given the rather deferred nature of the Icebox's critical reception, with the exhibition's most significant later interpreters not having seen it when it was on view, those images have come to bear a remarkable interpretive responsibility, and also despite earlier presentations elsewhere, firmly ground the show at RISD.

Dominic: In John Brooks's art form review of a subsequent Warhol-curated effort, Folk and Funk, at the [inaudible 00:45:07] Museum of Folk Art in New York, in the mid-70's, he alludes to Raid, remarking that, quote, "I didn't see the show, but judging by its catalog, the most striking thing," et cetera, et cetera, suggesting that even early-on in the mid-70's, the show is best known through intermediary images and texts.

Dominic: The show wasn't included in Warhol and Hackett's Popism: the Warhol Sixties, suggesting the place it apparently didn't have in the artist's self-regard. And while it did merit inclusion on some timelines and bios as early as the 1971 Catalogue Raisonné of Warhol's gestures, in an issue of Art in America, and continuing with the timeline for the 1989 MoMA Retrospective, it is largely a no-show in the numerous books related to Warhol ... dedicated to Warhol.

Dominic: The critical, or historical, reception of Raid that I alluded to at the outset seems to have primarily begun in the early 1990s, very much in the wake of Raid-style projects at the

MoMA and other museums, internationally starting in the mid- to late-1980s, and perhaps the Sotheby's auction helped to also kind of groom the way for reconsideration of Raid. While these shows were not exclusively orientated towards institutional critique, the more prominent of them seemed to be, encouraging the interpretation of Warhol's exhibition as its own form of repost to the various authorities represented by the museum. Peter Wollen named his 1993 book about cities and subcultures Raiding the Icebox, with an essay appreciating Warhol's larger contribution to underground culture and sensibilities that John actually closed with in his talk.

Dominic: Situating the show is fundamental to that understanding. Mark Lobell's 1996 Andy's Closet frames the exhibition as part of a public-private dialectic, related to Warhol's guarded avocations of his sexuality.

Dominic: Lisa Corrin's 1996 text for the RISD Museum's museum notes on the occasion of Danny Robbins's passing in 1995 appreciates the exhibition less in terms of Warhol's individual artistic subversion of institutional standards, but rather as a visionary result of the museum directors' assembling of artist, curator, objects, and space.

Dominic: Deborah Bright's Shopping the Leftovers, Warhol's collecting strategies in Raid the Icebox One, from 2001, considers the exhibition relationship to some consumptive nature the artist's personal collecting habits, particularly the rejection of an expected connoisseurial approach. As well as a thematic of social class revenge that is fine-tuned and intensified by Anthony Huberman in his 2015 text for Moose Magazine's the Artist as Curator series. Particularly in a statement distancing the show from later institutional critique-oriented artist-curated projects, that quote, "Warhol's beef was not with those who make the payments, but with those who make the judgments."

Dominic: His text importantly, if tangentially, acknowledges the [Menulski 00:48:08] role in the project, and like [Horin 00:48:10] before him, positions the show as a [inaudible 00:48:12] of sorts, a Warhol work on a museum exhibition scale. Thomas Morgan Evans, in his recent book on Warhol and his sculpture, discusses Raid alongside Warhol's time capsules, to signal the artist's ongoing emphasis on recycling, reuse, and rehabilitation, but also to dispute notions that overemphasize the artist's development of the project into one big Warhol work, in favor of its quote, "providing an alternative precisely the structures of value that constrict the aesthetic possibilities of our encounters with objects."

Dominic: In this sense, the exhibition's legacy has been most acutely felt in the way that it has encouraged artists, artist curators, and curators themselves to reconsider structures of value that attach to objects. The various ways, varying ways, that it has become integral to numerous artists' practice has become a quiet barometer of shifting relationships between artists and museums. While institutionally critical projects still happen now, and while more neutral or reverential projects certainly happened in the late 1980s-early 1990s, it's fair to say that the tone of the artist-curated exhibitions has developed from the presentation of objects to indict the power of structures and methodologies that constrain and define our understanding of what is culturally and historically significant to a sensibility that harnesses the museum's power, and the

artists' power within it, to critically recalibrate the art historical canon, or to develop or contextualize one's own practice and idiom through the presentation of historical objects in others' works.

Dominic: The short tour of some of these projects that have developed in the wake of Raid the Icebox: Michael Asher's presentation at the Art Institute in 1970, which he displaced an outdoor Udon sculpture from the late 18th century into the interior of the museum; the first in a series of artist-curated series at MoMA, Scott Burton reinterpreting their collection of Brancusi in 1989; RISD alum Jenny Holzer, a curated section of Biedermeier furniture at the MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, really kind of something that they did with a number of different artists- Donald Judd, Barbara Bloom- and represents instead of a single artist being invited, the reinterpretation of a museum's entire collection through artist-curated projects.

Dominic: Robert Gober's Meat Locker at the Menil Collection in Houston in 2005, note the Ice Box painting at the center; and Raid the Icebox is actually identified in this catalog as say, for the show, as a model for the exhibition. Gober was aware of the show, that it had happened, but was kind of unaware of how and why and what until the curator had given him the catalog.

Dominic: And then finally, Carrie James Marshall selects at the Metropolitan Museum an example that now occurs very frequently of the artist-curated show that is attached to a larger survey or retrospective, really complement and give a greater breadth to an understanding of an artist through their appreciation of art history.

Dominic: It's also worth noting that curatorial practice within the museum has been transformed by these interventions, and to the license that institutional staff now feel the agency to take with the presentation of objects and artworks. Artist-curated exhibitions have also transformed curatorial practice, in bringing attention to overlooked figures, prompting museum curators to either shift their perspectives on works already in the collection, but also inspiring the acquisition of those artists' works, or other objects, for the collections.

Dominic: Finally, shows ranging from MoMA's Museum is Muse in 1999, to the Artist Museum at ICA Boston in 2016, have recognized the special relationship between artists and museums, and were themselves inspired by and often featured references to Warhol and the museum's original grade.

Dominic: I'm incredibly pleased to be able to pass the discussion over the artist Fred Wilson, whose 1992 exhibition Mining the Museum and decades of artistic practice have profoundly altered our perception of the racial, cultural, and historical implications of museological display, but also allowed for Raid the Icebox to come out of the shadows of that, and become a reconsidered part of contemporary art history. Take it away, Fred.

Fred Wilson: Wow, you have this written in such large type. I wish I thought of that, but I'm looking at my little phone, and I have this here too, but ... I have little thoughts here on my little phone, and so I'm gonna jump around a bit.

Fred Wilson: I wanna say that Warhol was ... I'd imagine that Warhol was kind of a seminal character in my formation as an artist, but certainly as a young young artist or a student, I was very taken by his work and really interested in his work, as in the late 60's and early 70's, I ... because I think that what we shared was an interest in contemporary culture and everyday culture. I enjoyed that he was a dispassionate observer of things, where of course I could not be, but I really enjoyed the fact that he was.

Fred Wilson: He also, to my mind, had a way of making everything ... well, seeing a great equalizing of objects from high and low to be all the same merit. Again, another thing that I really appreciated as a young artist, or certainly in art school, looking at the world and seeing things that were considered important, or not important, and seeing that, to my mind, seeing the importance of things that were not considered important at the time.

Fred Wilson: I do also wanna say ... I'll start this here ... it worked. After art school and having all these thoughts in my head, I worked at various museums because I had been taking classes in those museums throughout high school, because I'm a New Yorker. And working in the museums really was a major experience for me, and working at the Metropolitan, but also this is the Museum of Natural History, both of them showing culture, different cultures, but often the same culture. But how they displayed them was extremely different one to the other, and almost incomprehensible that they were the same, from the same places, the same people.

Fred Wilson: But I did work a lot at the Met, as I said I took classes at the Met when I was really young, as a young man. And I never did even know about Raid the Icebox until after I did Mining the Museum. Of course, people made the references after I did this project. However, my interest in museums and what they do to objects goes back to my high school years, if I can look backwards, and interestingly, the intersection of the year 1969 is significant.

Fred Wilson: I went to see the exhibition Harlem On My Mind, which opened in 1969, with my father, who grew up in Harlem. And that was a wonderful experience because I was with him, and it enabled him to talk about Harlem through the veil of the museum. However, I also was taking classes at that time, and I remember the huge protests that occurred against Harlem On My Mind, because there were ... no black artists were invited to be in this exhibition about Harlem. And they were ... really staunchly against having artists in there. The only artist that was in it was James Van Der Zee, a photographer, a chronicler of Harlem in the 20th century, the early part of the 20th century. And those weren't even original photographs, they were big photo blow-ups. It was like a trade show in the MoMA. And that was how they chose to represent in their infinite wisdom, to talk about black culture.

Fred Wilson: And this was a big event in 1969. The artist Benny Andrews formed a group and protested against the museum. And as I was a student there, in high school programs, I remember this very strongly. Again, this place, the museum, which I found very much comfortable in, the ways that museums present culture and can present bias at the same time.

Fred Wilson: However, as I said, working in the museum as a young man, excuse me, as a student in the museum a young man, one of the reasons why I became very comfortable in museums was because I would take classes in the basement. Back in the late 60's, early 70's, it wasn't quite as cleaned up as it is now, and you'd walk through the halls in the back, back corridors where the education classes were, and you'd see sculpture in the hallways, just draped with plastic over them. And these, of course, were major plaster cast, but they looked exactly like the ones in the galleries. And it always interested me that what really struck me is being able to be behind the scenes, because what struck me was that objects can have many lives, can have many meanings.

Fred Wilson: The public sees the artworks in particular spaces, and thinks that's it, this is how you should be thinking about it, seeing it, thinking about this object. When in fact, it's an object and can have many lives depending on where it is. And so I think I've always thought about that, being behind the scenes.

Fred Wilson: Just give me ... a minute here to get to my ... information.

Speaker 2: It's the other computer, Fred.

Fred Wilson: No, no, I'm looking at my phone.

Fred Wilson: And so I also think that ... thinking about Warhol, and thinking about my practice, if the galleries are the face of the museum, the offices are the brain, and the storage is the unconscious. The manner-controlled and aestheticized public galleries belie the haphazard, chaotic, and sometimes ugly private spaces hidden from view.

Fred Wilson: Warhol revealed the psychosis of the museum. And if Warhol revealed the general psychosis, I, in my practice, have dug deep, pinpointing the source of a particular manifestation.

Fred Wilson: And so I really appreciate what he did with this project ... I can continue on ... with his project ... this is Mining the Museum. And because it brought, for the first time, brought all these issues to the fore, I'm not surprised that he didn't like the exhibition, because I still, continually, when I work in museums, usually they're afraid that I'm gonna make fun of them, until they get to know me and know that I've been working in museums for decades now, and really love museums. I love objects and I'm very careful with them and very respectful of them, and I respect their scholarship when I work with them. However, they're afraid that I'm gonna make fun of them somehow, and use them in improper ways.

Fred Wilson: The problem that most happens, or doesn't happen many times anymore but it did happen quite often, is that some curator thinks that I'm pulling out something that they don't want to show anybody. That's in the collection and it's not important enough, not fine enough, and so it should stay in the basement forever. And it's a personal embarrassment to them, personal embarrassment perhaps to the donor, if they put it out there, and they want something else from the donor and they don't want to be

embarrassed, and embarrass the donor, because you're putting something out that maybe the public or the critics will say is not an important object.

Fred Wilson: All this kind of activities within the museum, it's just below the surface. If you come in as an outsider, you kind of shake things up a bit and find out where the issues are. I, of course, if it's not something that's incredibly important for me to include, I don't include it because I'm not there to disrupt the business of the museum. That's not what I do. I'm looking for meaning in places that it hasn't existed for the museum before.

Fred Wilson: This is the Maryland Historical Society as I found it, one of the galleries, and I believe this space still is like this. This particular vignette. And everything here looked like something I understood and knew of American history, but I felt very uncomfortable. And for me, as I said, I can't be dispassionate at the museum. For me, at the moment, I didn't really know what was bothering me about this display. And it was in the process of looking at every object, talking to everyone in the museum, and making the project that I did ... it was answered for me. And it was like, duh. But anyway ... that is my process. That was my process.

Fred Wilson: And I'm just showing you little bits of things that I did. Museums, they have things on view ... the things on view tell you a lot about the museum. Things in storage tell you even more. And there are reasons why things, as I said, don't come of storage. They're there, and they just lie dormant forever.

Fred Wilson: I found these wonderful [Remposee 01:02:59] silver tea servers in their storage, but I also found these slave shackles in their storage. It's an old museum, and there's a lot of collections that's very old, and it's a history and art museum. And that happened after it was ... years of being more or less a men's club, and where people brought all their wedding dresses and all their ... you know, it's a historical society. Things at the museum and just ... deposited them there. And so there are things that nobody ever really looked at or thought about. And for me, it was ... they organized things in this museum in [inaudible 01:03:37] fashion, which means looking at aspects of the objects and giving you very little information.

Fred Wilson: So I did the same. Under the heading of Metalwork, and ... but whose hand served the silver? Who could've made these objects in a princeship situations, at the end of slavery? But certainly, whose labor spread a wealth that could produce the silver?

Fred Wilson: So for me, the museums with the grandeur of one's culture, this is all around the world, and the museums where the hearts of one's culture, never would you see this together in one space or ... together in, certainly, in the same room, but certainly not in the same display case, but they both speak to each other so much. And it says a lot about our country even more.

Fred Wilson: Talking about collections of things, it made me think of this grouping. They had many Native American things, because early on, Benjamin Latrobe, a famous architect and artist from that region, collected things, including Native American things. And here we have these arrowheads, hundreds of arrowheads of course, never [inaudible 01:04:54] a

few, because it would just fall in the purview of what the museum saw itself as. And I put them all together under the heading of Collection of Numbers.

Fred Wilson: But in addition, all of our museums have ... older museums have maybe one Cigar Store Indian. I put that in quotes. Well, they had quite a number of them there, and I decided bring them all together, and put them on view. There was a Duck Decoy show in the space beforehand, and the curators didn't like it either. But anyway, it was the donor's idea, but anyway. On the wall there is a map with the Chesapeake Bay with all the duck-hunting clubs on it. And I decided to leave even recent history in the exhibition, just added the Native American tribes were they were on the map. They're all facing away from you because ... well I asked the curator, I wanted to speak to the Native population in Baltimore. And she said, well there are no Indians in Baltimore. And I'm like oh really? So, as I ...

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:06:04]

Fred Wilson: And I'm like "Oh, really?" So as I often do, I found the native population, native families, and I told them the project I was doing and where it was going. And they loaned me photographs. So what these cigar store Indians are doing facing the wall, but they're actually facing photographs, family photographs, historic and contemporary photos of native folks from the region. The label on the floor says "Portraits of the Cigar Store Owners." And in fact, the one on the far left was by a German immigrant of his daughter, and she's sort of the fraulein in brown face, I would say.

Fred Wilson: And under the heading of modes of transport, we have the sedan chair of the last royal governor of Maryland and a model ship, a sloop that was used after the War of 1812, it became a slave ship. And documents about slaves. The baby carriage ... here's another image of it, I found this Klan hood in storage, anonymously donated, and you know, the curator said "Sure, we'll put that out there for you." Really thinking, I found out later, she's like "Well, really, if this doesn't get the director fired nothing else will." But anyway, but they were a little nervous about putting this out. 'Cause I should say that the show was up, it became an extremely popular show for many reasons, and the staff wanted to keep it up longer. So we kept it up, and they wanted this particular image in it. And during the time period that it was up, one of the education people came to me and said "You know, some of the kids that come in, some of their parents were in the Klan. What should we do?" So I was very proud of the museum for actually dealing with this subject and not shying away from it. And nothing ever happened.

Fred Wilson: Here we have these wonderful, under the heading of cabinet making, we have the chairs of various, as I saw it, various members of society. But then in the storage they had this big wooden thing on the floor. I said "What's that?" The curator said "Oh, that's the public whipping post. We don't know what to do with that thing. It was used in front of the city jail until 1958. And we got it, we don't know what to do with that thing." And I was like "I know what to do with that thing." So anyway.

Fred Wilson: I'm gonna quickly try to show another project. This was at the Hood Museum at Dartmouth, and this painting was in their major area, major center of their exhibition,

their permanent exhibition, of Daniel Webster. It was called "Black Dan." No racial thing connected to it. He was a very important statesman and orator in the country, and he also was important to Dartmouth, because he saved Dartmouth from becoming a private, public institution. Now, I don't know what was so great about that, but anyway.

Fred Wilson: And I should say that that was the major photograph they had of him. However, in storage I found 50 images of Daniel Webster. The good, the bad, and the ugly, by like alumni and all different people, and I put them all on view. 'Cause museums, they have Daniel Webster's socks. From the archive on the hill, in the middle of campus. Anyway, and then these arcane collections that were also in the museum. The show was called ... well, never mind.

Fred Wilson: In storage, deep storage, I found these busts. And something curious about these busts, of the races. And I never saw sculptures of people from various countries. It was from early part of the 20th century. And so I decided to put them all on view. In fact, they're from the ... they're busts of people who were cast at the World's Fair in 1904 in St. Louis. And so I brought them out, and they were sold to museums, natural history museums around the country, and there was a natural history museum here at one time. And so people had to sit there and put this plaster on their faces, who, many of them didn't speak English. So it must have been horrific. Anyway, I'm not gonna go into their experience.

Fred Wilson: But we have here at the far end, why it's so much shorter, is a pygmy. And he looked familiar to me, and it turns out I did know who he was. I gave them these honorific sashes and kind of sashes that perhaps, the color white often is kind of a image of mourning, so I put that on there as well. Basically, it's covering up what it said, which is "pygmy," or we'll just say the tribal name, not who they were. And I did research and found out that this was ... oh, I don't have the image of it. This was, that was Ota Benga. I had just read a book about him. He was brought, he didn't go back to his country, he stayed in the United States, was brought to New York in 1904 and put in the Bronx Zoo.

Fred Wilson: And there was a big hue and cry by the black community in New York, he was brought out of the Bronx Zoo, brought to the Museum of Natural History, where he stayed there and showed his teeth, because they were pointy, and his crafts, and eventually he got really upset about being there. And black clergymen brought him to the South and he stayed there for a while, but he was so miserable he committed suicide at age 32.

Fred Wilson: So I also found all these busts of different people, but then I also found these hands. And what intrigued me was, the busts had no names, the hands had names. And that's it, thank you.

Speaker 3: Switch vehicles. Okay. So I'm going to contribute a little genealogy. And for those who know my work, this is my favorite kind of history, a genealogy. Especially one that begins with Andy Warhol, that begins, essentially, queer, meaning curlicued and calligraphic, cursive, discursive, inclusive, looped in, lassoing, roping in, associative, intuitive, nonlinear, and never ... always not the norm, ever unexpected, ever provocative.

Speaker 3: And we learn from these kinds of genealogies because we are curious and always up for an interesting query. This is Andy Warhol at the ICA, the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in 1965, where Andy had his first museum exhibition and where I, many years later, was the chief curator for 15 years. And here's the legendary ICA opening, where Andy and his entourage escaped the opening crush by fleeing up these stairs. And they opened a hatch in the ceiling, and that's how they escaped the mob at that opening in 1965.

Speaker 3: And this is an installation at ICA that was dedicated to that moment, a sculpture by Alex Da Corte, who's one of the artists in the Carnegie International, which is the show that I'm working on now. So we're doing some curlicuing here. And this is the exhibition by Andy Warhol that I wished I could have seen. As a curator, there's always a couple exhibitions you'd like to go back, little loopholes in time, and have experienced. And this has always been one of mine. And so I'm happy to be here revisiting it with this symposium, this gathering.

Speaker 3: Ditto Fred Wilson's "The Mining of the Museum," another extremely generative exhibition. This is the slide that I've been showing every year since 2005 as part of an annual lecture that I give called "What is Contemporary?" And it's a series of 12 genealogies, sort of ways of thinking through this question of what is contemporary. And there are parts that are ever-changing, but this remains the same in thinking about storage and archiving and collecting, and how meaningful these are as modes and materials for contemporary art and artists. And certainly can't think about storage, archiving, collecting, without thinking about Fred's exhibition "The Mining of the Museum" and metalwork.

Speaker 3: So speaking of deep storage, this is an installation view from an exhibition that encapsulates, really, the essence of so much of my work. It was called "Deep Storage," and here it is at the Haus der Kunst in Munich in 1997. And we're looking at a gallery with work by Hannah Darboven on the walls and [Ana Kora's 01:16:31] "One Million Years," and Andy Warhol's time capsules. This trash is the contents of one of the time capsules. And the "Deep Storage" exhibition was, really, I think, one of the first to contextualize, exhibit the time capsules in the contemporary art context.

Speaker 3: And here is Andy Warhol's time capsule project as it exists at the Andy Warhol Museum. And this is how I got to know John Smith, who was the chief archivist at the time. That was the first time John and I worked together. And so "Mining the Museum" and the time capsules, to me, go hand in hand as important projects in Warhol's work and mine.

Speaker 3: So at ICA I instituted a series of artist-as-curator projects. And I'm gonna look at two by way of examples, case studies that seem relevant to this question of now. The first is "Set Pieces" from 2010, and the curator is the artist Virgil Marti, artist and activist, seen on Instagram yesterday. Virgil, here's an iconic work by Virgil, "Wallpaper," detail of a sheet of wallpaper that commemorates ... they're photos from his high school yearbook of the boys that bullied him, that Virgil had crushes on. And here we see the wallpaper

installed, the bullies wallpaper, it's called the bullies wallpaper, and I think Warhol, a consummate wallpaper artist, would approve.

Speaker 3: So Virgil's project really was a homage to Andy Warhol's "Raid the Icebox." And since the ICA, we didn't have a collection, so we went and knocked on the doors of our friends at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and were welcomed in to raid their collection and exhibit it at ICA. So here we are in the storage with Joe Rishel, who was one of the chief curators at the PMA. I think of Joe as having been Virgil's Virgil, if Virgil is Dante, taking us through the deep storage at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. And Virgil, like Warhol, looked widely through many collections high and low, decorative, fine arts, to compose a very theatrical installation, these "Set Pieces" in the galleries. So here's part of the installation, and they were contiguous with one another. You'd go around a corner and you'd come across this set piece and this set piece.

Speaker 3: And Virgil was referencing different sources that are meaningful for him, especially a history of film. So that set piece was a conjuring for him of this scene from Michelangelo Antonioni's film La Ventura, where the girl has gone missing and they're looking for her on this seascape, and everybody's heads are kind of popping up from the rocks as they're looking for her. So that was translated into this by Virgil. And as a case study, one of the things that I learned or experienced as part of making this exhibition with Virgil was something that Fred just touched on, was ... well, I'm gonna talk specifically about the head that's lying on its side. So Virgil really was given free rein to explore and draw from the collections, and it mattered that Joe Rishel was the person who opened the doors for him at the museum.

Speaker 3: And yet this piece that Virgil wanted to ... and every work had to be vetted by curators, conservators, for its inclusion in the exhibition. And the head that's laying on its side was the one moment where it was, it looked like it was gonna be a no-go, because one of the conservators felt that to show the work on its side with this, the post that would have affixed it to its marble pedestal, to show it like that showed the museum in a bad light, a disrespectful light. And it took the director himself pleading with the conservator for the permission to show it slumbering, and as Virgil had foreseen it slumbering on a shelf in storage. So it just is as it was, but to show that behind-the-scenes, the museum was sensitive.

Speaker 3: So ... we're back in storage here. So thinking about how for Warhol, even if it is part of a mythology, it did feel like he had this freedom to ... it was a direct gesture, it was quick. He was able to just move and grab. I wonder if we could do an exhibition like this today in an institution. So that idea of "raid the icebox" as being an expression of institutional freedom as well for artists, for curators, for museums.

Speaker 3: So the second case study is Christian Marclay's "Ensemble" from 2008 at ICA. Here's young Christian Marclay, conceptual artist and DJ. Here's Christian, a publicity shot from his great work "The Clock," which is an epic 24-hour film, tour-de-force, really, where he's snatching moments of time from films, a history of film from across time. So Christian Marclay is a consummate sampler. And thinking about sampling as a kind of curatorial practice. So we invited Christian, and his point of departure for "Ensemble"

was, as an artist whose art makes noise, he said that he would frequently find himself being sequestered in a group show like away from everything else. You know, the noise was interfering people's contemplation of the art. So Christian wanted to make an exhibition in which all of the works of art was curated as much by eyes, by ear, everything made some acoustical sound, together. So the [Martin Krieg 01:23:22] clock, you would hear the sort of flapping of the numbers, and the Doug Aitkens sound table. And I actually can't remember who made the chandelier that would be tinkling. And in the pool here, by Celeste Boursier-Mougenot, it was full of porcelain bowls, and they're being agitated in this pool and making this beautiful tinkling sound.

Speaker 3: So all these mostly delicate noises, so [pitstiletto 01:23:54], there's a tea kettle whistling away in here. There was a piece, I'm trying to think, that was a trash can that would, like every 20 minutes would erupt in a ruckus of like, clap your hands over your ears noise. So it was definitely this soundful room. And Christian invited artists and musicians to play the exhibition. This is from a performance with Alison Knowles, where she had directives for different ways of playing the works of art. This is a work by Jim Hodges. So the exhibition was being played, and then it was being recorded as well, so the publication was a CD of recordings from the exhibition.

Speaker 3: And to say that the lesson there, or sort of what this is a case study of as an artist-made exhibition, was, I was almost jealous of Christian's, that he could make an exhibition with artists, asking them to put their work together in a room where everybody's work was going to be making sound together. I was aware of myself as a curator, I wouldn't be able to do that. Because I would be instrumentalizing artists' work. But that Christian, as an artist amongst peers, could have a different relationship to the kind of exhibition that he could make. So different relationships, sometimes, that an artist can bring to artists, to works, to generate, engender trust between the participants. So that was another lesson learned.

Speaker 3: So that said, now we're in the present, and I'm working on the Carnegie International. And I approached this exhibition very much as an exhibition where myself, the curatorial team, the artists, the invitation to artists was "We're gonna make this thing together." So 32 artists and collectives, and there was commissioned work, new work, and there's two exhibitions within the exhibition, which is what I'm going to share very briefly, because they are works in process. One of them is "Dusty Groove: Space is a Diamond." And the curator is the artist Josiah McElheney. Josiah McElheney. Oh, where'd he go to school? So actually, RISD does good by the 57th Carnegie International, with Jessi Reaves and [Tavara Stron 01:26:48], and maybe others too. But Josiah McElheny, best known for his conceptual works of art that deploy his mastery of glass.

Speaker 3: This is a great work, chandeliers that are modeling different theories of the Big Bang theory of the universe, created by Josiah. So that's his work as a sculptor, but my invitation to Josiah came from a conversation that we'd been having, a sort of noodling conversation, to build a project, a next chapter of a project that he had already initiated with the curators Jim Dempsey and John Corbett, who are also gallerists. They have a gallery in Chicago, I think that's maybe why they're wearing these gangster suits here.

And the three of them, they together, artists, curators, gallerists, they're guys who, they listen to music as much as they look at art. And this project that they've initiated are a series of exhibitions where you move through ... it's a movement through a modernism that's like "What if we listen as much as we look? What might come in?"

Speaker 3: So the project began, Josiah, in conversation with Jim and John, created a series of, I think of it as sculpture portraits of mavericks of modernist composers. So this is Josiah's sculpture object dedicated to Harry Partch. And Harry Partch, he made his own instruments, he made his own musical notation, he made his own, he published the music, he recorded the music, he created his own kind of musical, alternative form of music, truly. So Josiah, this is a sort of abstraction of one of Harry Partch, there on the left, one of his musical instruments.

Speaker 3: And the other figure that Josiah ... so it begins, this is a work that existed, the Harry Partch, so Josiah's making a new work to commemorate or think about Pauline Oliveros, as another maverick modernist. And Pauline is a first electronic musician-composer, but she invents the idea of deep listening. That listening is as important as playing an instrument. So they're creating, this is here a schematic of Dusty Groove, work in progress. And drawing around these two visionaries, others. So Sun Ra, again, an artist for whom the visual and the sonic worlds come together. Lucia Dlugoszewski, who like Harry Partch, created her own musical instruments, musical notation, "Space is a Diamond" is one of her compositions. And there'll be an evening with Joe McPhee, a free jazz horn player who says he learned to listen from Pauline. So we'll have a day of deep listening as part of Dusty Groove.

Speaker 3: And I'm just gonna move a little more quickly here, 'cause I got the sign. Okay, so the other exhibition within the exhibition is "Dig Where You Stand," and this is organized, I invited Koyo Kouoh, who is, she refers to herself as an independent exhibition maker. She's also an institution builder, and this is her institution, it's called Raw Material Company in Dakar, Senegal. And it is, as the sign says, it is a center for art, knowledge, and society. And so invited Koyo to make an exhibition within the exhibition, drawing on the museum's permanent collection. And she has dubbed it "Dig Where You Stand." Here's an e-flux about it. It, again, is very much a work in progress, but for Koyo, her urgency as an exhibition maker and an institution builder is the conditions of coloniality. And for her, coloniality is the condition of being occupied. So capitalism is as much a colonizing force as colonizing is a colonizing force.

Speaker 3: So she finds Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Museum rich ground for this curatorial project, "Dig Where You Stand." And it will be located, location is always also significant, in the ... I'm sorry it's such a pixelated, the Carnegie, the Art Museum has galleries dedicated to a small collection of African art, and what you don't see is, if you spin around this long gallery, narrow, dark gallery continues, and it's non-Western art and ancient art. So it's this long sort of spine that's at the back of, the rest of the permanent collection is kind of more big and fulsome and a Western art history. And so it's like these are the two sort of beginnings of a Western art history. We might begin with the non-Western and the classical, and then the African as the beginning of a modernism.

Speaker 3: So the invitation to Koyo was not to work with these collections, but to work in the space, to occupy the space, to empty the space. So that after "Dig Where You Stand," this space will be empty and it will be a space to be thinking anew about how the museum can use its collections, and what other kinds of stories to tell. And I'll be very quick here, but I do think it's important to show why I invited Koyo. It came out of the research that I did for the Carnegie International, I traveled extensively looking as much at curatorial work as contemporary artwork. And just randomly, here we are with Patrick Flores, man in the middle there, or on the right is Patrick. And we're at the University of the Philippines, the Vargas Museum. He's the director there.

Speaker 3: And he has used every part of this museum's collection to, let's just say, create a new narrative. And so he's using the sort of, the standard modernism. This is all work made in and of the Philippines. So kind of classic modernism, or other modernism. Kitsch. I mean, Patrick says "Here, we're using kitsch as well to tell this story, to tell this art history." Archives are mined throughout and presented throughout, to be part of like another reading, another level of reading. And everywhere you look in this museum, the collection is being activated. Artists are being brought up in. You open this door and there's a project by a contemporary artist. It's just like this museum is firing on all pins, raiding itself to reformulate historic and cultural narratives from within. And so let's wave goodbye to ... there, and just randomly, and this is our last stop. We're in Singapore with the curator, Siddharta Perez, at the National University of Singapore. And they have open storage, and part of open storage is they invite artists to do projects in open storage.

Speaker 3: So this is an artist project, and it was an unpacking of this one object. And the object is this taxidermied alligator, that was actually the stuffing that came out of the alligator. And the alligator was captured or killed by this hunter, great white hunter, and this sort of unpacking, mapping, history that unpacks so much through this alligator and its stuffing. And here on the left is the alligator's tongue. Yeah, that sort of meatloaf thing, it's the alligator's tongue. And if we ... so let's listen to what the alligator's tongue has to say. And specifically what we're gonna hear is the museum's mission statement. But we're gonna listen with our icebox ears.

Speaker 3: And so it says this is about the ways in which the museum's permanent collection may be read in relation to writings on art and cultural history. It examines lines of inquiries that are predicated by various practices, institution making, scholarship, and nation building.

Speaker 3: So just to quickly end, I feel like this is the now that we're ending in. This is the legacy of "Raid the Icebox," of "Mining the Museum," this work that museums themselves have to do to be using their collections to create new narratives. So I'm done with mine, okay?

Speaker 3: I just had one quick question about "Mining the Museum." How did it come to pass that you got in there?

Fred Wilson: Oh, Lisa Corrin. And, oh, good God, let me remember the director's name. Oh, [inaudible 01:36:40]. The director and the curator of the Contemporary in Baltimore, which is a museum without walls ...

Speaker 4: George Ciscle.

Fred Wilson: Thank the Lord, George Ciscle, of course, George. You're great.

Speaker 4: [inaudible 01:36:53].

Fred Wilson: Yes, George Ciscle. Yes ...

Speaker 3: And Lisa Corrin.

Fred Wilson: And Lisa Corrin. They heard me ... I had been making fake galleries, fake museum space in galleries. And I rent a gallery and I tried a major project, kind of glamour project for me with that idea. And they corralled me to do a project for Baltimore, and I could have picked ... they said "You can pick any museum in Baltimore to do it and we'll try to get them to do it." And I chose the Historical Society. And that's how it happened. And you know, it was fascinating working with curator, because basically Lisa had nothing to do. The curators at the Historical Society had nothing to do, they just had to kind of bring things out for me. So it was kind of this interesting relationship that I had with them.

Fred Wilson: Lisa, in the end, was, she's framed it in a way that was interesting, with the text in the elevator. But for that moment, the interesting moment for me, besides that, was that for me, I spoke to everybody in the museum. The person who cleaned the silver, the guards, the maintenance staff, the bookstore woman, and the board of trustees, and the curators, and the registers. Everyone, because I didn't know Maryland, Baltimore, and I didn't know the museum. And from that I gained access to what this place was about. And so everyone sort of felt ... as happens with my projects, feels some connection to the project. It's not just me coming in and sort of raiding the icebox three, or something. So that's how it worked. And I met with lots of people from outside the museum to, to sort of understand ...

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:39:04]

Fred Wilson: ... how it worked and I met with lots of people from outside the museum too, to understand where I was.

Speaker 3: I'm going to say, you all might still want to chat with each other, but if anyone has any questions or observations?

John: I have another question for Fred. Can you maybe speak a little bit about your Venice Biennale project, however long a ... which was in a way mining the city.

Fred Wilson: I'm glad you brought that up.

John: You didn't [inaudible 01:39:30]?

Fred Wilson: Didn't plan this.

John: Nevermind.

Fred Wilson: No, what was ... It has a lot to do with what I've just completed. I'm going to Venice and I want to do something about Venice. For me, Venice is a city as a museum. That was the easy part. The hard part was actually getting into the museum. I ended up not using museum collections. In fact, the paintings that I did borrow were from dealers because Italy has its state system with museums. It was a little more difficult than the sponsors could handle but was fine with me, because the subject was the Africans of Venice from the 1500s to the present. It's all in the popular imagery as well as the historic paintings. While Venice is an incredible city, historians know everything about the French, the Germans, Austrians, and the Turks who came, they knew nothing about the Africans, who were there from the beginning in Veronese and Carpaccio and all these paintings in the city scenes. That was my ...

Fred Wilson: I was mining the city of its detritus and popular culture, these More cookies, More meaning more, and door knockers from historic times to paintings, to these wooden figures that stand in front of hotels, that are copies of these page boys in the paintings. There's nothing about them as far as I could tell. No one knew. Now ... That one was in 2003. There are historians focusing a little bit more on it but, at the time, to me it was a great project to just reveal it and think about it, and show it. Those figures that I ended up using ... I took one head off and put a globe on it. This is in 2003.

Fred Wilson: Elmgreen and Dragset who saw this said that they went to a party and the host had draped their figure. It really did make an impact because it was ju ... Outside, I had bags made in the material, in the fabrics, that relate to the materials in the paintings and costumes in a window and had a bag seller out there. Not selling them but with them. People thought they could buy them but they couldn't because they're in my bank but they're all with historic fabric. Trying to connect this long lineage for Italians who think that immigration has just happened recently with the Senegalese.

Fred Wilson: I only ... I don't know what your question was but I'm just jumping off to-

John: I just asked you to talk about it so you're doing great.

Fred Wilson: All right, well, just to say that I was in just in 2017 in the Istanbul Biennale and, there, all my questions were answered. I'm not a huge world history buff, until it's something amazing for me to understand but the Ottomans ... You still had the Turks there but you also saw the Turks were fighting, warring, with them or trading with them, meaning the Venetians. The Africans were all in the mix because they had huge slave trade. In Turkey, not only did I learn about the Ottoman slave trade, which in the early centuries were Europeans and then later, when they couldn't get the Europeans, they got many scores of Africans through the 19th century. I actually met Afro-Turks who ... There's a community there and who told me, well, there're Afro-Armenians. There're Afro-Kurds. There're Afro-Greeks, all from this slave trade. It's only in this generation that really acknowledged their lineage, their heritage with Africa.

Fred Wilson: The Turks used to call them, or some of them still do call them, Arabs, but those are the people who sold them into slavery so they don't like that so much. Even James Baldwin, who was there working, he was called Arab Jimmy. Of course, he wasn't thinking about what that was. This connection of history, because supposedly Italy didn't have slavery, Venice didn't have slavery, these children were brought to Europe, either as contraband and became Christians perhaps. Also it was a fashion for these young boys to be in these families and dressed up in the family's royal colors.

Fred Wilson: This project became justice, because it was for the Elmgreen and Dragset Biennale, Istanbul Biennale, called Good Neighbor. To me, I was thinking about Venice and Turkey and then Africans in between. That show's coming to New York in July 10th.

Speaker 3: Where?

Fred Wilson: Pace. Pace shipped it to me.

Fred Wilson: Yes, exactly.

Pablo: I have two questions. I happen to work in a museum where there's a practice of inviting artists to curate shows. I've observed interestingly how the curatorial response tends to be a combination of puzzlement, surprise, sometimes irritation of the way that things get put together. Generally, accepted as an artist's artwork of many an extension of the artist's artwork, but not so much as a real show.

Pablo: My question really is what is really the criteria that we should apply to critically look at the work of an artist as curator in the museum. The other question relates to the reaction that apparently the Warhol show had, which was ... I think some of you mentioned that, perhaps, there was expectation that Warhol would curate something that was somewhat an extension of his vision or his aesthetics. That was perhaps not the case in the way that it ultimately manifested.

Pablo: Is that a misplaced expectation that the artist-curated show should also be an extension of the artist's sensibility, worldview, ideas or not?

Speaker 3: One criteria or ... You're Pablo, as I out you, at the ...

Pablo: Yes, I am.

Speaker 3: ... at the Museum of Modern Art. I'm thinking about the series that you touched on, the artist as curator series that began with Scott Verdon and [Brancusi 01:46:41], and so ... Maybe it's like what does the artist open up for the museum? With the Scott Verdon, that was the first time that the museum or the people looked at Brancusi's pedestals as part of the sculpture. The artist made that argument, using the museum's collection.

Speaker 3: One of the exhibitions that came after that was Elizabeth Murray, who looked at the collection and she noticed there weren't a lot of women there. Maybe she put them all in one room so maybe some ... Called institutional critique, but I like the idea of

something more generative, like something that's ... What does the artist open up for us to see?

Dominic: Also sometimes what it opens up within their own practice. I think it was really fascinating to see, in Bob Gober's MOMA retrospective, the acknowledgement of his own curatorial practice, in terms of the inclusion of other artists' work within his own. Telling the story basically of his career. The very interesting will power it took to invite other artists into that story, but also the real acknowledgement of his own curatorial practice, starting with the Meat Locker show and continuing with Exhibitions of Birchfield and Others.

Dominic: That, perhaps, can be a gauge, in terms of the importance of a given artist-curated project. Not only in terms of what it advances in contemporary art history or even just art history in general but also within the artist's own practice.

Speaker 3: Right, and how Gober's, with the great show Lynne Cooke's The Outliers in the American Avant Garde, she shows, as a work by Gober a sort of expert of his Forest Best exhibition. The way that exhibition he made about Forest Best becomes part of Gober's own work.

Fred Wilson: Sometimes, if it looks too close to curating, you get the feeling it's like, "I could've done that." It is a kind of a interesting line to walk when you're working at institutions. That's when they don't invite you but [inaudible 01:49:22].

John: Also, I think, what Dominick pointed out about that it is becoming frequent now, you have the retrospective and then, almost as an aside, you ask the artist, "Oh, and would you like to choose some things from the collection?" I think that feels particularly meaningless in a certain kind of way to do that and question, is it part of the show. Is it separate from the show? Is it the artist that you're looking at in the show? Are they wearing, I think to your question, a different hat, a different set of eyes, a different mindset when they're choosing these things? I think it's healthy that all of these things collapse.

Speaker 3: I have an endless appetite for the artist as curator show, because it always is going to yield something different. When Kerry James Marshall curated his show from the Metropolitan's collection, you got to see what Kerry James looks at.

John: Right, but is it separate from the sh ... It's the same show in a way.

Speaker 3: Oh, yeah, that's a good point, yeah. Yeah.

John: I mean separating [crosstalk 01:50:29] out in a way as something ... This is the ...

Speaker 3: It should be seen as part of the total exhibition.

John: ... retrospective and here's this but it, in fact, is the whole show.

Fred Wilson: Yeah, because for some curators, it looks too close and so they can't separate themselves. You're really special.

Speaker 3: Am I or [inaudible 01:50:50]-

Fred Wilson: I'm being serious.

Speaker 3: All right. I'll be your special child.

Fred Wilson: I had other thoughts but I keep losing them.

Fred Wilson: (silence)

Audience: I forget which one of you brought up that Warhol thought are institutions like a store. I see how that's true of galleries but not other institutions. What economic system makes that true?

John: What I was saying was actually a quote from Warhol, that he was saying, "In the future" ... I think it was, "In the future, all department stores would look like museums and that museums would look like department stores." I don't know that he was thinking this through as a set of economic values but, in a way, more about the idea of objects being desirable and that, in the way you think about department store display and this whole idea of everything being curated now.

John: I think, in a way, it's Warhol's prophecy coming true in a certain kind of way. That this idea of this is designed in a very special and thoughtful way. That experience of, in a way, the flip side of that is a museum looking at popular culture and the tropes of shopping as the flip side of that. I don't know if that really answers your question. I think that Warhol, in a way, was being flip about this in the same way that he said, whenever he ... Warhol had great veneration for department stores where he said, when he died, he wanted to go to Bloomingdale's.

John: In a way, I think it's that continuation of Warhol's serious humor.

Dominic: It's funny because I have to bring it up that our Warhol, the race riot painting from 1964 that's in our collection was actually for sale at the museum in a show, I believe, called Art for Your Collection, in December of 1967. It was a program that the museum had been doing for a number of years. Then, when Debby Robbins had arrived where there were works of art that they would pull from the art galleries that would be on sale with the hope to generate a collecting base here in Providence and hope that, as with the Warhol, that the work would come back into the museum collection.

Dominic: In some ways, it was actually kind of a department store. It is now.

Fred Wilson: A thought came back to me why she's so special and some others are not quite as forward thinking or clear thinking. It's that curators are used to controlling the meaning and controlling ... It's important for them to be able to, because they see the public seeing this. They're organizing a thought and such. Sometimes it's doing something that's outside of your [inaudible 01:54:32] is difficult for some to let go of. The fact that

you may have other ideas that are easily as cogent as ... A new idea that's easily as cogent as the previous one.

Fred Wilson: When a curator hands over the reigns to you and doesn't really know what's going to come out of the other end, and it's about the institution itself, it's ... I'm not a curator but it can be ... I assume it's a scary thing. Some curators go towards it and we like those curators.

Audience: I'm curious about possibilities for interactions between education departments, educators especially, working with younger audiences and artist as curator projects and best case scenarios for that. How it might or might not make sense, what circumstances it makes sense, to try to talk audiences through the process by which an artist as curator project arises, and what that means for the objects. Or, whether in some cases, it might make more sense to talk about the display at face value, if that makes sense. How to bring audiences for whom talking through the history of artist as curator or the curatorial process might be a lot of information or more than you have time for.

Dominic: It's funny to think about. Warhol's Raid the Ice Box is a ... It almost anticipates the way that punk rock deskilled rock music, in terms of deskilling the notion of curating an exhibition and the potentials that that opened. Thinking about the artist-curated exhibition as a way to introduce, I think, to younger people interested in, not only just museum professional practice but also just museums in general. The way that it opens a sort of agency to be able to bring together works to tell their own stories, particularly tell, perhaps, stories from their own sense of cultural identity, personal identity, what have you. Yeah, I think it becomes a really interesting model in that.

Dominic: Also the way that, perhaps, technologies now ... We had a project here a few years ago called Raid the Database, where artists from the Providence area were able to work with our collection but not physically but digitally. Certainly, the way that that representation of work or culture or things is becoming perhaps more prevalent, perhaps more interesting to younger audiences too, and maybe in a weird way more real, and so ...

John: Yeah, but I do think that there are these projects that continue to but heads with, in a way, the institutional motives around education and clarity of just ... There's a show. I don't know if it's still up or just recently closed that the theatre designer Robert Wilson curated from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts Asian Collections. There's absolutely no labels, absolutely no didactic material at all. You aren't told who Robert Wilson really even is, that he had the hand in it. There's full of sound. There's lighting effects. There's the whole thing, so it is a series of, in a way, set pieces one moves through.

John: For seasoned museum goers, you get it. You understand what it is that you're doing. I do think about people who are going to museums for the first time wondering, "Why does this look different from the rest of the museum? Why over here are there 100 words for every object and then I walk into this space and there's nothing. There's nothing to guide me," and how museums can actually equip people to relax and enjoy it. My understanding is that, even in Minneapolis, there was tremendous debate and dissension among the staff, among the curators, with the director, about this particular

project. I think these debates, even in enlightened institutions, continue to play out every time you invite an artist to come in. It's a new situation or a new experience and you have to write the rules as you go along according to what the artist wants.

John: I think that's one of the questions that we're asking with this particular exhibition and this project moving forward is what do you really ... When you invite an artist into your museum, and particularly a museum like ours that's aligned with an art and design school, how much power are you willing to cede. It's, I think, a tricky question and one that will, I think, certainly test our institution over the next year, as these 10 artists more fully flesh out and propose their projects. It's going to be very interesting.

Fred Wilson: For me, because I've worked in museums for so long, even before I started to do this sort of thing, the baseline is do no harm to the collection and the curatorial, [registrarial 02:00:45] conservatives. For me, that's where I ... That's the important benchmark and I like limitations for me. That makes me have to think another way to make something really have meaning within this institution that has its realities.

Fred Wilson: The other thing that I ... On a slightly different subject, people come to museums and they're always expecting the expected. Maybe not contemporary museums necessarily but they have expectations, if they're not constant contemporary museum goers. The museum is, whether it's an exhibition or just a new way that a curator wants to talk about a particular subject, they have to override that somehow, not pretend it doesn't happen. You think about the very famous exhibitions in Washington, DC that were a gay exhibition or [inaudible 02:01:45] American exhibition where they changed the narrative drastically and the public wasn't ready for that. They wanted this master narrative in place but basically no one was taking responsibility for that shift so the public was left with thinking ... up in arms over this change of the narrative.

Speaker 3: I was struck when you pointed to the galleries that the Historical Society said, "This is how I found them," and then he said, "This is probably how they are again still." The idea that this exhibition you made didn't ch ... It moved through that institution and then the institution, the vines grow back around it. You created something that went out in the field.

Fred Wilson: This is the thing. It's not ... because museums move glacially but I've come to realize ... Nobody at the Historical Society is either alive or in the museum. What happens is, with all art, you are engaging individuals, be it the museum professionals or the visitors. Museum professionals move around so the people who had the experience of my projects, wherever they were in the museum, they're at other institutions and they're taking that with them. Every once in a while I think, "Hm, I wonder who's working here."

Fred Wilson: The institution did not change drastically because staff no longer was there. I remember when the guard said, "Man, you're going to come back because this has gone back the way ..." That was ... He's no longer there now himself and so unfortunately the museum is dealing with all this history that people come and keep asking about, and they don't know anything about it.

Fred Wilson: For me, it's about thinking about how it spreads beyond the institution. Some institutions, where staff has stayed, hasn't changed, there has been interesting shifts within the institution, because they're still ...

Speaker 3: Digesting.

Fred Wilson: ... digesting it and dealing with it and pushing for themselves. That's not the norm in America in museums.

Fred Wilson: Someone right there.

Audience: One more question.

John: Yeah, one more question.

Speaker 5: Was there someone else?

Fred Wilson: Just do it.

Audience: I wanted to [crosstalk 02:04:25] ...

Speaker 5: Two more questions.

Audience: I wanted to go back to the question about the blurring of lines between the artist's own practice and their curatorial artwork and then also add in something about the idea of commissions and acquisitions. I was wondering, from the exhibitions that you were talking about, it seemed like sometimes, when the artists were curating, they were also possibly making new work of their own to include as a part of the collection. I was wondering, if that does happen, what happens to those objects after the exhibitions are over and if they're considered now part of the collection.

Speaker 3: I don't know what you're referring to specifically about someone making something ...

Audience: There was a clock that ... a sound-

Speaker 3: Oh, so that was in Christian Marclay's exhibition. Those were all works by other artists that he brought together to make a group exhibition so ...

Audience: Oh, okay, [crosstalk 02:05:25] I thought you were saying that the clock was-

Speaker 3: I was moving very quickly so, yeah.

Audience: That's okay. Part of my question is, when the artists are invited to curate these exhibitions, if they also possibly are invited to create new work to be included as a part of that curatorial project.

John: Yeah, I will say, in our upcoming project, that's exactly the case. There's one of the artists in it, Beth Cattleman, is actually creating ... She's creating new work in response to it. I think that, again, to have an openness and to say that there's no one way to do it but, in

fact, there are multiple ways to do it. I think that we're in a way, hoping and expecting that there'll be new work made in reaction to our invitation to this project.

Fred Wilson: I've had work that's purely the collection work be collected, bought by the institution. It's ... I'd say it's rare but it does happen.

Audience: Fred, you talked about a show in Washington where the public wasn't ready for the shift in narrative. Then I was [crosstalk 02:06:37]-

Fred Wilson: Oh, yeah, several.

Audience: Could you talk about your first project, like [inaudible 02:06:39] the museum or that you said it was really popular, that there was really great response and it was so new at the time? Could you talk about how that happened ...

Fred Wilson: Why that happened?

Audience: ... what the response was?

Fred Wilson: It opened at A.M. so 3,000 museum professionals saw it in three days. The director smoked more cigarettes the morning of that opening than I had seen him the whole year I was working. It was just really the right moment for this to happen. It was really consumed incredibly and by these ... They weren't curators. A.M. is not curators. It's directors, conservators, registrars. It was the first time that contemporary artwork was speaking their language. It was all their language because there were the larger issues that I showed but there was a lot of nuanced things that, in the didactics and how things were framed, that really they understood in a way that the public wouldn't.

Fred Wilson: There were a lot of levels to this work because the other thing that happened was the public ... It was in the museum for a while. For the duration of the exhibition, it was completely understood, unspoken, completely understood by all the staff people that the guards, the food servers, the maintenance understood the exhibition far more deeply than the professional staff. There was a shift in power relationships. In fact, at the opening, one of the museum directors was in the bathroom and asked the guy cleaning up what he thought of the exhibition. He talked about it. The director came and spoke to me afterwards and he was like the maintenance man spoke about this thing in very deeply and in ways that this director could not have understood and thought about.

Fred Wilson: Yeah, it ... Luckily, the thing is, it reached different publics in different ways. Local people in a wa ... I'm from New York City. Everybody's from somewhere else. Half our families are immigrants so I ... In Baltimore, I had all these runaway slave broadsides. The family of the slave in the broadside came. The family of the man, the family trying to catch the slave, came. This was something that I think the Historical Society was afraid to deal with, because everybody's still there and have opinions and feelings. It was a whole other level ... Actually, one of the families of the person who's trying to catch one of these individuals was the writer in the newspaper and he just wrote incredible things about the exhibition.

Fred Wilson: It really ... Lucky for me. If it went the other way, I would not be talking about it right now but it really ... I spent enough time there and deeply embedded myself rather than ... Being a New Yorker, I always say my project are not for curators in New York. They're for whoever comes and ... The people where I am. I have to embed myself into it and not have my own way of doing things or thinking be the ... not tempered by the experience that I have with the individuals that I'm there with.

Fred Wilson: Yeah, so it was quite an amazing experience that reverberated with the public for a long time. A lot of trustees left, which was a major part of the problem, some of these trustees.

Fred Wilson: Hm?

Fred Wilson: Because it was popular, because it was good, because they had to change. It meant they had ... This is the Historical Society. It meant the museum had to change, so. It was a good thing.

Speaker 5: (applause)

Fred Wilson: We did it. We did it.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [02:11:19]